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Issuance Date:	May 26, 2022
Questions Due:	June 10, 2022, at 9.00am Kenya Time
Concept Note Submission Closing Date:	June 27, 2022, at 9.00am Kenya Time

Subject: Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation, and Exchange (HELIX), New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) Program, Annual Program Statement (APS) No.: 720OAA20APS00009

Opportunity Title: **Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum No. 72061522APS00002**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: 98.001, Foreign Assistance for Programs Overseas

Pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, the United States Government, as represented by the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation, Center for Education (DDI/EDU) and USAID/Kenya and East Africa (KEA) is announcing the Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum to the Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation, and Exchange (HELIX) New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) Annual Program Statement (APS), hereafter known as the HELIX APS.

The Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum is not a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) but rather a **request for Concept Note(s)** in response to this Addendum published under the HELIX APS. To be competitive, the Concept Note submission must be fully responsive to all directions under this Addendum and HELIX APS. Based on the submitted Concept Note, USAID/KEA's Office of Education and Youth (EDY) will determine whether to request a Full Application from an eligible organization. Issuance of this Addendum does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of Concept Note(s) or Application(s). Issuance of award is subject to the availability of funds and the interest and requirements of E3/ED as well as the viability of eventual Full Application(s) received.

To be eligible for award, the Applicant must provide all information as required and meet eligibility standards of this APS Addendum. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the entire APS Addendum has been downloaded from www.grants.gov in its entirety as USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. In case of difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the APS Addendum, please contact the grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

Please send any questions by the due date to the point of contact identified in this notice. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential Applicants through www.grants.gov.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Sandra Asiedu
Digitally signed by Sandra Asiedu
Date: 2022.05.26 14:27:30 +03'00'

Sandra Asiedu
Agreement Officer, USAID/KEA/OAA

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ANNOUNCEMENT

CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum Number 72061522APS00002
UNDER EXISTING

Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation, and Exchange (HELIX)
Annual Program Statement

A New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) Opportunity

No.: 7200AA20APS00009

PLEASE NOTE: This is an Addendum to an existing announcement. All interested organizations should carefully review both the Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum AND the full APS announcement, which can be found here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=326056. Important information contained in the full worldwide announcement is not repeated in the Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum.

This activity is authorized in accordance with Part 1 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

Through the Employment Pathways for Youth addendum to the Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation, and Exchange (HELIX) Annual Program Statement (APS) New Partnerships Initiative No.: 7200AA20APS00009, the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation, Center for Education (DDI/EDU) and USAID/Kenya and East Africa (KEA) seeks to establish **high-quality, industry-endorsed training directly connected to employment opportunities in priority sectors (e.g. ICT and manufacturing related to pharmaceuticals and textiles)**.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/KEA anticipates supporting multiple four-year awards of approximately $3-4 million over the life of each award. USAID reserves the right to award more or fewer awards than this estimate and is not obligated to make any awards.

Unless otherwise stated herein, all terms and conditions of the HELIX APS apply (https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=326056).

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APS	Annual Program Statement
CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HELIX	Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation, and Exchange
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
KEA	Kenya and East Africa
K-YES	Kenya Youth Employment and Skills
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NPI	New Partners Initiative
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVETA	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
YALI	Young African Leaders Initiative

SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is issuing this Addendum pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. Any potential resulting award(s) will be subject to 2 CFR 700 and 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards and USAID's Standard Provisions for U.S /Non-U. S Based Nongovernmental Organizations per ADS 303.

A.1 Background

Youth Unemployment in Kenya

The 2019 Kenya Youth Development Policy[1] acknowledges that youth, defined by the Kenyan constitution as individuals ages 18-34, are essential to the country's development and realization of the Big Four Agenda, Vision 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Yet, youth are the hardest hit by joblessness compared to their counterparts above age 35. During the second quarter of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic eliminated countless jobs and opportunities, youth unemployment stood at 17 percent compared to total unemployment at 10.4 percent.[2] For young people who are employed, most tend to be engaged in the vulnerable and low-paying informal *jua kali*[3] sector in urban areas, while those in rural areas are often underemployed, particularly in the subsistence agriculture sector. Of the 750,000 youth entering the Kenyan labor market each year, only 16 percent succeed in acquiring formal employment.[4]

While Kenya has significantly increased access to and improved the quality of basic education, the same progress is not evident in technical training and tertiary education. For many youth, university is cost prohibitive and out of reach. These youth are instead increasingly seeking practical training opportunities that will boost their chances of securing employment. Data from the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service indicate that more than 2,630 students who scored university entrance grades in 2019 opted out of university degree programs in favor of less expensive polytechnic diploma programs.[5]

Further, the period between 2016-2020 saw a 130 percent increase in the number of youth enrolled in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions.[6] Recognizing this trend, the government of Kenya has made TVETs more accessible to youth by providing bursaries and loans, as well as a reduction in academic fees.

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1 Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender State Department for Youth. Kenya Youth Development Policy. 2019.

2 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Quarterly Labour Force Report: Quarter 3. November 2020.

3 Swahili for "hot sun"; *jua kali* is a term used to describe the informal sector.

4 UNDP. Kenya National Human Development Report. Youth and Human Development: Tapping the Untapped Resource. 2010.

5 Tanui, Carolyne. "Over 2,000 Students with University Entry Grades opt for TVET Courses - KUCCPS." Capital News. June 2, 2020.

