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Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, Uganda
Addendum to BAA-OAA-LLDI-2019
Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) for Locally Led Development Innovation

Background

Uganda hosts the largest population of refugees in Africa, which currently includes over 1.43 million people who have fled conflict, political instability, and human rights abuses. Although the recent focus has been on South Sudanese and Congolese refugees, Uganda has hosted refugees from neighboring countries for nearly 50 years and currently hosts refugees from over nine countries.

With the understanding that protracted crises often lead to increased challenges that cannot be tackled through a humanitarian lens alone, the Government of Uganda adopted the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in 2017. The CRRF provides a framework for “a more systematic and sustainable response that benefits both refugees and the communities that host them.” The CRRF provides an organizing framework for advancing humanitarian-development nexus approaches. Although lessons to improve implementation of the CRRF abound, the few programs that have sought to address the nexus space have not yielded enough data to build a convincing evidence base regarding what effective interventions within a nexus approach look like.

As the largest donor of humanitarian and development assistance in Uganda, USAID recognizes the need, as well as the opportunities under Uganda’s liberal refugee policies, for stakeholders to work together to further empower both refugees and their host communities and to find better long-term solutions that support displaced populations affected by protracted crises. USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance has already provided more than \$368 million for refugee emergency food assistance since 2016; however, it is acknowledged that indefinite emergency assistance is not a solution for longer-term needs. Severe ration cuts, the COVID-19 pandemic, and other recent shocks have further demonstrated that new solutions are needed to help empower vulnerable refugee and refugee-hosting households to be able to better meet their own basic needs, and further engage in livelihoods and economic growth.

USAID plans to address these needs by exploring and contributing to evidence of how inclusive push-pull market strengthening approaches¹ can decrease vulnerability among refugees and host

¹ Push-pull approaches can look at increasing capacities of vulnerable households to engage in market activities, as well as simultaneously increasing the economic opportunities available to them. For more information, please see: https://www.marketlinks.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/LEO_Framework_for_a_Push_Pull_Approach_to_Inclusive_Market_Systems_Devel....pdf

communities. Without robust evidence-based models that demonstrate a pathway for self-reliance under a nexus approach, humanitarian assistance will continue to be needed in perpetuity in protracted crises.

Solutions Sought

USAID is interested in working with coalitions of stakeholders, including non-traditional partners², to co-create and collaborate on push-pull market strengthening solutions to increase participation of refugees and their host communities (both individuals and/or groups of refugees or community members) in market-driven, sustainable livelihoods. Solutions should use a nexus approach³, leveraging the strengths of both the humanitarian and development systems. These solutions could include applied research and development of approaches and interventions that generate data towards an evidence base that can inform and practically guide what programming under a nexus approach looks like.

Stakeholders encouraged to express interest include, but are not limited to, private sector and other market actors, foundations, humanitarian and development organizations, research and educational institutions, and other organizations that can work together on collaborative solutions. The focus of this collaboration will be **in Lamwo and Isingiro Districts only**, although learning from these solutions are expected to contribute to overall programming in other refugee settlements in Uganda and beyond.

USAID has identified three thematic areas for receiving expressions of interest (EOI). EOIs must address at least one of the themes, although USAID encourages multiple themes to be addressed in a single EOI given their interrelated nature. Within these themes, USAID posits illustrative questions, and welcomes applicants to address them in their EOIs. As the questions are illustrative, EOIs may address other types of questions related to solving this challenge under the themes. These include:

Theme 1: Increasing availability and diversity of market opportunities for households to build sustainable livelihoods - USAID is interested in a wide range of innovative approaches that help transition refugee and host communities from indefinite direct humanitarian assistance to greater self-reliance and resilience.⁴ EOIs are encouraged to consider the knowledge base on how push/pull market strengthening approaches support pathways out of poverty, as well as how a diverse livelihood strategy helps increase resilience of vulnerable households.⁵ USAID has identified relevant guiding questions with regard to increasing availability and diversity of market opportunities for households to build sustainable livelihoods in Lamwo and Isingiro Districts.

