



Issue Date: **March 16, 2023**
Pre-Application Conference: **March 23, 2023, 8:00 a.m., Indian Standard Time (IST)**
Deadline for Questions: **March 28, 2023, 11:55 p.m., Indian Standard Time (IST)**
Closing Date and Time: **April 25, 2023, 11:55 p.m., Indian Standard Time (IST)**

Subject: **AMENDMENT#01** Notice of Funding Opportunity #72038623RFA00003

Program Title: **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Children with Disabilities**

Federal Assistance Listing Number: 98.001

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications for a cooperative agreement from qualified entities to implement the **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Children with Disabilities Activity**. Eligibility for this award is not restricted, open to all eligible and qualified non-government entities. Therefore, USAID encourages the participation, to the maximum extent possible, of all U.S., local and international non-governmental organizations.

USAID intends to make an award to the applicant(s) who best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this NOFO subject to a risk assessment. Eligible parties interested in submitting an application are encouraged to **read this NOFO thoroughly** to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and selection process.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID anticipates making a single award as a result of this NOFO to the applicant who best satisfies the NOFO requirements. To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this NOFO. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity and to ensure that the NOFO has been received from the internet in its entirety. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

USAID/India will be hosting a virtual pre-application conference to provide potential applicants with a better understanding of the NOFO requirements. The conference will be held online on **March 23, 2023** from 8a.m. to 10a.m. IST. Participation is limited to only two persons per organization. USAID encourages all interested participants to attend. RSVP by **March 21, 2023, 4:00 a.m. IST** to Ms. Charushila Lal at clal@usaid.gov with a copy to indiarco@usaid.gov to obtain a link to attend the conference. The USAID attendance list is restricted and will not be shared.

USAID **may not** award an applicant unless the applicant has complied with **all** applicable unique entity identifiers and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in SECTION D. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, Applicants are encouraged to obtain them early to be eligible to apply for this NOFO.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section D by the deadline shown above. Responses to questions received by the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to www.grants.gov.

Issuance of this notice of funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of comments/suggestions or an application. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Sd/-

Cheryl Hodge-Snead
Agreement Officer

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SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This funding opportunity is authorized under the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. The resulting award will be subject to 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and USAID’s supplement, 2 CFR 700, as well as the additional requirements found in Section F.

FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

A.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to enrich and strengthen the mainstream public education ecosystem to support foundational learning outcomes for children with disabilities (henceforth referred to as CwD). While the corresponding age group for the learners in the foundational learning stage is 3-9 years, some learners with disabilities might be older and will be considered as a part of the main beneficiary group. Given the pervasive lack of data on persons with disabilities (even more so for women and girls with disabilities), including on learners with disabilities (henceforth referred to as LwD¹), the activity will work with and support the State Education Department and other key government agencies in the collection, and usage of relevant data to inform equitable delivery of program benefits².

A.2.2 Background and Context

The New Education Policy 2020³ of the Government of India (henceforth referred to as NEP) emphasizes on the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy skills. To provide particular focus and concerted effort, the Government of India’s (GoI) Ministry of Education has launched the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat Mission. NIPUN Bharat guidelines outline learning outcomes designed sequentially and progressively from preschool to grade III, aiming at holistic development and learning in the foundational age. USAID’s Education policy also emphasizes the criticality of foundational learning as an essential precursor to school completion with appropriate levels of knowledge, skills and positive attitude. USAID defines foundational skills as reading, math, and social and emotional learning⁴. In addition to foundational literacy and numeracy skills, gaining social and

¹ The dual terminology on children with disabilities and learners with disabilities is used intentionally and on purpose here. In the context of a whole child approach CwD is used while LwD is used when the focus is specifically on learning opportunities and outcomes.

² USAID defines inclusive education as an umbrella term that requires a profound cultural shift and positive gender norms shift at the early childhood, primary, secondary and post-secondary education levels in order to create an education system in support for all learners, especially for marginalized populations including girls with disabilities, indigenous populations, LGBTQI+, and other groups. For the purpose of this NOFO, the focus will be on disability inclusive education and should take an intersectional approach as disability intersects with other facets of identity.

³ https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

⁴ USAID (2019). Foundational Skills Development: Learning Agenda. Retrieved November 28, 2022 from: <https://www.globalreadingnetwork.net/sites/default/files/media/file/USAID%20FSD%20Learning%20Agenda.pdf>

emotional skills⁵ is a strong predictor of success in school and in life⁶. Moreover, the 2018 USAID Education Policy identifies social and emotional skills as a measurable learning outcome and contributor to the overall wellbeing of children.

India has made substantial gains in universalization of primary education. While the existing programs have brought many erstwhile excluded children to mainstream schools, serious gaps remain for girls, indigenous populations, and LGBTQI+ groups and most of all for children with disabilities. India has an estimated 7.8 million children and youth with disabilities⁷ under the age of 19. Three-fourths of the CwD are under five years of age, and one-fourth of those with disabilities between ages 5 and 19 years do not attend school. The proportion of CwD who are out of school is much higher than the overall proportion of out-of-school children at the national level.

A.2.3 Challenges

An analysis⁸ of recent evidence and literature suggests that India faces several challenges in providing age and developmentally appropriate education for foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) skills to CwD⁹. Some of the challenges are discussed below.

- a. **Early Identification and Intervention:** Early intervention is a strong contributor to meeting developmental (and learning) milestones for CwD. Under NEP the Anganwadi Centres are designated as preschool centers and are mandated to ensure early identification and intervention for delays and disabilities. Unfortunately, preschools and community health centers, which should support this task, are generally poorly equipped and lack trained personnel to support early identification of disabilities and delays.
- b. **Delay in school enrolment:** Parental lack of knowledge around, and non-acceptance of disabilities are also responsible for the delay in early interventions and school enrolment. These beliefs and attitudes often prevent parents from realizing their child's potential, resulting in little or no attempts to enroll their child in school. In 2018-19, only 29.47% of the schools across the country had LwD enrolled, with wide inter-state variation.¹⁰
- c. **Pedagogy:** One of the key reasons for the low participation of LwD in education is linked to the lack of appropriately trained preschool and schoolteachers and learning materials, as well as the misunderstanding that pedagogy must match types and levels of disabilities instead of individual ways of learning (which can vary among learners with the same

⁵ USAID defines social and emotional skills as a "set of cognitive, social, and emotional competencies that children, youth, and adults can learn that allows them to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions." (in Shivshanker; Resler; Kaler-Jones; Briceno; and Weisenhorn, How to Integrate Social and Emotional Learning in USAID Basic Education Programs. United States Agency for International Development, 2021, page 2. Retrieved November 2022 from: https://www.edu-links.org/sites/default/files/media/file/USAID_HowtoIntegrateSocialandEmotionalLearning_Final.pdf).

⁶ USAID (2019). USAID Education: Early Learning and Foundational Skills. Retrieved November 28, 2022 from: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/USAID_Education_EarlyLearning_FactSheet_Apr19.pdf

⁷ UNESCO. (2019). The State of Education in India 2019 (p.13). <https://en.unesco.org/news/n-nose-state-education-report-india-2019-children-disabilities>

⁸ Rapid Assessment of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Children with Disabilities, July 2022, USAID/India CLAIM

⁹ Rapid Assessment of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Children with Disabilities, July 2022, USAID/India CLAIM

¹⁰ NCPEDP. (2021). NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY: Opportunities & Challenges. New Delhi: National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPDP). Retrieved May 1, 2022, from https://ncpedp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/WHITE-PAPER_FINAL-1.pdf

type/level of disability). This is exacerbated by a lack of efforts towards building robust systems that cater to the diversity of learners' needs and a supportive legislation.

- d. **Inadequate staffing:** A cadre of Special Educators who travel around mainstream schools and communities are the cornerstone of inclusion in the present education system. Every state has reported a severe shortage of Special Educators. Recent data show that each special educator might support as many as 30 schools and manage substantial administrative work resulting in each LwD receiving a meager share of the teachers' time. Furthermore, their status is usually low as they are not affiliated with any school and are perceived as visiting teachers, functioning as temporary contracts with low pay grades.
- e. **Capacity Building:** The institutional support for human resource development in the disability sector is primarily based out of the country's eight national institutes and a few universities. Beside a few exceptions, there is a vast difference in the quality of knowledge, skills, and gender sensitivity among special educators trained by the National Institutes and Universities and those trained by civil society organizations.
- f. **Inaccessible School Infrastructure:** There is a severe lack of basic school infrastructure conducive to LwD at all levels of education in India. While the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment identifies accessibility parameters for schools, these are often neither appropriately understood nor followed. Additionally, the UDISE+ data captures only ramps, railings, and accessible toilets at schools, and while ramps and railings are usually found in many schools, the percentage of accessible toilets is deficient.
- g. **Governance:** Multiple agencies within central and state governments govern the education of LwD: the Ministry of Education leads inclusive education, while the Ministry of Social Justice/Welfare manages special schools. The National Human Rights Commission, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and the Chief Commissioner for Disability, as well as their state counterparts, are the three primary monitoring agencies for children and adults with disabilities. However, there are currently no clearly defined domains, goals or success indicators of the agencies mentioned above, and they have overlapping portfolios along with a lack of coordinating mechanism.
- h. **Lack of data:** A recent assessment commissioned by USAID/India¹¹ could not find data for FLN instruction for LwD. There is also no single national comprehensive portal related to data on persons with disabilities, including children, as multiple agencies capture the data for their specific domains without coordination. This is especially true for girls and women with disabilities who might experience layered discriminations. A few states, such as Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh, have developed data portals for capturing data across sectors related to persons with disabilities. However, these data portals only capture data for persons with disabilities who have received disability certificates. As the vast majority of persons with disabilities, including children have not received disability certificates, they do not appear in these databases and remain left out of any entitlements. There is also multiplicity and overlapping of data.