6 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. 2021 Kenya Economic Survey. 2021.

With an increasing number of secondary school graduates, the economy depends on the expansion of tertiary education, particularly within the TVET subsector, to put Kenyan youth to work and propel the country toward achieving its development goals.

Emerging Sectors for Youth Employment

The pandemic led to a global shift in how business is conducted and this has allowed some sectors to recover more quickly than others. The accelerated digitization of services and increased demand for connectivity, for example, has contributed to the strong performance of the Kenyan ICT sector. Kenya is at the forefront of technological innovation and is often referred to as the *Silicon Savannah*. Its ICT sector has outperformed all other sectors, expanding by over 10.8 percent annually since 2016.[7] The sector has proven to be more resilient than other sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic which accelerated digitalization and increased demand for connectivity and online services. Fast and reliable connections have become vital across all sectors and the Kenyan government has committed 3.5 billion Kenyan shillings in its 2021 national budget[8] to rehabilitate and install ICT infrastructure.

The development of large-scale ICT infrastructure is recognized as critical for the country's economic progress. The sector is identified as a key foundation under Vision 2030 and an enabler of the Big 4 Agenda by enhancing productivity and service delivery in agriculture, healthcare, and manufacturing. The Kenyan economy is moving toward a greater share of ICT output and employment and the sector is viewed as critical for its spillover effects into other sectors such as financial services, e-commerce, and trade.

Other high growth areas include, but are not limited to, the manufacturing sector, especially in the pharmaceutical and textile/apparel sub-sectors. For example, Kenya's cotton, textile, and apparel exports to the U.S. have increased from $8.6 million in 2000 to $453 million in 2019. Similarly, Kenya has the fastest growing pharmaceutical market in Africa and the country is the third largest exporter of pharmaceuticals on the continent. These sectors have tremendous growth potential but are hampered by an unskilled labor force.

As the U.S. Government ramps up business ties with Kenya through economic initiatives such as Prosper Africa, Kenyan youth will need to develop relevant technical skills, learn to problem solve, gain positive workplace behavior, and be challenged to innovate and lead in order to take advantage of these new economic opportunities, particularly those that are emerging in priority sectors.

[7] World Bank. Kenya Economic Update. Securing Future Growth: Policies to Support Kenya's Digital Transformation. October 2019.

[8] Government of Kenya. Programme Based Budget of the National Government of Kenya. June 2021.

Rethinking TVET

While economic opportunities are growing in Kenya, the World Economic Forum[9] identified insufficient capacity to innovate, a poor work ethic, and an inadequately educated workforce as some of the most challenging factors for doing business in the country. TVET curriculum has traditionally focused on measuring proficiency rather than practical knowledge and does not support immediate employment. Kenyan employers similarly reported[10] that the skills job seekers gained through education and training did not match their hiring needs. Employers cited that TVET graduates often lacked key soft skills and the poor quality of TVET institutions and trainers was a key barrier to skills acquisition. ICT employers in particular cite low numbers of Kenyan job seekers with specific skills in cabling and hardware and software to help Kenya achieve last mile connectivity. Employers have indicated a need to invest a further 6-12 months of training for employees recruited from TVETs because their skill levels are too low.[11] The Kenyan ICT Authority has responded to this demand by developing skills programs such as the Presidential Digital Talent Program and partnering with the private sector to develop skills training programs to better meet the needs of ICT employers.

Past USAID investments such as the partnership with Generation Kenya have taken a demand-driven approach by partnering with the private sector to develop training programs targeted to employer needs. USAID envisions a similar approach with Employment Pathways for Youth through direct engagement with TVETs. Establishing a new relationship dynamic between TVETs and employers will be critical. TVETs must be responsive to evolving market demands and closely collaborate with employers in priority sectors to continuously revise and refine training and work readiness programs.

Closer TVET engagement with employers is also necessary for the development of internship and apprenticeship programs and mentorship opportunities to help youth gain work-based experience that will enhance their competitiveness for future employment.

Distance Learning

The Kenyan HEI system still operates on a traditional structure that has not adequately adapted to an increasingly digital world. This greatly hampered the education sector during the nine-month nationwide school closure in 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing that Kenya needs a flexible and resilient education system, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) recently established standards and guidelines for the implementation of open learning, distance learning, and e-learning. The development of these

[9] World Economic Forum. Global Competitiveness Special Report 2020: How Countries are Performing on the Road to Recovery.

[10] Awiti, Alex, et al. Whole Youth Development in Kenya: Survey of Employers and Employees in the Formal and Informal Sectors to Determine Entry-Level Skills Among Youth (18-30 yrs.) in Employment Kenya. Aga Khan University. October 2019.

[11] Ngure, Susan. An Empirical Evaluation of Technical, Vocational, Education and Training Processes in Kenya. 2015.

standards demonstrates the government's interest and commitment to increase and sustain access to education for all learners.