² A range of entities are encouraged to apply, even those without registration under DUNS. However, USAID does not anticipate funding individuals under this BAA.

³ Globally referred to as the “humanitarian-development nexus” or the “humanitarian-development-peace nexus,” hereafter referred to as the “nexus” in this document. For more: <https://opm.go.ug/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-uganda/>

⁴ For more information on resilience and self-reliance in Uganda’s refugee response, please see <https://opm.go.ug/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-uganda/>

⁵ For more information on push/pull approaches, livelihoods diversification, and sustainable poverty escapes, please see <https://www.marketlinks.org/>

- a. What are the best ways to leverage Uganda's agriculture-led growth strategies to bring more refugees and host communities into market-led agricultural opportunities?
- b. Not all refugees and Ugandans are farmers, nor are farming activities feasible for many vulnerable groups. What are some under-leveraged or novel ways to increase sustainable off-farm livelihoods?
- c. Markets, and the needed skills to compete, often change in the years after a refugee/host community member finishes a vocational/business training program. How can we better coordinate and link with refugee vocational training/business training programs to ensure graduates of these initiatives are part of an inclusive market system that helps them sustain and grow their enterprises?

Theme 2: Increasing access to, and availability of, key productive assets and critical services, including finance - An inclusive market system requires the collaboration of a wide range of diverse stakeholders. Addressing systemic issues that challenge self-reliance requires efforts of not only the development and humanitarian actors expected to implement the nexus approach, but also the government, civil society institutions, and private sector entities. The CRRF emphasizes a 'whole-of-government' approach across line ministries horizontally, as well as vertically between central and local governments. Market actors involve stakeholders both in the public and private sectors, and refugee and host communities themselves should be considered market actors as workers, business operators, traders, and customers who all contribute to market systems themselves. USAID has identified relevant guiding questions to this thematic area including:

- a. How can stakeholders encourage private sector investment into refugee-hosting areas, including equity investments, loans for equipment and working capital, technical services, and other support to refugees and host community groups?
- b. What are the barriers to access savings, credit, and other financial services for refugees? What needs to happen for refugees to be considered viable clients and participants within the financial service ecosystem? Are there new or promising financial services or products that can be developed or scaled to provide refugee and host community members/groups with high-quality financial services that meet their particular needs?
- c. What are the key barriers local governments face to expanding and increasing the quality of key services, such as extension services, that help increase productivity and commercialization in refugee hosting areas?

Theme 3: Increasing capacities of, and coordination between, key actors - Nearly all key policies and strategic documents on refugee and host community livelihoods promote the central participation of the private sector. However, the extent to which the private sector, non-governmental organizations, refugee groups, local governments, and coordination bodies have been able to meaningfully interact and implement a common vision with the private sector has been limited. Should applicants propose solutions under this theme, ideas that go beyond deepening constructive interactions and capacities to result in concrete commitments between the private sector and other stakeholders would be welcomed.

- a. **Private Sector Actors** - What actions are needed to better engage local, regional, and national private-sector actors and build up their understanding of the profitable opportunities working in refugee-hosting areas? What business information, as well as foundational understanding of refugee profiles, skills, and rights, can help encourage investment in refugee-hosting areas? How can the private sector, public sector, and humanitarian and/or development organizations move beyond corporate social responsibility models or donor-subsidized agribusiness services to market-driven approaches that can help businesses and refugees/host communities engage in mutually profitable opportunities?
- b. **Development and Humanitarian Actors, including international non-governmental organizations and local organizations** - How can not-for-profit organizations better work with for-profit entities to advance refugee and host community livelihoods? For example, how do we get to shared value initiatives that will advance business interests of the company and refugees/host communities; and how can organizations transfer private sector engagement capacities to refugees and host communities themselves?
- c. **Refugee and Host Community Groups** - How can we build capacities of refugee and host community savings or livelihoods groups to run as profitable businesses that can make their own mutually beneficial contracts and relationships with other businesses (such as for input supply, transport or marketing services, etc.)?
- d. **Local Government Entities** - How can we work with District and Sub-County governments in refugee-hosting areas to better support their capacity to take the lead in attracting, negotiating, and bringing private sector to their constituents to help grow businesses, offer capital, and invest in value addition capacities?
- e. **Coordination between stakeholders** - How can we strengthen and support coordination, so that the push interventions implemented by both humanitarian and development actors better link with each other, as well as with pull interventions? How can existing coordination bodies help stakeholders better address barriers to private-sector investment?