A.2.4 Theory of Change

USAID's illustrative theory of change for the activity holds that:

If the Government preschools and primary schools have the capacity to plan, implement and and

¹¹ Rapid Assessment of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Children with Disabilities, July 2022, USAID/India CLAIM

monitor equitable access and meaningful learning instruction aligned to a universal design of learning; and

if families and communities have improved awareness and positive attitude on disability inclusive education and the skills to support their CwD's access to foundational learning; and

if the relevant stakeholders including Government departments, civil society organizations (counting DPOs), private sector and communities can develop effective partnerships to support CwD

then

Foundational learning outcomes for all children, including children with disabilities will improve.

A.2.5 Objectives and illustrative outcomes

Goal: To enrich and strengthen the mainstream public education ecosystem to support foundational learning outcomes for children with disabilities.

Objective 1: Strengthen the Government's mainstream service delivery mechanism to ensure foundational learning outcomes for learners with disabilities.

It is critical to work closely with mainstream educational systems to make them inclusive and accessible to learners with disabilities as defined by the International Disability Alliance¹² to achieve the goal of equal societies. An inclusive, learner friendly school and classroom environment needs rethinking around curriculum, classroom practices, teacher preparation and systemic data collection and monitoring systems, along with analysis and localized research. There is also a need to massively expand and innovate around enabling technologies for learners with disabilities. Illustrative outcomes might include, but not limited to,

- Timely detection of delays and disabilities.
- Improved curriculum and teacher (including special teachers) practices to address and include diverse learning needs and abilities
- Robust data systems to feed into planning, resource allocation and implementation for inclusive preschools and schools
- Access to scalable and effective enabling technological aids and tools for children with disabilities

Objective 2: Identify, address and overcome attitudinal barriers and stereotypes towards children with disabilities in families and communities.

It is important to closely engage with families and communities towards a positive mindset and outlook for children with disabilities to facilitate inclusion in families, schools and communities. Families play a critical role in ensuring timely preschool and school enrolment as well as regular attendance for positive early learning gains. Illustrative outcomes might include, but not limited to,

- Improved family and community awareness and knowledge around school participation for their CwD

¹² [IDA Inclusive Education Report | International Disability Alliance](#)

- Strengthened family and community understanding on existing provisions and entitlements around RPWD (The Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and RtE (Right to Education) Acts as well as Government schemes around education, income and livelihoods programs especially for people and youth with disabilities.

Objective 3: Facilitate effective partnerships between relevant Government departments, civil society, the private sector and communities in support of children with disabilities.

Nurturing long term systemic partnerships that involve all stakeholders is critical to achieve the objective of inclusive schooling systems and sustain the progress made. There is a need for convergence between various schemes and implementation mechanisms adopted by various government and departments to provide sustained and seamless support to CwD and their families. Illustrative outcomes might include, but not limited to,

- Collaborative decision making, resource allocation and implementation mechanisms among representatives from state and district agencies for Health, Integrated Child Development Services, Education and Social Justice through inter and multisectoral coordination.
- Effective private sector engagement in terms of innovative ideas and tools especially enabling technology and financial contribution towards enabling access to foundational learning for LwD.

Managing activity priorities

The Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for LwD activity will approach all interventions using principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)¹³, based upon the premise that all children and youth learn differently and as a result, the activity needs to provide learners with pathways to

- (1) be engaged, motivated and to learn through multiple means
- (2) receive information in various ways
- (3) express their learning in multiple ways.

The application of UDL in the FLN activity may apply to areas including, but not limited to: teacher training, development of teaching and learning materials, designing and administering learning assessments.

While all objectives are important for the success of the activity, *not all objectives may be addressed to the same extent*. The decision on which interventions should be prioritized should be based on several considerations:

1. The quantity, quality, relevance, and conclusiveness of available evidence: interventions with India-specific, high quality, conclusive evidence may not need to be re-piloted but may benefit from implementation research and Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA).

¹³ Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. UDL's goal is to support learners to become "expert learners" who are purposeful and motivated, resourceful and knowledgeable, and strategic and goal driven. Instead of changing the learner, UDL aims to change the design of learning environments to reduce barriers so that all learners can engage in rigorous, meaningful learning. The UDL Guidelines provide a set of concrete suggestions that can be applied to any discipline or domain to ensure that all learners can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities.

2. Theory on causal linkages between (one or multiple) interventions and outputs and outcomes: While theory might suggest that some interventions contribute significantly to a particular outcome on their own, other interventions might only show efficacy bundled with other interventions with which they have mutually reinforcing interactions and synergies.

The applicant is encouraged to make evidence informed programming choices regarding the design, prioritization, and sequencing of the interventions to be implemented in targeted locations.

Activity structure

USAID estimates a total budget of up to \$15 million over five years, inclusive of a three-year base period and an option period of two years. The total funding of the base period (Phase 1) is \$10 million. The objective during Phase I would be to work closely with the relevant Government departments to implement and create evidence around a Foundational Learning Program for CwD. Emphasis during Phase I would be on adaptation of the program based on lessons learned during implementation and leveraging existing efforts of all the ecosystem actors including USAID, Government and civil society organizations towards developing an evidence based model on inclusion. Phase II will be initiated based on the program performance and Government's commitment and approval for Universalization of the inclusive model. It will also depend on availability of funds, financial terms being met, the achievement of compliance, and contingent on positive results from a performance evaluation of activities implemented during Phase I. In response to this NOFO, the applicants should submit an application for the Phase one for a three-year program to be implemented in close coordination with the Government of India (GoI), State Education Department of the identified state, and other relevant organizations.

Focus on Localization

The activity design should facilitate programming that is able to place local communities in the lead to co-design a project, set priorities, drive implementation, and/or evaluate the impact of our programs. This includes ensuring local civil society organizations engagement processes during the life cycle of the activity. Also, local governments and community based organizations such as PRIs remain the most important stakeholders for the activity and should be involved to ensure sustainability and impact of the activity.

Geographic scope

In line with the Mission's CDCS, the activity will test interventions in up to two states delivering technical, management, operational, and pedagogical support to assist the mainstream preschools and schools to establish and implement inclusive foundational learning programs. The objective is to determine best practices and implementation approach as well as cost effectiveness. The geographic state selection will be done based on the following criterion.

- **Documented poor levels of inclusion** especially for LwD in Government mainstream preschools and schools.

- States' active commitment towards improving foundational learning outcomes for LwD, as measured by the **percentage of the state revenue dedicated to Basic Education and specific inclusion based interventions.**
- **Evidence of systemic reform or systemic appetite** for inclusion-based programming in mainstream preschools and schools
- **Potential for in-state partnerships** including private sector, foundations, and/or other actors predisposed to contribute financial, material, or technical inputs to support the states' development of efficient and effective systems for foundational learning instruction for LwD.

USAID's own landscape assessment in 2019 prioritized the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Chattisgarh for foundational learning activities. A rapid assessment study undertaken in 2022 indicated the states of Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh have potential for preschool and school-based programming on foundational learning for LwD. It may also be noted that presently, USAID is implementing its educational activities in the states of Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Telangana, Delhi (part), Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

Note: This is for informational reasons only. For the present activity the applicant can prioritize any state/s based on the above mentioned criterion.

A.2.7 Link to Agency priorities

USAID's strategic goal in India from Jan. 1, 2020, to Dec. 31, 2024 is *India Accelerates its Own Inclusive Development and Fosters Enhanced Regional Connectivity*. The FLN for LwD in India activity will contribute to USAID's Development Objective (DO) under its broader goal to improve the human development of marginalized populations in India. Specifically, the activity will contribute to the intermediate result (IR) of enhancing the Government of India's effectiveness in education and health reforms.