Distance learning is a broad spectrum that includes multiple formats and levels of engagement between instructors and learners. This can range from synchronous learning where instructors and learners are together online, to asynchronous models where learners independently access relevant content both on- and offline such as through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), videos, mobile phones, radio, etc. Distance learning can also combine both face-to-face classroom activities with online learning. This blended learning approach increases the engagement of all types of learners including those who learn better in a structured classroom environment and those who desire semi-autonomous computer-based training.[12]

U.S. Community Colleges

Community colleges in the United States are public higher education institutions that offer an alternative pathway to credentials and employment. Most community colleges offer two-year programs resulting in technical/associate degrees or certificates. Community colleges offer a recognized alternative pathway which not only provides options for university overflow enrollment, but also a second chance for non-traditional students to access higher education or learn skills necessary to begin new careers. At community colleges, students often can learn and earn credentials at a pace and manner that works for them. This includes blended and fully online certificate and degree programs. The flexibility in skills-based training is an advantage that the community college model provides.

U.S. community colleges can serve as a model for TVETs in Kenya. By partnering with and adopting aspects of the U.S. community college model, such as a distance learning approach, Employment Pathways for Youth will provide opportunities for Kenyan youth to develop industry-aligned skills that will ensure more stable employment.

Policies and Guiding Documents

Guiding documents that may be helpful in developing Concept Notes include:

- USAID/KEA Country Development Cooperation Strategy
- USAID Digital Ecosystem Country Assessment: Kenya 2020
- USAID Higher Education Program Framework
- USAID Positive Youth Development Framework
- Government of Kenya National Education Sector Strategic Plan
- Government of Kenya National TVET Standards Report 2020
- Government of Kenya National ICT Policy 2016

[12] USAID. Evidence Summary: What Works in Online Learning in Higher Education

A.2 Purpose

Employment Pathways for Youth will establish, at minimum, a partnership between a U.S. community college, a Kenyan HEI, and a private sector employer that will result in ***high quality, industry-endorsed training directly connected to employment opportunities in high priority sectors to be identified through co-creation with USAID***. As a result, Employment Pathways for Youth will serve as a replicable model for employment pathways in other high-growth sectors over time. To accomplish this, Employment Pathways for Youth will (1) strengthen TVET institutions in industry-aligned training; (2) establish pathways to employment; and (3) develop youth leadership and soft skills for workforce readiness.

USAID anticipates collaborating through a U.S. community college and Kenyan HEI partnership to co-create a program that provides a clear, proven pathway to sustainable youth employment in priority sectors. USAID encourages Applicants to build upon and leverage the work of relevant current and past USAID-funded youth and workforce development activities such as Generation, K-YES, USAID Empowered Youth and the Young African Leaders Initiative's (YALI) regional learning center in Nairobi. *Applicants should succinctly describe how they propose to leverage these opportunities to achieve the stated objectives.*

Concept Notes should propose expected outcomes for each objective and Applicants should describe how each objective can be sustained beyond USAID support.

Objective 1: Strengthen TVET Training

Effective youth workforce development requires strong TVET institutions that are responsive to the labor market. Applicants should describe their proposed approach to leverage the U.S. community college model to establish locally relevant, flexible, cost-effective training programs, accompanying instructional materials, and improved pedagogical approaches that are tailored to the evolving needs of employers in the proposed sectors. New or updated curricula should include 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and communication. In developing or revising training content, Applicants should consider different learning styles and propose approaches that provide opportunities for faculty/instructors to learn new pedagogical approaches that will enhance the learning experience for students.

Distance Learning Pilot

Within the context described above, Employment Pathways for Youth should also pilot and test distance learning models that can be replicated during the activity implementation period. Applicants should propose how best to support working partnerships between U.S. community colleges and Kenyan HEIs in their approach to develop this pilot that will enhance both student training and institutional capacity. The pilot distance learning model should be based on universal design for learning[13] principles that take into account the

[13] CAST: http://udloncampus.cast.org/home

needs of all learners on three overarching principles: representation, action and expression, and engagement and interaction. Distance learning could include blended learning or fully remote options. It should include ways to help students access training remotely. Such a model, if proven to be effective, will help Kenyan TVETs be more resilient to unexpected shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic while simultaneously enabling TVET access to a greater number of youth. Employment Pathways for Youth should build TVET instructor capacity to design and deliver online training to diverse populations including students with disabilities.

When designing both the classroom and distance learning approaches, Applicants should recognize that shorter courses and pathways to skills certification and employment that offer maximized flexibility are more desirable to learners. USAID is interested in concept notes that propose opportunities that allow for stacking modular shorter-term training and credentials gained over time towards higher level certification (i.e., short-term trainings that, when combined, equate to a certificate; multiple certificates that equate to a diploma; multiple diplomas that equate to a degree). Applicants should also consider the capabilities of TVET instructors to teach with these new modalities and propose appropriate capacity building to ensure optimum effectiveness.

Applicants should note USAID's emphasis on directly aligning training to employer needs. Applicants should describe how Employment Pathways for Youth will engage with employers to identify employment skills needs and realign curricula, pedagogical approaches, learning methods, and assessments and certifications to those needs and better provide youth with viable pathways to employment. Applicants should also describe their proposed sectors and provide evidence demonstrating the capacity of those sectors to absorb youth employment. Applicants should note, however, that final identification of sectors will be determined during co-creation.