The Need for New Approaches

Despite a favorable refugee hosting environment, the vast majority of refugees within Uganda remain critically dependent upon humanitarian assistance for their survival. Even with decades of humanitarian assistance, some refugee settlements have shown an increase in dependency rates, indicating the need to approach refugee assistance as part of a complex environment where refugee livelihoods are integrated into a broader system that leverages the gains from development programs. This also reflects the need for approaches in line with the Uganda Livelihoods and Resilience Sector's strategic objective to "stabilize the livelihoods of refugees, transition from humanitarian to development assistance, and integrate them into local economies to promote resilient livelihoods and achieve self-resilience." While acknowledging that shocks and unexpected events can affect the dynamics, increased investments in refugee

self-reliance should correlate with reduced dependence on humanitarian assistance.

New approaches that address these objectives should use a rigorous lens to examine gender, conflict, and environmental dynamics. EOIs should reflect how proposed approaches empower youth, women, and vulnerable populations, support meaningful feedback loops with stakeholders, and prioritize Accountability to Affected Populations, social cohesion, and energy and environment. As part of the need to better understand if these new approaches lead to the desired results of more resilient livelihoods, USAID will work with successful applicants to co-develop monitoring and evaluation plans and learning agendas appropriate to the approaches proposed (note, monitoring and evaluation plans and learning agendas are not required as part of the EOIs).

Guidance for Expression of Interests/Concept Notes

Expressions of Interests should follow the submission and formatting instructions below.

Concept notes will be submitted after co-creation workshops, and per the guidelines outlined in the [Broad Agency Announcement for Locally Led Development Innovation](#). Proposed EOIs and subsequent concept notes may be at any of the following stages of development:

1. Testing impact and delivery - testing a promising concept toward improved outcomes and/or viability, as well as operational refinement to build paths to sustainability and scale.
2. Scaling-up - adaptation of a rigorously evaluated innovation to new contexts and geographies and engagement of additional partners who will help scale the project beyond USAID support, but for whom more evidence of success and track record are needed.

Submission Instructions

Please submit your EOI indicating the research, new approaches, or development idea which will address the Solutions Sought from the list above. Your submission should clearly state how you intend to increase knowledge and seek potential solutions; exploit scientific discoveries or improvements in technology, materials, processes, methods, devices, or techniques; advance the state of the art; or use scientific and technical knowledge in the design, development, testing, or evaluation of a potential new product or service (or of an improvement in an existing product or service). Organizations are encouraged to consider collaborating with peer organizations that bring differing perspectives and/or comparative advantages. In addition to the description of the solution, applicants should describe any cost-share, matching, or leveraging, if applicable.

Organizations may submit more than one EOI. Each EOI should clearly address at least one of the three themes listed above in the Solutions Sought section. Addressing multiple themes in a single EOI is encouraged. USAID also encourages organizations to consider innovative partnerships that assemble a range of organizational capacities to address the thematic area(s). The questions provided under each theme are illustrative; organizations submitting EOI may speak to related matters as relevant.

Expression of Interest Information Formatting

EOI Information must:

1. Be in English;
2. Be no more than 4 pages in length - and no smaller than 12 point font;
3. Be submitted electronically to BHA.FY21.UgandaBAA@usaid.gov;
4. Contain a header with the following information (included in the page count):
 - a. Respondent Name/Group;
 - b. Contact Information;
 - c. Response Title;
 - d. BAA Addendum Name/Number;
5. Be in .pdf, or .docx format;
6. Include a footer with page numbers; and
7. Describe your organization's idea/approach.

USAID may invite submitters of EOI(s) to participate in one or more co-creation workshops with other successful applicants to jointly develop basic research, applied research, and/or research and development/pilot activities for potential funding. All applicants are encouraged to read the full announcement closely for guidance on the stages of co-creation.