Under the USAID/India Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), inclusive development is a key theme woven throughout its programming. It states: *In a joint effort with the GoI (for later scale-up and roll-out across the country) and the private sector (to determine private sector solutions, leverage resources, and bring innovation), USAID/India will implement innovative health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and education solutions for people who are typically denied full access to social and economic programs [...]. Improving outcomes in these areas will help the marginalized break free (in targeted Indian states) from the cycle of poverty that currently maintains their exclusion and marginalization from productive participation in society and improve India's human development.*

The activity will play a critical role in achieving these strategic aims to support LwD in the acquisition of foundational skills.

A.2.8 Guiding principles

Gender and Social Inclusion

Promoting gender equality and advancing the status of all women and girls worldwide is vital to achieving U.S. foreign policy and development objectives. Available evidence indicates, compared to boys, girls with disabilities are at greater risk of neglect in family settings. Statistics show that school enrolment of girls with disabilities is persistently lower than that of boys with disabilities. “The GPI (gender parity index) of LwD from 2014-15 to 2018-19 indicates [... that the ratio between the girls and boys with disabilities remains between 0.74-0.7 in school education.¹⁴” While the ASER 2018 report states that the percentage of girls without disabilities out of school has decreased from 2008 to 2018¹⁵, it does not capture exact data pointers for LwD. There is a deep lack of data on persons with disabilities in all spheres of life, including in education, in India. This is especially true for girls and women with disabilities who might experience layered discriminations. Most available data about gendered educational outcomes in India do not reliably reflect the experiences of people with disabilities or LGBTQI+ people.

USAID understands that education programs are most effective when they account for gender-related challenges in order to meet the unique needs of learners and educators in each context and strives to improve the collection of quality data to inform equitable delivery of program benefits. This proposed activity aims to benefit all learners with disabilities and benefit all genders in their diversity. This activity will be inclusive and contribute to the advancement of gender equality in India, promote equitable gender norms, and increase the capability of women and girls, in all their diversity, at the classroom/school level, as well as, at the system level. Hence the activity will align its implementation with USAID's [Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy](#), [Policy Paper on Disability](#), Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2020 Policy ([PRO-IP Policy](#)), and [Youth Policy 2022](#)

Applicants should also consult USAID ADS 205: *Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle* to learn more about relevant gender considerations and integrating gender equality and female empowerment throughout this activity. The efforts will be designed, in consultation with different communities, to and will benefit everyone equally and equitably. Development efforts must, therefore, be aimed towards three interrelated goals: 1) create and promote safe and inclusive education learning environments and resources for learners and educators with disabilities and of all gender; 2) families of learners with disabilities, especially girls, can meaningfully participate in decision-making about education programs, and 3) educators and learning materials provide gender transformative pedagogy that combats harmful gender norms.

Sustainability

A key component of this activity is the sustainability of the interventions. USAID defines sustainability as how the project will be supported and can continue without donor funding. For the results achieved to continue and evolve after USAID assistance ends, the activity must work to unlock these changes within the targeted local system, in close coordination with the above-mentioned potential partners. For long term change there will be a need to work towards (i) detailed

¹⁴ NCPEDP. (2021). NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY: Opportunities & Challenges. New Delhi: National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCEPDP). Retrieved May 1, 2022, from https://ncpedp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/WHITE-PAPER_FINAL-1.pdf

¹⁵ ASER. (2018). Annual Status of Education Report 2018. New Delhi: ASER Centre. Retrieved May 15, 2022, from <http://img.asercentre.org/docs/ASER%202018/Release%20Material/aserreport2018.pdf>

policy and implementation mechanism coordination mechanisms with these GoI agencies at the state, and district levels to provide policy direction and support; (ii) specific directives for the proposed changes in district/school organization and administration in the primary schools and Anganwadis; (iii) the deployment of relevant pedagogy and materials, including teacher training; and (iv) the requisite budget allocations for the participating districts, blocks, and schools.

Coordination and Collaboration

USAID/India will utilize a co-creation approach with the successful applicant to finalize the program description and the consortium framework. The successful applicant will also be expected to engage with the Ministry and State department of Education and Social Justice and Empowerment amongst others, academic and training institutions, local disabled persons organizations (DPOs), other civil society organizations including those which are managed by and for persons with disabilities (also known as organizations of persons with disabilities or OPDs) and private sector specialized in working with CwD. Finally, this activity will also coordinate with other USAID-funded activities and leverage the work of other relevant actors and stakeholders to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of efforts. The aim is to collaborate and coordinate efforts with and amongst relevant local actors to catalyze change within the local systems and build the evidence and model for this intervention to be picked up by GoI and its partners and continued well after USAID assistance ends.

Private Sector Engagement

Private sector engagement is a cornerstone of USAID's strategic approach and overall operating model in India as it plays a vital role in addressing the root causes of development challenges through market-based solutions and investments across all areas of our work.

USAID encourages long term strategic engagement with the private sector to enhance the effectiveness and development impact of its programming for basic education for learners with disabilities. Illustrative areas¹⁶ of work could include:

- **Support for private implementers:** Supporting innovative private sector models for delivery of foundational learning that is accessible to learners with disabilities, community and parental engagement, capacity building and training of teachers / Anganwadi workers, and assessment. This support could be in the form of direct financing, capacity building, market linkages, government engagement, and others
- **Partnerships with private financiers:** Catalyzing additional financing for inclusive programming from the private sector, including CSR donors, other philanthropic organizations, and impact investors.

Leverage

Leverage is defined as anything of value that is measured, financial contributions, third party contributions, donated services or property, or intellectual property. USAID/India requires the

¹⁶ Note, these examples are illustrative only, not prescriptive, and are meant to demonstrate the breadth of technical offerings that Applicants should expect to provide during the implementation period.

applicant to leverage resources from either private or public resources. The applicant will work towards leveraging resources- programmatic and financial, from both the private and public partners to enable the activity to engage in interventions that are of shared interest and that are sustainable and will enable the interventions to be continued after the Activity ends.

LIST OF ANALYTICAL AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

- Refer Attachment A - Rapid Assessment of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Children with Disabilities, July 2022, USAID/India CLAIM.
 - USAID/India Country Development Cooperation Strategy, January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2024
 - USAID/India Performance Management Plan
 - Integrating Local Knowledge in Development Programming, USAID/PPL/LER, July 2022
 - USAID How-To Note Disability Inclusive Education, November, 2018;
https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/How-ToNote_DisabilityInclusiveEducation_0.pdf
 - MoE. (2021). NIPUN Bharat - Guidelines for Implementation. New Delhi: Govt. of India.
_fi
 - NCPEDP. (2021). NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY: Opportunities & Challenges. New Delhi: National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCEPDP).
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- World Bank. (2009). People with Disabilities in India: From Commitments to Outcomes.
<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/577801468259486686/pdf/502090WP0Peopl1Box0342042B01PUBLIC1.pdf>
- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, Creating Disability Inclusive ID Systems, 2020

[END OF SECTION A]

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SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

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

USAID intends to award one Cooperative Agreement with option for renewal period pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide U.S. \$10,000,000 in total USAID funding for the **Base period** of implementation up to a three-year period. If USAID decides to renew the award in accordance with the process detailed in this NOFO, USAID intends to provide \$5,000,000 to renew the agreement for a **Renewal period** of an additional two (2) year period. This equates to a combined total of \$15,000,000 and **up to a maximum period of performance for five-year**. USAID reserves the right to change funding amounts and terms of the resulting Cooperative Agreement as a result of availability of funds and U.S. Government requirements.

B.2 Expected Performance Indicators, Targets, Baseline Data, and Data Collection

Goal: To enrich and strengthen the mainstream public education ecosystem to support foundational learning outcomes for children with disabilities.

Objective 1: Strengthen the Government's mainstream service delivery mechanism to ensure foundational learning outcomes for learners with disabilities.

Objective 2: Identify, address and overcome attitudinal barriers and stereotypes towards children with disabilities in families and communities.

Objective 3: Facilitate effective partnerships between relevant Government departments, civil society, the private sector and communities in support of children with disabilities.

Anticipated results and indicators

1. Number of functional facilities(preschools, schools, health centers) for timely detection of delays and disabilities.
2. ~~Number and percentage of mainstream government preschools and schools with improved physical access to LwD~~
3. Number and percentage of LwD enrolled and regularly attending Government preschools and schools
4. Improved learning outcomes for LwD in foundational learning.
5. Number of collaborative events/trainings/workshops/onsite mentoring visits for the special teachers and regular teachers for joint strategizing on inclusion of LwD
6. Number of collaborative means such as events and agreements set up between Government departments to enable effective interdepartmental coordination

7. Amount of contribution and commitment demonstrated by the private sector to improve mainstream service delivery.
8. Number of ICT and assistive technologies available for LwD for improving their educational access.