Applicants should consider how Kenyan HEI faculty knowledge, skills, and certifications will be upgraded through a cascaded approach. U.S. and Kenyan HEI partnerships could also foster virtual faculty exchanges, joint research, mentoring, and coaching with the aim to improve pedagogical approaches and strengthen faculty leadership capacity. USAID's YALI program can be leveraged to strengthen the capacity of TVET instructors. The YALI leadership curriculum focuses on design thinking as a problem-solving approach that facilitates different ideas within a team which is essential for employment and for civic engagement. Research indicates that leadership development for TVET instructors increases their capacity to adopt and influence curriculum reforms, engage with stakeholders in advancing the goals of training, and to transfer those qualities and skills to their students. Applicants are encouraged to utilize the YALI leadership curriculum to enhance their approach to training TVET instructors and other faculty.

This activity is an opportunity for a strong sector approach to employment skills training and improving the capacity of Kenyan HEIs. USAID expects that Employment Pathways for Youth will collaborate with USAID Empowered Youth and other activities and partners identified by USAID to support learning and the exchange of information and best practices. Through Empowered Youth, HELIX funding can be leveraged for research conducted by Kenyan HEIs together with youth (with technical assistance and capacity building support from U.S. HEIs) to test the effectiveness of the U.S. community college model in building the TVET ecosystem in Kenya. Similarly, joint research with Empowered Youth can also test the effectiveness of the distance learning models.

Minimum desired outcomes:

- Increased number of industry-aligned training programs developed in collaboration with the private sector.
- Self-sustaining partnerships established between and among U.S. and Kenyan higher education institutions to strengthen industry-aligned workforce development.
- Quality of TVET instruction improved through faculty professional development.

Objective 2: Establish Pathways to Sustainable Employment

To be effective, any proposed approach to establishing pathways to sustainable employment must be holistic. This means skills training (as described in Objective 1) should be coupled with appropriate career guidance, mentoring, and on-the-job experience that will lead to job placement in the priority sector(s).

Career guidance helps youth acquire the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions about opportunities as well as alternatives that will lead to economic stability. Career guidance better prepares youth by building awareness about workplace complexities; strengthening employer relations and interpersonal communication; increasing self-esteem and motivation; and improving employment marketability. Concept notes should outline a career guidance program that is developed in close coordination with Kenyan and U.S. HEIs that can be tested, scaled, and replicated. USAID is interested in understanding how the capacity of career guidance counselors will be built.

Applicants should describe how they will identify private sector partners and pinpoint training needs which will inform the development or revision of training content and instruction with the relevant TVETs as described above in Objective 1. Applicants should describe how these private sector partners will support pathways to employment, such as through attachments and internships that lead to full time employment.

While the female participation rate in TVET institutions is about 43 percent, the national employment rate for women is only 13.8 percent.[14] Concept notes should consider how to effectively increase pathways to employment for young women.

[14] Kenya National Bureau of Statistics: Kenya Economic Survey. 2021.

Entrepreneurship is a viable alternative pathway to employment and concept notes should propose a strategy to support entrepreneurship among youth who have received skills training, such as additional, short-term, stackable training in entrepreneurship. In describing their entrepreneurship development model, USAID encourages applicants to build on existing leadership and entrepreneurship models in Kenya. USAID also encourages Applicants to consider opportunities for mentoring or connecting youth to social-economic support and financial services.

Concept notes should describe how youth will be identified, matched for skills training, and supported through the entire employment pathway continuum.

Minimum desired outcomes:

- Increased number of youth who have completed USAID funded workforce development training.
- Increased internship opportunities for youth in the priority sectors.
- Increased number of individuals who participated in USG-assisted workforce development programs employed in fields related to their training.
- Increased number of individuals with new employment following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs.
- Increased number of individuals with improved perceived quality of employment following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs.

Objective 3: Develop Youth Leadership and Soft Skills for Work Readiness

Youth leadership should be viewed as a critical element of any workforce development program. Strong leadership skills greatly contribute to the positive development of young people, especially as they transition from learning to employment. As youth prepare to enter the workforce, they must learn to communicate effectively and build relationships which will help them navigate workplace complexities or work in team settings. Other leadership skills such as goal setting, problem-solving, and sound decision-making contribute to higher career aspirations and increase self-esteem. USAID encourages applicants to consider effective youth leadership programs at U.S. community colleges that can serve as replicable models that are relevant to the Kenyan context. In proposing their youth development approach, Applicants should understand the aim is to strengthen the soft skills necessary to prepare trainees for their professional and civic responsibilities in a real-world context.

USAID supports the development of youth leadership through many programs including YALI which trains young African leaders in civic leadership, public management, and business and entrepreneurship. Alumni from the East Africa YALI program operate a robust alumni network in Kenya which can be leveraged to provide leadership training and capacity building to youth.

These alumni can serve as mentors or coaches and support youth in civic engagement and other community development activities.

Concept notes should also explore how to establish an alumni network that would enable training graduates and alumni of Employment Pathways for Youth to utilize their leadership training to mentor younger cohorts on their pathway to employment.

Minimum desired outcomes:

- Increased number of youth accessing leadership training and mentorship.
- Increased number of young leaders building the capacity of other young leaders.
- Enhanced youth peer-to-peer engagement and support.
- Improved soft skills among youth.
- Improved knowledge and attitudes in leadership among youth.