Review of Submissions and Selection Criteria

Stage 1: USAID will review and select EOIs submitted in accordance with the guidelines and criteria set forth in this Addendum and the Evaluation Criteria described in Section V of the Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) for Locally Led Development Innovation. USAID reserves the right not to review any EOIs that do not meet the submission instruction guidelines.

Stage 2: Selected groups will be invited to join one or more potential co-creation workshops where USAID, partners, and selected groups may gather to collaboratively develop activities designed to achieve the objectives articulated in this Addendum. Organizations may be asked to develop short concept papers or full proposals following these co-creation workshops for potential funding. USAID will communicate any required annexes to the partners as part of the development of these concept papers or proposals.

An invitation is sent to a potential partner to participate in a co-creation workshop, conference, meeting, to work together with all invitees to further develop the idea presented in the expression of interest. USAID anticipates the co-creation workshop to happen in March 2021. The co-creation workshop will advance opportunities for invitees to work with each other and form partnerships to strengthen concepts. Due to constraints in travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, co-creation workshop(s) will be held virtually. Costs for participants in these events will not be reimbursed by USAID.

Stage 3: Final concept papers or proposals produced after co-creation workshops will be submitted to USAID's Peer and Scientific Review Board. Approved concept papers or proposals for activities will be further refined and potentially implemented based on a decision at that time by USAID whether to proceed to implementation - and based on the availability of funds.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be applied to all EOIs:

1. Idea/Approach: Soundness of your idea/approach related to inclusive push/pull market-strengthening approach(es), as a potential solution to how multiple systems can be better leveraged and coordinated via a nexus approach to strengthen livelihoods of both refugee and host community populations. USAID will look at whether your idea/approach reflects a thoughtful understanding of the local context, the landscape of prior and ongoing work locally, and challenges inherent in bringing together Uganda's humanitarian and development systems through a nexus approach, and posits realistic solutions. A number of pilots and concepts in push-pull market systems strengthening, as well as refugee livelihoods, have already been tested in Uganda. USAID encourages interested applicants to integrate existing evidence, analysis, and learning into your idea/approach to the greatest extent possible. Additionally, USAID is interested in the scalability of ideas/approaches proposed in Uganda and other protracted humanitarian settings. Lastly, applicants should specify their technical expertise and capability that allows execution of the idea/approach.

2. Partnership expectations and value: Ability of your organization, or coalition of organizations, to navigate the nexus; namely, that corresponding expertise in humanitarian systems, development systems, private sector, and market systems are all present. USAID recognizes that it is highly unlikely that one organization will have significant experience working in all of these systems in the targeted districts. While we would like to see these coalitions of capacities reflected in the EOIs, please note your idea/approach is paramount, and USAID will convene a co-creation workshop to help organizations connect, collaborate, and form coalitions. In the spirit of this collaboration, USAID neither requires, nor desires, coalitions that include exclusive teaming agreements, particularly for local Ugandan organizations.

3. Diversity of perspectives and capabilities: USAID seeks an approach that brings multiple diverse systems together into a "nexus" space. We seek to bring together a diverse set of co-creators in collaboration, which may include organizations and entities with which USAID does not typically partner, including private sector entities and other local actors. USAID values experience implementing adaptive and/or iterative activities, managing successful peer-to-peer networks, and catalyzing new ideas effectively.

4. Impact and goals of the activities: Describe the intended outcomes and goals of the concept, focusing on how it will lead to increased participation of refugees and host communities in market-based livelihoods and more inclusive market systems. EOIs should not duplicate existing programs, although descriptions of linkages and collaboration with other programs that help magnify the impact and goals of your proposed solution is welcomed.

Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this Addendum to the BAA-OAA-LLDI-2019, Uganda BAA should be directed to FY21.BHA.UgandaBAA@usaid.gov no later than 11:59pm EST on January 8, 2021.

Response Date

Please submit your expression of interest in English to FY21.BHA.UgandaBAA@usaid.gov no later than 11:59pm EST on February 5, 2021.