B.3 Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The period of performance anticipated up to five years with an initial Base period of 36 months, subject to Renewal period for an additional 24 months. The estimated start date will be upon the signature of the award.

B.4 Award Renewal

The Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Children with Disabilities will be a Cooperative Agreement that allows the phased implementation of the programmatic activities, within the five-year maximum period of performance. The activity under this NOFO envisages two periods of implementation. From the onset of the agreement, the Base period, the applicant implements the specific activities stated in the Section A of this NOFO for an initial period of three-years (36 months).

USAID will conduct the mid-term and final programmatic review of the Base period activities at 15 months and 30 months after the award respectively. Based on the successful achievement of the following renewal conditions USAID will invite the applicant to submit the detailed application for the Renewal period. Below are the Renewal period conditions:

- Subject to availability of funds, USAID will invite the applicant to submit a detailed application to continue implementation of the Renewal period activities.
- USAID will assess the applicant's progress towards meeting the award objectives based on the results of the final programmatic review of the Base period of implementation.
- USAID will also assess and take into consideration the timely submission of the required program reports both technical and financial.
- USAID will also review the applicant's compliance with the terms and conditions of the award including the renewal conditions including the required risk-assessment requirements.
- As part of the re-application process, if required, USAID may revise the award and define further activities within the general program description of the award.

Based on the successful achievement of the renewal conditions as stated above, the applicant must reapply for the Renewal period activities at least three months prior to the completion of the Base period of implementation.

If the Renewal period is executed, the start date of the renewal period will be concurrent with the expiration date of the Base period to prevent a break in the activities or funding. In the event the award is not renewed, USAID will inform the recipient in a timely manner and provide sufficient time to complete the program activities prior to the end date of the initial award period.

B.5 Substantial Involvement

In accordance with ADS 303.3.11, USAID will remain substantially involved over the life of the Cooperative Agreement to assist the Recipient in achieving the expected outcomes and results of the program. Some examples of potential areas of substantial involvement during performance include the following:

- Approval of recipient's implementation plans during performance;
- Approval of key recipient personnel; and
- Joint participation will be necessary to ensure achievement of key objectives during the performance of the activity.

NOTE: This Substantial Involvement section is subject to change following the Co-Creation Workshop and submission of the Final Application Phase.

B.6 Authorized Geographic Code

The authorized geographic code for the procurement of services and commodities is 937. Code 937 is defined as the United States, the recipient country (India), and developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source. There are currently no prohibited source countries, but the list is updated regularly and can be found here:

<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/310mac.pdf>.

B.7 Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Learners with Disabilities which is authorized by Federal statute. The successful Recipient will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The Recipient will assume responsibility for administering Federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award.

[END OF SECTION B]

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SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

Eligibility for this NOFO is not restricted, open to all eligible and qualified U.S., local and international non-governmental entities. An organization may submit only one (1) application under this notice of funding opportunity. However, organizations participating as a member of a consortium may elect to participate in another consortium for a different Concept Paper in response to this NOFO.

Pursuant to 2CFR 200.400(g), it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments such as Cooperative Agreements. While for-profit organizations may participate, pursuant to 2 CFR 700.13(a)(1), Prohibition against Profit, no profit will be paid to any for-profit entity receiving or administering Federal financial assistance as a recipient or subrecipient.

USAID welcomes organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID.

Faith-based organizations are eligible to apply for federal financial assistance on the same basis as any other organization and are subject to the protections and requirements of Federal law.

C.2 Leverage

Leverage is defined as anything of value that is measured, financial contributions, third party contributions, donated services or property, or intellectual property. USAID/India encourages the applicant to leverage resources from either private or public resources. The applicant will work towards leveraging resources- programmatic and financial, from both the private and public partners to enable the activity to engage in interventions that are of shared interest and that are sustainable and will enable the interventions to be continued after the Activity ends.

C.3 Other

C.3.1 SAM REGISTRATION

Applicants must have successfully registered in SAM (System for Award Management) prior to submitting a full application. Applicants must also provide a valid UEI number in the SF424 form to be submitted along with a full application. For those who have previously registered in SAM, they must renew and maintain an active SAM registration during the time they have concept notes or applications under consideration by a Federal awarding agency or during active Federal award. However, applicants are advised to start the process now.

C.3.2 PRE-AWARD RISK ASSESSMENT

The Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA) will be responsible for ensuring achievement of the objectives described in the NOFO. Thus, an ASA must be a responsible entity. Prior to making an

award under this NOFO, USAID may perform a pre-award survey for organizations that are new to working with USAID or for organizations with outstanding audit findings. Accounting systems, audit issues and management capability questions may be reviewed as part of this process. Depending on the result of the risk assessment, USAID may determine to execute the award, not execute the award, or award with “specific conditions” (2 CFR 200.207). If notified by USAID that a pre-award survey is necessary, applicants must prepare in advance to provide the required information and documents. A pre-award survey does not commit USAID to make an award to any organization.

The Agreement Officer (AO) will decide on whether to subject the ASA to a pre-award survey, and based on the results, will make a determination if the prospective recipient is a responsible entity, whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting, and operational controls, financial resources, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award. The Agreement Officer reserves the right to perform a pre-award survey for any entity.

Additionally, at the time of the renewal of the award, the applicant along with the request for renewal application must submit a new set of SF-424 and a new set of certifications, assurances, representations, and other statements for risk assessment. Depending on the results of the risk assessment at the renewal of the award, the AO will make a determination for the execution of the renewal award.

[END OF SECTION C]

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SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1 Agency Point of Contacts

Cheryl Hodge-Snead
Title: Agreement Officer
Email: indiarco@usaid.gov

Charushila Lal
Title: Acquisition and Assistance Specialist
Email: indiarco@usaid.gov

D.2 Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO should be submitted indiarco@usaid.gov, with a copy to clal@usaid.gov no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Unless otherwise notified by an amendment to the NOFO, **no questions will be accepted after the due date**. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment to this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicant.

Applicants must not submit questions to any other USAID staff. All the submission of questions application files submitted must be compatible with Microsoft (MS) Office in a MS Windows environment and/or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). The subject of each e-mail must read as follows:
NOFO # 72038623RFA00003 - Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Children with Disabilities.

D.3 General Content and Form of Application

Applicants are to review, understand and comply with all aspects of this NOFO and ensure all necessary documents are complete and received at USAID on time. **Failure to do so will result in the submission being considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed.** All submissions received by the stated deadlines in the NOFO and determined responsive will be reviewed in accordance with the review criteria contained in Section E of this NOFO.

Each applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO for each phase and must be submitted in accordance with the instructions provided under Section D. Any erasures or other changes to the application must be initiated by the person signing the application. Applications signed by an agent on behalf of the applicant must be accompanied by evidence of that agent's authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

Applicants may choose to submit a cover letter in addition to the cover pages, but it will serve only as a transmittal letter to the Agreement Officer. The cover letter will not be reviewed as part of the

merit review criteria. USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections. Please ensure that applications comply with the page limitations.

Submissions must be in electronic format. Applicants' authorized representatives are to sign their names (manually or digitally) on the cover pages of their submissions, as well as in required certifications. For a submission to be considered timely, the electronic transmission must be submitted by email to indiarco@usaid.gov with a copy to clal@usaid.gov and received by USAID/India no later than the date and time indicated on the coversheet of the NOFO. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes associated with electronic submissions.

Applicants not selected for the consecutive phase will be notified at the end of each phase. Depending on the number of applicants, the AO may or may not respond to requests for additional information from unsuccessful applicants.

D.3.1 Overall Selection Process

Under this NOFO, there will be a three-phase process that is described below:

Phase 1 - Concept Paper:

Conditional Acceptance/Acceptance of Concept Paper: Applicants are to first submit a concept paper for an initial review. All concept papers received in response to this NOFO will be evaluated by a USAID Merit Review Committee (MRC) for responsiveness to the merit review/ evaluation criteria outlined in Section E. This process is to identify concept papers that align with the intended objectives of the NOFO. After all concept papers are evaluated, applicants whose concept paper is **accepted (based on the Merit Review Criteria)** will proceed directly to Phase 2 - Co-creation. However, USAID reserves the right to **conditionally accept** concept papers and request the applicant/s to present their concept orally before acceptance of the concept papers for Phase 2-Co-creation. The presentation will provide USAID an opportunity to better understand the concept and its approach to the solution, as well as to pose clarifying questions. Attendance at an oral presentation or co-creation workshop will be approximately two-weeks after being notified that applicant's Concept Paper was conditionally accepted or accepted. The presentation, if held, will be either through video conferencing or in person, depending on the location of the applicant. USAID will use the Merit Review Criteria (**See Section E**) to determine the Applicant's concept paper including the presentation, if any, that is conditionally accepted or accepted.