A.3 Programmatic and Geographic Focus

Programmatic Focus

USAID/KEA anticipates that ultimately Employment Pathways for Youth will contribute to USAID's objectives through successful achievement of the following outcomes and focal areas as leverage points in higher education programming:

- **Increase Capability, Contributions, and Quality of *Individuals***: Individuals, whether faculty, researchers, staff, students, recent graduates, or others, play important roles in locally led development. As individuals who are within the local system, Kenyan citizens are best placed to elevate solutions that can lead to sustained development gains. When equipped with necessary skills and resources, these individuals have the ability to act as catalysts for change within the institutions and systems that they are a part of, and can bring important connections, unique experiences, and a high degree of expertise to the work that they do.

- **Enhance Sustainable and Self-Reliant *Institutions* of Higher Education**: USAID's sustainability approach is based on the premise of locally led development. By partnering with and placing increasing ownership and responsibility on local partners, USAID aims to put Kenya on an accelerated path toward self-reliance. Strategically, Employment Pathways for Youth outcomes will be best achieved by building local ownership and fostering partnerships across organizations and sectors, especially higher education institutions, within the Kenyan context. While this funding opportunity is open to any higher education institution, USAID/KEA strongly encourages local Kenyan higher education institutions to apply.

- **Strengthen Higher Education *Systems* to Ensure Long-lasting Impact**: Higher Education systems achieve sustainable outcomes through partnerships and leveraging of resources. Strategically, Employment Pathways for Youth outcomes will be best achieved by building local ownership and fostering partnerships across organizations and sectors. **All USAID/KEA activities are required to collaborate closely with county governments on the development of annual work plans including annual budgets and joint tracking and monitoring of performance indicators.** Concept notes for Employment Pathways for Youth should propose implementation approaches that not only support meaningful engagement with county governments, but also with TVET institutions, youth, and employers based in the targeted counties. It is equally important to have an enabling environment (including, but not limited to policy, private sector, innovation environment, etc.) primed for integrating promising findings and solutions into the appropriate channels for successful uptake and sustainability. Whenever possible, USAID seeks to build individual, institutional, and systems capacity within higher education systems to reduce barriers and maximize opportunities to promote evidence-based decision making and uptake.

- **Advance the Higher Education Evidence Base for *Learning***: It is anticipated that Employment Pathways for Youth activities will contribute towards larger learning and building the evidence base concerning the role of higher education systems in achieving development objectives and the role of higher education as a central actor in development, regardless of sector, in support of USAID's Higher Education Learning Agenda, as well as specific learning priorities identified in Addendum. The proposed monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) approach should include internal, activity-level programmatic evaluation(s) to inform learning and decision-making related to Employment Pathways for Youth. Applicants should note that while USAID expects robust learning, third-party external evaluations are not required. Further, concept notes should propose a collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) approach to test the distance learning pilot. USAID is interested in understanding how effective the different distance learning modules are, and how they can be scaled and replicated.

Employment Pathways for Youth will be expected to collaborate with other relevant USAID-funded activities including Empowered Youth, Kenya Investment Mechanism, the Small Business Development Centers and any other activities identified by USAID post-award.

Geographic Focus
USAID/KEA's 2020-2025 Country Development Cooperation Strategy prioritizes integrated engagement with 25 core counties where USAID has MOUs with the county government and where the bulk of USAID resources will be programmed. Within this geographic priority, USAID envisions maximizing HELIX investments by using a facilitative approach that will emphasize two priority counties for in-depth technical assistance, coordination between stakeholders, and partnerships with private sector employers. These priority counties will serve as regional hubs to support other neighboring counties in the region with mentoring, tools, and sharing of lessons learned. This established network of counties will allow Employment Pathways for Youth to develop and share promising practices and policies and scaling proven concepts.

While it is expected that Kisii and Makueni will serve as the two regional hub counties, final county selection will be determined by USAID based on programmatic priorities and may include other counties not identified here. Each concept note should only cover one of the two hub counties and its related neighboring counties. Concept notes should not cover both hub counties.

- Kisii (Bomet, Nyamira, Migori)

- Makueni (Machakos, Kilifi)

Kisii and Makueni are part of a group of eight Prosper Africa counties. The other six counties (Isiolo, Mombasa, Kakamega, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Kiambu) are supported by the complimentary USAID Empowered Youth activity.

Applicants should note that key personnel will be expected to be based in the two priority counties.

Guiding Principles
The implementation approach of Employment Pathways for Youth will adhere to the guiding principles elaborated below. Every activity under Employment Pathways for Youth should strive to contribute toward the empowerment and employment of youth.

- All Employment Pathways for Youth activities must embed an **evidence-based** approach as defined in ADS Chapter 201.

- Through **private sector engagement**, Employment Pathways for Youth and employers will co-design and co-create industry-aligned training. Employment Pathways for Youth will also establish partnerships to support internships, apprenticeships, and mentorship for employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

- **Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting** (CLA) will be embedded throughout implementation with continuous co-creation engagement between youth, HEIs, government, and the private sector being central to regularly and systematically monitoring, tracking, achieving, and reporting on expected outcomes. Employment Pathways for Youth will drive an implementation strategy that is industry-driven, innovative, and adaptive.