The process ends for all applicants whose concept paper was not conditionally accepted/accepted and no further consideration will be given to the applicant(s).

Phase 2- Co-Creation Workshop: After notification that the applicant's concept paper has been accepted, a three day in-person co-creation workshop will be hosted by USAID. The applicant whose concept paper was accepted will be invited to submit a draft Program Description and participate in a co-creation workshop. Specific details will be included in the invitational letter. The purpose of the co-creation workshop is to design a mutually sustainable Program Description using a participatory process that assumes some degree of shared power and decision making. Participants in this co-creation workshop will include the applicant, USAID, and potentially other

stakeholders such as representatives from MoE, experts with first-hand knowledge and experience of working with children and people with disability, and cross sector experts from Health and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

Phase 3 - Full Application (RFA): At the end of the co-creation workshop, the applicant will be requested to submit a full application including the technical and detailed cost application. The full application will elaborate the project's theory of change and proposed key results and indicators. The full application also requires the applicant to complete specific USG forms and to provide additional information that USAID/India will need to move forward with an appropriate implementing instrument. The full application will be reviewed for its technical merit against the full application merit review/evaluation criteria by the Merit Review Committee. USAID will continue to work with the applicant(s) to strengthen the Full Application, if additional information is required, prior to making an award.

NOTE: No funding will be made to any applicant prior to the award of the Cooperative Agreement and Applicants are responsible for all pre-award costs, costs incurred during all the phases. Please note that USAID reserves the right to make no award under this NOFO at any stage of the process.

D.4 APPLICATION FORMATS

Each applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO. This subsection addresses content requirements applying to this NOFO. Please see subsections D.5 and D.6, below, for information on the content specific to the application.

Concept papers must be submitted by email to indiarco@usaid.gov, with a copy to clal@usaid.gov no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Email submissions must include the NOFO number and applicant's name in the subject line heading.

After sending the concept paper electronically, applicants should immediately check their own email to confirm that the attachments were indeed sent. If an applicant discovers an error in transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email that it is a "corrected" submission. Do not send the same email more than once unless there has been a change, and if so, please note that it is a "corrected" email.

Applicants are reminded that email is NOT instantaneous, and in some cases delays of several hours occur from transmission to receipt. Therefore, applicants are requested to send the application in sufficient time ahead of the deadline. For this NOFO, the initial point of entry to the government infrastructure is the USAID mail server.

There may be a problem with the receipt of *.zip files due to anti-virus software. Therefore, applicants are discouraged from sending files in this format as USAID/India cannot guarantee their acceptance by the internet server.

Application must comply with the following:

- USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections. Please ensure that applications comply with the page limitations.
- Written in English.

- Use standard 8 ½” x 11”, single sided, single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1” margins, left justification and headers and/or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and applicant’s name.
- A 10-point font can be used for graphs and charts. Tables, however, must comply with the 12-point Times New Roman requirement.
- Submitted via Microsoft Word or PDF formats.
- Applicants must review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to do so may be considered as being non-responsive and may be evaluated accordingly. Applicants should retain a copy of the application and all enclosures for their records.

DO NOT SUBMIT: Promotional literature and materials regarding the Applicant or other unsolicited material.

D.4.1. PHASE 1: Concept Paper Format

The concept paper is to be specific, complete, and presented concisely. The concept must demonstrate the applicant’s capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this program. The concept is to consider the requirements of the program and merit review criteria found in this NOFO.

Applicants should also ensure that their concept paper contains the following aspects:

- List of Acronyms (*does not count towards page limitation*)
- Table of Contents (*does not count towards page limitation*)

No other documents/annexures are being requested currently; USAID will inform the applicants about additional documentation required in subsequent phases, if needed.

A Concept Paper can be no more than a maximum of **14 pages (exclusive of annexures)**, where the applicant provides an overview of its idea. **Please see Concept Paper Instructions below.** Applicants must submit a Concept Paper by the deadline specified in this NOFO. USAID will review Concept Papers against merit review criteria detailed in Section E of this NOFO

Concept Paper must include a cover page containing the following information:

A. Concept Paper Cover Page (*does not count towards page limitation*):

The concept paper must include a cover page containing the following information:

- Proposed Activity Name/Title;
- Period of Performance (i.e., start date and end date);
- Total Amount of Funding Requested from USAID;
- Total amount leveraged, including from what source(s);
- Applicant Organization Name;
- Applicant Contact Person (name, phone, e-mail);

- Full Address for Applicant Organization;
- Type of Organization [please include certification of incorporation] (e.g., US. non-US, multilateral, private, for-profit, nonprofit, etc) date of incorporation;
- Notice of Funding Opportunity number;
- (if Applicable) Name(s) of Partner(s) Organization(s)

Applicants may choose to submit a cover letter in addition to the cover pages, but it will serve only as a transmittal letter to the Agreement Officer. The cover letter will not be reviewed as part of the merit review criteria.

- B.** Include major sections and page numbering to easily cross-reference and identify the information below.

C. Concept Technical Approach: (12 pages)

Concept papers should describe your organization's approach for tackling the challenges and objectives described in Section A of the NOFO. Collectively, these interventions should achieve USAID India's Country Development Cooperation Strategy goal (Jan. 1, 2020, to Dec. 31, 2024) is '*India Accelerates its Own Inclusive Development and Fosters Enhanced Regional Connectivity*'. The FLN for CwD in India activity will contribute to USAID's Development Objective (DO) under its broader goal to improve the human development of marginalized populations in India. Specifically, the activity will contribute to the intermediate result (IR) of enhancing the Government of India's effectiveness in education and health reforms.

The approach must also contribute towards the [USAID Education Policy](#), the [USAID Disability Policy paper](#), the [USAID Private Sector Engagement Policy](#), and USAID priorities on inclusive development and working with under-represented communities.

Concept papers must address the following:

- Provide a focussed description pertaining to the organizational technical approach and positioning addressing specifically the challenges and goals detailed in Section A of the NOFO.
- Describe the interventions the organization will implement to meet the stated objectives in Section 'A' of the NOFO and describe the anticipated results and/or impact of the proposed intervention including Theory of Change (ToC)
- Collaboration and coordination plan with all relevant stakeholders including local actors.
- Provide broad parameters for use of technology, including but not limited to assistive technology, communication devices and adaptive learning for achieving the goals as detailed in Section A of the NOFO.
- Outline a strategy for cross sectoral convergence with critical sectors such as Health and WASH.
- Define which innovations, and for what specific program areas, will be leveraged or created within this activity.
- Meaningful understanding and integration of gender and social inclusion into each objective and result area of the Activity, as relevant and feasible.
- Define the proposed approach to leverage resourcing and innovations including private sector engagement plan and establishing viable public private partnerships.

- Outline the strategy towards sustainability, systemic strengthening and scalability.

D. Organizational Structure and Management: (1 page)

- Provide a description of the management approach for this activity that shows the relationship within the team and between partner organizations (as applicable). As applicable, articulate the role of each member organization of the consortium and their respective contributions.
- Describe how your proposed concept will partner with and leverage experience(s) from local Indian organizations in the field of disability and inclusion.
- Additionally, identify four to five positions/ key personnel that would be critical to accomplishing the outcomes outlined in the Concept Technical Approach and describe the qualifications for each position and why it is critical to successful implementation of the project.

E. Institutional Capacity and History of Performance: (1 page)

Describe the institutional capacity – technical, managerial, and financial – to carry out the proposed intervention. Describe your organization’s relevant previous experiences, from the past five years, working on projects related to foundational learning and disability inclusion highlighting the timeframe, scale, and geographic region for each project. As applicable, provide information on institutional capacity and strengths of consortium members.

In addition to the above stated main sections, annexures (*does not count towards page limitation*) should be attached including, but not limited to the following:

- Recommended intervention locations along with a reasonable justification
- Examples of scaled up programs, pertaining to Foundational learning outcomes and children with disabilities, that the organization has implemented in the past
- Evidence based scaling up plan around the activity including identification of relevant data pointers, data collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination along with an approach towards advocacy to scale with focus on strengthening the agency for disabled of the children with disabilities.

F. Name and Signature of authorized individual (*does not count towards page limitation*):

Any erasures or other changes to the concept paper must be initiated by the person signing. A concept paper signed by an agent on behalf of the applicant must be accompanied by evidence of that agent’s authority unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

D.5. REQUIREMENTS FOR A FULL APPLICATION (For Information Purpose Only)

NOTE: ONLY THOSE APPLICANT(S) WHO ARE SUCCESSFUL AT PHASE 2 WILL BE REQUESTED TO SUBMIT A FULL APPLICATION. NO FULL APPLICATION IS REQUIRED AT THIS TIME.