- Employment Pathways for Youth will support **positive youth development** and emphasize youth ownership of their own professional development and economic prosperity.

- To support greater equity and inclusion in TVET training, Employment Pathways for Youth will adhere to **Universal Design for Learning** principles by providing flexible learning environments for all learners.

- Female participation in the Kenyan labor market has lagged behind males. Employment Pathways for Youth should consider approaches that reduce gender-related barriers to training and employment opportunities. **Gender equity** should be reflected in the youth and instructors targeted for training as well as the youth placed in employment opportunities.

- Employment Pathways for Youth implementation approaches and Applicants' proposed organizational management structure will support **diversity, equity, and inclusion**.

A.4 What is the Process?

USAID has outlined the process through which potential Applicants may apply under each potential Addendum of the HELIX APS in Section D of the APS and under Section D of this Addendum.

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Issuance of this Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor do those commit the U.S. Government to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of questions, comments, suggestions, Concept Notes, and/or Full Application. Applicants submit Concept Notes/Applications at their own risk, and all preparation and submission costs are at their own expense.

B.1 Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID/KEA anticipates awarding multiple awards of up to approximately $3-4 million each under this Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum to the HELIX APS. The actual number of assistance awards, if any, under this Addendum is subject to the availability of funds and the interests and requirements of USAID/KEA, as well as the viability of eventual Applications received.

B.2 Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Award

USAID/KEA anticipates Employment Pathways for Youth to have a period of performance of four years. The estimated start date will be upon signing of the award, on or about October 31, 2022.

B.3 Type of Instrument

Assistance Awards that result from this Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum may take the form of a cooperative agreement.

USAID anticipates a close working partnership and substantial involvement based on programmatic requirements under this assistance award during performance of the Activity. The specific areas of USAID substantial involvement will include, but not limited to, approval of the Recipient's implementation plans, review and approval of substantive provisions of proposed subawards or contracts, involvement in the selection of key recipient personnel, approval of monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plans, as well as Agency and Recipient collaboration or joint participation, other activities as determined, based on the selected Program, and negotiated with the Recipient prior to award.

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

For this award, USAID defines "Implementing Partners" as U.S. and non-U.S. non-governmental organizations that can design and implement assistance activities outside the United States. All Implementing Partners must be legally registered entities under applicable law and eligible under the relevant laws to receive funding from a foreign source. Individuals, unregistered, or informal organizations are not eligible to be Implementing Partners. NPI provides further details on eligibility, depending on the approach to partnership. Implementing Partners must also have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and maintain current registration in www.sam.gov to be eligible to receive United States Government (USG) funding.

Eligibility for the USAID/KEA's Employment Pathways for Youth is limited to a higher education institution as the primary Applicant ("Prime"); however, Concept Notes must include at minimum a partnership between at least one U.S. community college; at least one Kenyan higher education institution which can include TVETs, colleges, and/or universities; and at least one private sector employer partner. Applicants may propose additional partners as appropriate.

While this funding opportunity is open to any higher education institution, USAID/KEA strongly encourages local Kenyan higher education institutions to apply, especially those institutions that have a deep understanding of the capacity needs of Kenyan TVETs as well as county-level youth workforce development and emerging employment opportunities in high-growth sectors. USAID also strongly encourages that the U.S. HEI partner comes from the U.S. community college system. Concept notes must meet at least one of the NPI modalities listed in Section III of the HELIX APS.

All eligible interested organizations are restricted to submitting only one Concept Note as the Prime Applicant. If more than one Concept Note is received with the same Prime Applicant, USAID will seek written clarification from the relevant entity regarding which Concept Note should be considered for review. If clarification is not resolved within five (5) business days, all Concept Notes submitted by the Applicant will be deemed ineligible.

Note: Please note that Applicants can serve as sub-awardees or supporting partners on multiple Concept Notes under an Addendum.

Please refer to the HELIX APS for additional information on eligibility requirements, including NPI requirements, for Addendum under the APS.

C.2 Cost Share

USAID expects Employment Pathways for Youth to leverage private sector and/or community resources. In addition, applicants are required to propose at least $300,000-$400,000 (or ten percent of the award, whichever is greater) in cost share as part of their application in order to foster ownership and improve sustainability. Applicants should briefly describe what this contribution is and its value. USAID also supports collaboration with other donors and multi-laterals, both local and international, to avoid duplication of effort and allow for more efficient, catalytic, and effective programming. Applicants are encouraged to think holistically about sustainability, and concept notes should describe how the objectives of Employment Pathways for Youth will be sustained beyond USAID funding.

Applications that do not meet the minimum cost share requirement are not eligible for award consideration.

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1 Agency Points of Contact

Questions regarding this addendum must be submitted electronically via e-mail to Sandra Asiedu, Agreement Officer at sasiedu@usaid.gov **with a copy to** Caroline Munene at cmunene@usaid.gov no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. All questions submitted by email must have the Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum number **72061522APS00002** included in the email subject line.

The USAID/KEA will furnish promptly to all prospective Applicants, as an amendment to this Addendum, any information concerning this Addendum given to a particular prospective Applicant, if that information is necessary in submitting Applications, or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicant.

If an award is made, the Agreement Officer (AO) will appoint an Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) at that time to provide technical and administrative oversight of the specific award during implementation.

D.2 Content and Format of Application Submission

Applicants are advised to refer to both the HELIX APS and Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum in preparing Concept Notes and Full Applications as applicable. The application process for this Addendum includes the following sequential phases:

1. Concept Note submission
2. Review of Concept Notes by USAID/KEA
3. Co-creation phase with selected Applicant(s), by invitation only
4. Invitation for submission of a Full Application

USAID/KEA will be responsible for the review of Concept Notes and Full Application and management of a subsequent award(s) issued under this Addendum.

D.3 Concept Note Submission

A Concept Note is a short document, not to exceed five (5) pages, in which the Applicant provides an overview of the proposed idea. All Concept Notes must be prepared and submitted in English using the provided Concept Note Template (see Attachment A of the Addendum) on www.grants.gov.

The main body of the Concept Notes must be five (5) pages or less, single-spaced with 12-point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins on the electronic equivalent of 8.5 x 11-inch paper with page numbers in the bottom right-hand corner.

The Concept Note must also be accompanied by a 1-page notional summary budget, using the provided Budget Template (See Attachment B of the Addendum on www.grants.gov) and a budget narrative in a Word document, not to exceed 3 pages (total of 4 pages).

Applicants should only provide the information and materials requested in this Addendum and the Concept Note Template; additional information will not be read and may adversely affect the Applicant's review.

After a Concept Note is received, USAID reserves the right to request supplementary information or pose questions to any Applicant. Requesting supplementary information or posing questions to one Applicant does not obligate USAID to do so with all Applicants nor does it guarantee an invitation to participate in subsequent co-creation or to submit a Full Application.

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 Review of Concept Note

Concept Notes will be reviewed according to the Merit Review Criteria. Concept Notes that do not meet at least one of the NPI modalities specified in Section C of the HELIX APS will not be evaluated. Concept Notes that do not adhere to formatting guidelines will be considered ineligible and not be evaluated.

Following review of all Concept Notes, Applicants will receive one of three possible determinations:

1. Concept Note(s) is selected to move on to the co-creation phase with USAID/KEA;
2. Applicant is requested to submit a revised Concept Note (this is very rare); OR
3. Concept Note(s) is unsuccessful, and USAID/KEA will not pursue further collaboration with the Applicant under this Addendum.

E.2 Co-creation

USAID/KEA anticipates inviting Applicant(s) whose Concept Notes best address the stated objectives to participate in co-creation. The co-creation process is an integral part of this procurement process to develop the most effective, holistic approach across to achieve program objectives. The HELIX APS provides details on co-creation, shared responsibility, collaboration, and communication that applies to Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum. USAID/KEA will determine the duration and format of the co-creation process. Co-creation may be with one or multiple Applicants.

During co-creation, USAID/KEA and Applicant(s) will collaborate to identify and fine-tune new solutions and approaches that address the stated objectives of Employment Pathways for Youth. During this phase, USAID will identify its priority employment sectors and make a determination on the target counties for implementation. Following co-creation, Applicant(s) will be invited to submit full applications for review.

Applicants are advised that participation in the co-creation process is entirely at their own risk. The U.S. Government is not responsible for any costs incurred by the Applicant before an award agreement is signed. An invitation to participate in co-creation with USAID should not be interpreted as a commitment to making an award of USAID funding.

E.3 Full Application Submission

Following co-creation, Applicant(s) may be invited to submit Full Applications. The Full Application will expand upon the Concept Note to provide extensive details about the planned projects and activities, incorporating any ideas, adjustments, feedback, etc. that arose during co-creation. Additional information regarding the Full Application will be provided at the time of its request including guidance for a detailed budget submission.

A request for Full Application via a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) should not be interpreted as a commitment to funding or guaranteed issuance of an award.

If a Full Application is successful and an award is issued, the Agreement Officer (AO) will appoint an Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) at that time to provide technical and administrative oversight of the specific award for the entirety of its period of performance.

E.4 Merit Review Criteria and Considerations

Concept Notes meeting the minimum requirements will be evaluated according to the following merit review criteria on an adjectival system *(Very Good, Satisfactory, and Marginal)*. The criteria below are described based on weight of importance as follows: Most Important, Very Important, and Important.

Criterion 1: Alignment with USAID and USAID/KEA Strategic Objectives and Programming Priorities: Extent to which the proposed partnerships, projects, or activities align with USAID policies and strategies, as relevant to the Addendum opportunity, including but not limited to: the Education Policy, Youth Policy, Policy Framework, Scientific Research Policy, and the Indigenous Peoples, Disability, and Gender and Women's Empowerment Policies; **USAID/KEA Country Development Cooperation Strategy**; other collaborating Bureau or Independent Office Mission(s) and strategic objectives; and partner country strategies, policies, and/or objectives. **(Important)**