Please note additional requirements below that must be met prior to award and as part of the Full Application evaluation stage:

(a) Business (cost) Application Format

NO Business (Cost) Application Is Required At Phase 1 or 2. The following information is provided for **information purposes only** for the applicant(s) that will be required to submit a full application after successful co-creation at Phase 2.

(b) Certifications and Assurances

As part of Phase 3 (Full Application stage), the Applicant must complete the following documents, upon request by the AO:

(1) “Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient” ADS 303mav document found at <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mav.pdf>

(2) Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)

(3) Certificate of Compliance: Please submit a copy of your Certificate of Compliance if your organization's systems have been certified by USAID/Washington's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA).

(c) Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM Requirements

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier (earlier known as DUNS number) and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements. If requested to submit information as part of Phase 3, the applicant(s) (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is exempted from requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

1. Provide a valid UEI number for the applicant and all proposed sub-recipients (if any).
2. Be registered in SAM prior to the issuance of an award. (www.sam.gov).
3. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency.

The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin the process early. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements above by the time USAID is ready to make an award, USAID may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

UEI/DUNS number: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

SAM registration: <http://www.sam.gov>

Applicants can find additional resources for registering in SAM, including a Quick Start Guide

and a video on how to obtain an NCAGE code, on www.sam.gov, navigate to Help, then to International Registrants.

(d) Funding Restrictions

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipient(s) under this award. See 2 CFR 200.331 for assistance in determining whether a sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor.

Construction will not be authorized under this award.

USAID will not allow the reimbursement of pre-award costs under this award without the explicit written approval of the Agreement Officer. Except as may be specifically approved in advance by the AO, all commodities and services that will be reimbursed by USAID under this award must be from the authorized geographic code specified in Section B.6 of this NOFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

(e) Consortium arrangements

If the Applicant has established a consortium or another legal relationship among its partners, the Cost/Business application must include a copy of the legal relationship between the parties. The agreement should include a full discussion of the relationship between the Applicant and Sub-Applicant(s) including identification of the Applicant with whom USAID will work with for purposes of Agreement administration, identity of the Applicant which will have accounting responsibility, how Agreement effort will be allocated and the express agreement of the principals thereto to be held jointly and severally liable for the acts or omissions of the other.

(f) Negotiation

Upon consideration of award or during the negotiations leading to an award, Applicants may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to make an affirmative determination of responsibility. Applicants should not submit the information below with their applications! The information in this section is provided so that Applicant may become familiar with additional documentation that may be requested by the Agreement Officer:

- Bylaws, constitution, and articles of incorporation, if applicable.
- Whether the organizational travel, procurement, financial management, accounting manual and personnel policies and procedures, especially regarding salary, promotion, leave, differentials, etc., submitted under this section have been reviewed and approved by any agency of the Federal Government, and if so, provide the name, address, and phone number of the cognizant reviewing official. The Applicant should provide copies of the same.

(f) Conflict of Interest Pre-Award Term (August 2018)

(a) Personal Conflict of Interest

- 1) An actual or appearance of a conflict of interest exists when an applicant organization or an employee of the organization has a relationship with an Agency official involved in the

competitive award decision-making process that could affect that Agency official's impartiality. The term "conflict of interest" includes situations in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, the obligations and duties of a USAID employee or recipient employee.

2) The applicant must provide conflict of interest disclosures when it submits an SF-424. Should the applicant discover a previously undisclosed conflict of interest after submitting the application, the applicant must disclose the conflict of interest to the AO no later than ten (10) calendar days following discovery.

(b) Organizational Conflict of Interest

The applicant must notify USAID of any actual or potential conflict of interest that they are aware of that may provide the applicant with an unfair competitive advantage in competing for this financial assistance award. Examples of an unfair competitive advantage include but are not limited to situations in which an applicant or the applicant's employee gained access to non-public information regarding a federal assistance funding opportunity, or an applicant or applicant's employee was substantially involved in the preparation of a federal assistance funding opportunity.

USAID will promptly take appropriate action upon receiving any such notification from the applicant.

[END OF SECTION D]

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SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 CRITERIA

All applications will be reviewed in accordance with the review criteria set forth below. The merit review criteria prescribed here are tailored to the requirements of this particular NOFO. Applicants should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant matters which the applicants should address in their applications, and (b) set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated.

Merit Review Factors will be evaluated relative to each other, as described here and prescribed by the Technical Application Format.

E.2 REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

PHASE 1: CONCEPT PAPER

Concept Paper: The concept paper will be reviewed by a Merit Review Committee according to the criteria described below. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the applicant incorporates interventions that will build upon and expand USAID's and the Government of India's (GoI) efforts to strengthen the public mainstream education system to ensure learning opportunities and outcomes for learners with disabilities. This will be achieved by facilitating robust service delivery mechanisms, breaking attitudinal barriers and collaborating with different Government departments and relevant stakeholders. A concept paper is determined to be acceptable if it proposes a sound approach and USAID has **Strong Confidence** that the applicant understands the requirement and will be successful in performing with **no** government intervention based on the criteria below, which are listed in descending order of importance.

The Agreement Officer makes the final determination and is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either an Agreement signed by the Agreement Officer or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

Successful applicants whose application was conditionally accepted (based on the Merit Review Criteria) will be invited to the Co-Creation phase.

NOTE: USAID reserves the right to consider co-creating with all applicant/s whose concept papers were conditionally accepted up until the award is made. For example, should a viable solution not materialize with the applicant whose concept paper was accepted, USAID will commence co-creation with the next viable applicant. USAID will provide a written summary feedback to applicant(s) who will remain in the conditionally acceptable category to those applicant/s who were invited for an oral presentation. Those applicant(s) whose concept paper was not accepted will have the opportunity to request additional information. **The process ends for applicants who were notified that their concept paper was not accepted. No further consideration will be given to the applicant(s).**

NOTE: After concept paper/s have been **accepted**, detailed activity design discussions between

USAID and the applicant will begin and continue throughout the remainder of the process.

NOTE: USAID reserves the right to conditionally accept a concept paper that meets the requirements and invite the applicants for presentations to better understand the approach and ask any clarifying questions. The outcomes of this presentation will be then used to determine which concept papers move forward to the co-creation stage.

USAID will not be responsible for costs associated with presentation.

PHASE 2: CO-CREATION WORKSHOP

USAID/India may host either an in-person or via video conference co-creation workshop depending on COVID-19 restrictions. The applicant will be sent an invitation letter requesting a draft Program Description and notifying the applicant of the date, time, and venue for the workshop. Specific details will be included in the invitational letter. Participants will include the applicant, USAID, and potentially other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education. The applicant is required to include their personnel who will be actually implementing the proposed activity.

No funding will be made available prior to the award of the Cooperative Agreement. Applicants, including the organization selected to collaboratively develop the Program Description, are responsible for all costs related to the oral presentation and the co-creation workshop. Once the award is signed, the implementing partner may start incurring costs. Applicants not selected for the consecutive phase will be notified at the end of each phase. Unsuccessful applicants may request additional information following such notification.

USAID reserves the right to make no award under this NOFO at any stage of the process.

PHASE 3: REQUEST FOR FULL APPLICATION

At the end of the Co-Creation, Applicant(s) will be requested to submit a full application that incorporates the feedback from USAID and the Ministry of Education during the co-creation workshop. The Full Application should include, at a minimum, expanded information on the Applicant's Technical Approach and Organizational Management and Staffing. In addition, the Full Application will expand on the Theory of Change and articulate the applicant's strategies for implementing a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning methodology, including an emphasis on adaptive management. The Applicant must also demonstrate how it will apply learning and adaptive management techniques to inform program management and key decisions. USAID will provide additional information about the full application.

E.2.1 MERIT REVIEW

Phase 1 – Concept Paper

USAID will conduct a merit review of all concept papers received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the

following criteria, and the technical approach will be weighted more heavily, while the other factors will be weighted equally.

Merit Review Criteria	Definition
Technical Approach	Applicants will be evaluated on the extent to which they demonstrate the following: A. <u>Relevance:</u> The proposed solution should be technically sound and responsive towards all three objectives set forth in Section A and in close alignment with the GOI priorities in this sector. B. <u>Impact:</u> Clear articulation of the activity objectives and results, including a theory of change, indicators and proposed targets. C. <u>Innovation:</u> The proposal should be innovative and creative in terms of new solutions or programming approaches to address the challenges faced by children with disabilities. D. <u>Scalability:</u> The proposal should clearly demonstrate sustainability approach within activity design as well as strategy to ensure scalability through systemic strengthening. E. <u>Collaboration:</u> The proposed approach should be inclusive of all relevant stakeholders including local actors. F. <u>Diversity:</u> Meaningful understanding and integration of gender and social inclusion into each objective and result area of the Activity which is realistic and achievable within the given timeframe and available resources. G. <u>Convergence :</u> The proposal should include cross sectoral convergence such as school WASH and school health programs for improved impact. H. <u>Technology:</u> The approach should demonstrate clear articulation and understanding of technology as a means for achieving the goals as detailed in Section A of the NOFO. I. <u>Leveraging:</u> The concept should demonstrate planning for resourcing and innovations including private sector engagement plan and establishing viable public private partnerships.