Criterion 2: Quality and Capabilities of Strategic Partnership Approach and Collaboration for Local Capacity Development of Individuals, Institutions, and/or Systems: Extent to which the proposed partnerships, projects, or activities describe a commitment to equitable collaboration and deep partnership between U.S. and host-country partners at every stage of the concept development, activity design, and implementation (including, but not limited to, sub-awards to local entities and/or locally established partners); propose appropriate, inclusive, equitable, and effective collaborations with local individuals, institutions, systems, including marginalized groups as defined by the reference to ADS 201 Additional Help (ADS 201saj); and demonstrate partner commitment to proposed collaboration(s), including a brief synopsis of how each partner will engage within the partnership. **(Most Important)**

Criterion 3: Quality, Feasibility, and Sustainability of Proposed Solutions and Impact at Individual, Institutional and/or System-Level: Extent to which the proposed technical solution(s) to achieving objectives/outcomes are technically sound, well-defined, and achievable; likelihood that proposed partnerships, projects, or activities will result in substantially enhanced capacity for individuals, institutions, and/or systems or build the evidence base for higher education and other related systems as relevant to the Addendum; and best practices for data, evidence, and learning are integrated into the proposed approach, including, where possible, the generation of evidence to support adaptive implementation and Agency-wide learning. **(Most Important)**

Criterion 4: Equity and Inclusion: Extent to which proposed technical solution demonstrates a clear strategy/vision to create improved outcomes using an intersectional lens to prioritize equity, along the equity dimensions most relevant to the context, and extent to which a diversity of groups, especially marginalized and underrepresented populations[15], are actively invited to contribute and participate at every stage of the concept development, activity design, and implementation. **(Important)**

NOTE: At a minimum, Concept Note/Applications should demonstrate considerations for persons with disabilities who comprise at least 15 percent of any given population, gender equality and women's empowerment, and crisis or conflict-sensitivity[16]. Illustrative indicators reporting on numbers of beneficiaries reached must report on sex disaggregates and should also include disaggregates to track inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented populations in all contexts. Specific indicators focused on equity and inclusion are encouraged.

Criterion 5: Collaboration, Learning, and Adaptation (CLA) and Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL): Extent to which Concept Note outlines an effective MEL approach that tracks and monitors the capacity building of TVET institutions in relevant, industry-aligned training; establishment of pathways to sustainable employment; and development of youth leadership for work readiness; appropriately considers opportunities to scale; provides for programmatic learning opportunities and recalibration; and proposes illustrative outcomes and targets. **(Very Important)**

NOTE: At a minimum, Concept Notes should include illustrative indicators used to track progress, quality, targets, and impact (custom or standard F indicators as applicable), note any technical frameworks that should shape the approach to monitoring, evaluation, or learning, and include at least one illustrative learning priority. At the full application stage, additional guidance will be provided. The Education Reporting Toolkit may be a helpful resource.

Proposed concepts must be consistent with USAID legal and policy restrictions, including those set forth in USAID's Automated Directives System and in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

While merit criteria are paramount, cost considerations may also be a factor for award. The U.S. Government is not obligated to make an award on the basis of lowest proposed cost or to the Applicant with the highest merit evaluation score.

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[15] The USAID Education Policy identifies marginalized populations as girls, people affected by or emerging from armed conflict or humanitarian crises, people with disabilities, people in remote or rural areas (including those who lack access to safe water and sanitation), religious or ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, orphans, and children affected by HIV/AIDS, child laborers, married adolescents, and victims of trafficking.

[16] The USAID Education Policy defines conflict sensitivity as the ability of an organization to 1) understand the context in which the organization operates; 2) understand the two-way interaction between its intervention and that context; and 3) act upon this understanding to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts on conflict.

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1 Federal Award Notices

The USAID Agreement Officer (AO) is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds. Applicants are prohibited from charging or incurring costs to the proposed award prior to receipt of either a fully executed award or a specific, written authorization from the AO. USAID will administer awards in accordance with Parts 700 and 200 of Title 2 of the CFR, and Standard Provisions for U.S./non-U.S. organizations.

F.2 Type of Award

USAID intends to award one (1) to two (2) Cooperative Agreement(s) pursuant to the Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide a total estimated award amount of $3,000,000.00 to $4,000,000.00 per award over a four (4) year period. The estimated start date will be upon the signature of the award, on or about October 31, 2022.

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the Concept Notes/Applications submitted under the Employment Pathways for Youth Addendum under the HELIX APS.

F.3 Additional Information on Award Administration

- ADS Chapter 201 Program Cycle Operational Policy
- ADS Chapter 204 Environmental Procedures
- ADS Chapter 205 Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle
- ADS Chapter 303 Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations
- ADS Chapter 303 Standard Provisions for U.S. organizations
- ADS Chapter 318 Intellectual Property Rights
- ADS Chapter 579 USAID Development Data
- Grant and Contract Process
- USAID Graphic Standards Manual and Partner Co-branding Guide

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

Sandra Asiedu
Agreement Officer
USAID Kenya and East Africa
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri
P.O. Box 629 Village Market 00621
Nairobi, Kenya
sasiedu@usaid.gov

Caroline Munene
Acquisition and Assistance Specialist
USAID Kenya and East Africa
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri
P.O. Box 629 Village Market 00621
Nairobi, Kenya
cmunene@usaid.gov

SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the Concept Notes/Full Applications submitted under this addendum to the HELIX APS.

[END OF APS No: 72061522APS00002]