Organizational Structure and Management	Applicants will be evaluated on the following: - The management approach includes the clarity of role and value of experience and expertise that each partner organization brings (as applicable) to effectively collaborate, manage and implement the proposed activity adaptively and successfully. - Extent to which they demonstrate a well-articulated staffing plan and key personnel with clear description of qualifications and role.
Institutional Capacity and History of Performance	Applicants will be evaluated on the extent to which they convincingly demonstrate the following: - Institutional capacity and relevant technical and management experience, based on past performance, to successfully plan, implement, and monitor complex activities that require coordination with the central government, local governments, and various other stakeholders. - Institutional ability to manage sub-awards and coordinate with sub-awardees to implement the proposed interventions adaptively and successfully.

USAID reserves the right to pose clarifying questions and conduct discussions with any applicant but may not opt to do so if it believes it has sufficient information in the concept paper itself. Posing clarifying questions and conducting discussions with one applicant does not obligate USAID to do so with all applicants.

USAID anticipates two (2) possible results from the Concept Paper merit review process:

- **CONDITIONALLY ACCEPTABLE** - Concept paper is evaluated and based on the merit review criteria the applicant is found to propose a good approach and USAID has **Good Confidence** that the applicant understands the requirement and will be successful in performing with **little or no** government intervention. Applicant(s) whose concept paper is conditionally accepted are required to attend an oral presentation to present their concept paper to receive further consideration.
- **UNACCEPTABLE**: Concept Paper is **UNACCEPTABLE** when evaluated against the merit review criteria and is found to propose an unsound approach and USAID has **Low Confidence** that the applicant understands the requirements. The applicant(s) will be unsuccessful in implementing the program. If **UNACCEPTABLE**, USAID declines the

concept paper. Due to the number of concept papers received, USAID is not able to provide details on why the concept paper was not selected.

After the concept paper review USAID will determine whether or not the concepts address the strategic objectives outlined in Section A of the NOFO. Only concepts that are acceptable will move forward to the Co-Creation Workshop.

- **ACCEPTABLE** - Concept paper is **ACCEPTABLE** when the applicant proposes a sound approach and USAID has **Strong Confidence** that the applicant understands the requirements and will be successful in performing with **no** government intervention. Applicants can only be rated as **ACCEPTABLE** after the applicant(s) concept paper is evaluated (**based on the Merit Review Criteria**) and is accepted to proceed to Phase 2 - Co-creation.

Leverage:

Leverage is resources that a non-traditional USAID partner brings to a public-private partnership, i.e. the portion not being borne by USAID. These non-traditional resource partners are typically NOT receiving USAID funds. It can be a variety of forms - anything of value that is measured, financial contributions, third party contributions, donated services or property, or intellectual property. USAID is seeking to leverage additional resources from both the private and public sectors for the activity's implementation. The resources leveraged from both sectors will enable the activity to engage in interventions that are of shared interest and that are sustainable and will enable the interventions to be continued after the activity ends.

[END OF SECTION E]

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SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1 Federal Award Notices

Notice of award signed by the Agreement Officer is the authorized document, which will be transmitted to the successful Applicant following the selection. This will be sent to the authorized agent of the successful Applicant electronically. The notice may be determined by the Agreement Officer, identify clarifying questions and request for a revised application by a specified date prior to finalization of the Cooperative Agreement. USAID reserves the right to award without requesting clarification or additional detail on the application. Once all outstanding issues have been resolved, the Agreement Officer will send the draft Cooperative Agreement to the Apparent recipient for review, comments and or acceptance to be followed by full execution of the Cooperative Agreement.

Award of the agreement contemplated under this NOFO cannot be made until funds are appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions of the award. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds.

Applicants are advised that costs incurred prior to receipt of either a fully executed Agreement (in electronic or print form) or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer are not allowable and therefore are ineligible for reimbursement under the Agreement.

The Agreement Officer will also provide written notification electronically to the unsuccessful Applicants' Points of Contact. Requests for additional information from unsuccessful Applicants will not be considered.

F.2 Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The resulting award from this NOFO will be administered in accordance with the following policies and regulations.

For U.S. Non-governmental organizations

- 2 CFR 700 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=531ffcc47b660d86ca8bbc5a64eed128&mc=true&node=pt2.1.700&rgn=div5>)
- 2 CFR 200 (https://ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl)
- ADS 303maa, Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental Organizations (<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303maa.pdf>)

See Section H , for a list of the Standard Provisions that will be applicable to any awards resulting from this NOFO.

USAID/India Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA) will administer this award. The Agreement Officer (AO) will designate an Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) to review, concur and/or approve on items outlined in Substantial Involvement (Section B.4 of this NOFO).

F.3 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Recipient will adhere to all reporting requirements listed below; further, US Non-governmental organizations need to be in compliance with 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 (specifically 2 CFR 200.327-329).

The Recipient will submit all reports by the due date for approval from the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR). The Recipient will consult with the AOR on the format and content prior to submission. In addition to the reports below, the AOR may request additional information to contribute to the internal USAID project reviews.

F.3.1. Performance Reporting

Reports and Deliverables	Due Dates
Activity Start-up Plan	Within 30 calendar days after the award. The plan should outline the Recipients plan for staffing, start-up workshop and work plan and MEL plan preparation.
Start-up workshop	Within 75 calendar days after award to inform activity theory of change, work plan and MEL plan
Annual Work Plan	A draft first year work plan – 60 calendar days after award (note: first year work plan should go from activity start date through the end of the next fiscal year so may be longer or shorter than 12 months depending on the date of the award.) Subsequent annual work plans – October 1st of each calendar year
Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan	30 calendar days after finalization of the first year work plan
Quarterly Progress Report	30 calendar days after the end of the quarter

Gender and Social Inclusion Plan	60 calendar days from the date of the award
Mid-term Programmatic Review	15 calendar months from the date of the award to assess the performance of implementation during Phase 1.
Final Programmatic Review	30 calendar months from the date of the award to conduct final assessment of the performance of Phase 1 implementation.
Annual Performance Report	October 15th of each year
Final Report	30 calendar days prior to the end of the award

- Start-up Workshop** - Within seventy five days post-award the Recipient will hold a workshop that includes USAID staff and relevant partners to guide development of the first year work plan, activity theory of change and anticipated outcomes, and MEL plan. The workshop will also serve to define requirements and format for deliverables and reporting. The objective of the workshop is to provide a dedicated forum for the activity consortium, USAID staff and other relevant partners to collaborate to refine the submitted technical approach, theory of change and anticipated outcomes, and MEL Plan. The cost of this 3-5 day workshop should be included in the applicant's cost proposal. Note, at the discretion of the AOR, this workshop may include or be done collectively with other mission implementing partners working on forest and biodiversity conservation.
- Annual Work Plan** - The annual work plan details how the Recipient will use the work plan year effectively to achieve the activity's objective. The work plan serves as a guide to program implementation and, once approved, represents an agreement as to the objectives and timing of specific tasks and interventions. The work plan is intended to be an annual roadmap for USAID and the Recipient. It should be closely aligned to the theory of change agreed upon during the start-up workshop, and clearly explain how the actions and outputs will lead to the expected outcomes identified in the theory of change. More details on the format of the implementation plan will be provided after the award.
- Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (MEL)** - The Applicant must prepare a clear Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) methodology for this activity that facilitates adaptive learning and management. The MEL plan must provide an overview of the project's objectives, theory of change and strategic approaches; indicate the custom and standard indicators that will be used to monitor progress towards achieving the stated objectives; and define the processes to monitor, analyze and evaluate progress. The plan should outline opportunities for learning and adaptive management throughout all stages of the project and include in its learning agenda evaluations or studies to assess and inform the roll out of interventions. More details on the format of the MEL plan will be provided after the award.

- **Quarterly Performance Reports** - The Recipient will submit brief quarterly performance reports to reflect progress, the activities of the preceding three months and lessons learned. The report must describe the tasks completed in the last three months relative to what was anticipated in the approved work plan and will assess the overall activity impact to date relative to the performance indicator targets and results defined in the activity theory of change. More details on the format of the quarterly performance reports will be provided after the award.

- **Gender Consideration:** To the greatest extent possible, the Recipient should seek to include both men and women in all aspects of this program including participation and leadership in e.g., meetings, training, etc. The Recipient must collect, analyze and submit to USAID sex-disaggregated data and proposed actions that will address any identified gender-related issues.

In order to ensure that USAID assistance makes the maximum optimal contribution to gender equality, performance management systems and evaluations must include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data when the technical analyses supporting the Agreement demonstrates that:

- The different roles and status of women and men affect the activities to be undertaken, and
- The anticipated results of the work would affect women and men differently.

- **Programmatic Review:** The programmatic review is a collaborative and course-corrective measurement of the programmatic opportunities, challenges and successes of the activity during the implementation cycle to determine whether continued investment in the activity will achieve defined development results and goals.

There is no pre-determined format for the programmatic and financial performance which may either take the form of a reporting by partner or a defined assessment based on primary data collection and stakeholder consultation.

USAID will conduct a mid-term and final programmatic review at the specific intervals of time during the Phase 1 implementation. Following the conclusion of the programmatic review, USAID will formally inform of a positive/negative determination to renew and continue support for the implementation of the award as well as of any required pivots or adjustments to the activity to best achieve development objectives.

- **Annual Performance Report** - Annual performance reports will summarize actions, progress and results during the year in relation to the approved work plan and the activity theory of change it supports. The report should include lessons learned, proposed adaptive management shifts, and proposed updates to the theory of change. The annual performance report will be used by USAID to assess the status of activity implementation. Each annual performance report will include an assessment as to whether the activity strategic approaches and actions are leading to the activity purpose. The annual performance report will cover all of the items included in the bi-annual performance report, with a focus on the Activity results over the entire year. More details on the

format of the annual performance report will be provided after the award.

- **Close-out Plan** - No later than six (6) months prior to the completion date of the agreement, the Recipient will submit a close-out plan for the Agreement Officer (AO) approval. The close-out plan shall include:

- Draft property disposition plan
- Plan for the phase-out of in-country operations
- Delivery schedule for all reports or other deliverables required under the agreement
- Timetable for completing all required actions in the close-out plan, including submission date of the final property disposition plan to the AO.

- **Final Report** - The Final Report must discuss all strategic approaches and results from the start of the award through its completion. More details on the format of the final report will be provided after the award.

F.3.2 Financial Reporting:

(1) Quarterly Financial Report

The Recipient must submit the Federal Financial Form (SF-425) quarterly, no later than 30 days after the end of the quarter, via electronic format to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (<http://www.dpm.psc.gov>). The Recipient must submit a copy of SF-425 at the same time to the Agreement Officer Representative (AOR) and the Controller.

Electronic copies of SF-425 and instructions for using it can be found at:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/standard_forms/ff_report.pdf

<http://www.forms.gov/bgfPortal/docDetails.do?dId=15149>

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/standard_forms/ffr_instructions.pdf

(2) Final Financial Report

Within 90 days following the estimated completion date of this award, the Recipient must submit to the: (a) USAID/Washington, M/CFO/CMP-LOC Unit; (b) Agreement Officer (manila-roaa-admin@usaid.gov); (c) Controller (aidmnlrfs@usaid.gov); and (d) Agreement Officer Representative (AOR), the final Federal Financial Form (SF-425).

(3) Foreign Tax Reports

Reporting of foreign taxes under this agreement shall follow the standard provision entitled “Reporting Host Government Taxes (December 2014)” of this award document.

Host government taxes are not allowable where the Agreement Officer provides the necessary

means to the recipient to obtain an exemption or refund of such taxes, and the recipient fails to take reasonable steps to obtain such exemption or refund. Otherwise, taxes are allowable in accordance with the Standard Provision, “Applicability of 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 (December 2014),” and must be reported as required in this provision.

The Recipient must include this reporting requirement in all applicable sub-agreements, including subawards and contracts.

F.4 Program Income

If the successful applicant is a non-profit organization, any program income generated under the award will be added to USAID funding (and any cost-sharing that may be provided, if applicable), and used for program purposes. However, pursuant to 2 CFR 200.307 Program Income, if the successful Applicant is a for-profit or commercial organization, any program income generated under the award will be deducted from the U.S. Government share of this award to determine the amount of USAID funding.

Program income will be subject to 2 CFR 200.307 for U.S. NGOs or the standard provision entitled Program Income for non-U.S. NGOs. If the successful Applicant is/are a PIO, any program income generated under the award will be added to USAID funding (and any non-USAID funding that may be provided) and used for program purposes.

F.5 Environmental Compliance

1a). The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID’s activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID’s Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201.5.10g and 204 (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ADS/200/>), which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities. Offeror environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this NOFO.

1b). In addition, the recipient must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter shall govern.

1c) No activity funded under this NOFO will be implemented unless an environmental threshold determination, as defined by 22 CFR 216, has been reached for that activity, as documented in a Request for Categorical Exclusion (Asia 22-155) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO) on February 24, 2023. (Hereinafter, such documents are described as “approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.”)

2a) As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the recipient, in collaboration with the USAID Assistance Office Representation (AOR)_and Mission

Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this award to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.

2b) If the recipient plans any new activities outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation, it shall prepare an amendment to the documentation for USAID review and approval. No such new activities shall be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval of environmental documentation amendments.

2c) Any ongoing activities found to be outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation shall be halted until an amendment to the documentation is submitted and written approval is received from USAID.

F.6 Branding & Marking

It is a federal statutory and regulatory requirement that all USAID programs, projects, activities, public communications, and commodities that USAID partially or fully funded under a USAID grant or cooperative agreement or other assistance award or sub-award, must be marked appropriately overseas with the USAID identity. See Section 641, Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended and 2 CFR 700.16.

Under the regulation, USAID requires the submission of a Branding Strategy and a Marking Plan by the Apparently Successful Applicant, as defined in the regulation. A Branding Implementation Strategy and Marking Plan must be in accordance with USAID Branding and Marking Plan as required per ADS 320 at the following link:

<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/320.pdf>

The Branding and Marking Plan may include a request for a waiver or exceptions to marking requirements established in 2 CFR 700.16. The Agreement Officer is responsible for evaluating and approving the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan (including any request for exceptions and waiver) of the ASA, consistent with the provisions” Branding Strategy”, “Marking Plan”, and “Marking of USAID-funded Assistance Awards” contained in AAPD 05-11 and in 2 CFR 700.16. Please note that in contrast to “exception” to marking requirements, waivers based on circumstances in the host country must be approved by the Mission Director or other USAID Principal Officers, see 1 CFR 700.16(j).

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SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

G.1 AGENCY POINT OF CONTACT(POC) FOR QUESTIONS

Agency Point of Contact

Name: Charushila Lal

Title: Acquisition and Assistance Specialist

Above is the Point of contact (POC) for questions while the funding opportunity is open.

All prospective Applicants must send their questions in writing by the due date and time specified on the cover page of this NOFO, so that a reply can reach all prospective Applicants before the submission of their Initial Concept Note. Oral explanations or instructions given before the award will not be binding. Any information given to a prospective Applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective Applicants as an amendment of this NOFO if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if a lack of the information would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicants.

Any questions concerning this NOFO must be submitted in writing to indiarco@usaid.gov with a copy to clal@usaid.gov. In the subject line please indicate “**Questions Regarding the NOFO# 72038623RFA00003**”. Applicants will retain for their records one copy of all enclosures which accompany their application.

G.2 Acquisition and Assistance Ombudsman

The A&A Ombudsman helps ensure equitable treatment of all parties who participate in USAID’s acquisition and assistance process. The A&A Ombudsman serves as a resource for all organizations who are doing or wish to do business with USAID. Please visit this page for additional information: <https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/acquisition-assistanceombudsman>.

The A&A Ombudsman may be contacted via: Ombudsman@usaid.gov.

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SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. Any award and subsequent incremental funding will be subject to the availability of funds and continued relevance to Agency programming.

Applications with Proprietary Data

Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purposes, should mark the cover page with the following: “This application includes data that must not be disclosed, duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, an award is made as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government will have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting award. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government’s right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets {insert sheet numbers}.”

Additionally, the applicant must mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following:

“Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application.”

Additional information available to Applicants includes:

1. ADS 201.3.15.3; USAID’s Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdact200.pdf)
2. USAID India’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy <https://www.usaid.gov/india/cdcs>
3. USAID’s Climate Change and Development Strategy 2012-2018 (2012). (<http://www.usaid.gov/climate/strategy>)
4. USAID’s Global Climate Change Initiative. (<http://www.usaid.gov/climate/us-gcci>).
5. USAID Standard Provisions:
 - (i) ADS 303mab, Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations.
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303mab.pdf>
 - (ii) ADS 303mab, Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental Organizations.
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303maa.pdf>

6. Certifications, Assurances, Other Statement of the Recipient

(1) “Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient” ADS 303mav document found at <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303mav.pdf>

(2) Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)

(3) Certificate of Compliance: Please submit a copy of your Certificate of Compliance if your organization's systems have been certified by USAID/Washington's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Annex 1: Preliminary Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Analysis.

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