Issue Date: **April 26, 2021**
Deadline for Questions: **May 10, 2021**
Closing Date: **June 8th, 2021**
Closing Time: **14:00 GMT**

Subject: **Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: 72066921RFA00001**

Program Title: **Conservation Works**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) 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 Conservation Works activity. Eligibility for this award is not restricted.

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 and responsibility 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.

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 may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section D.6.f. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section D. The deadline for questions is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to 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,

Garth Patterson Digitally signed by Garth Patterson
Date: 2021.05.11 09:42:54 Z

Garth Patterson
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.

1. Introduction

The goal of the Conservation Works (CW) activity is to conserve biodiversity while increasing sustainable economic growth.

2. Background and Context

Liberia is home to approximately 4.3 million hectares of tropical forest, including 44 percent of the remaining Upper Guinean Rainforest. As of 2015, tropical forests occupied about 6.5 million hectares, 68 percent of Liberia's land surface. In addition to intact tropical forests, Liberia's forest cover includes tree crops (palm oil, rubber, and cocoa) and about 975,000 hectares of degraded forest.

Liberia's natural forests are rich in biodiversity, with concentrations of endemic, threatened, and endangered species. Iconic species such as the western chimpanzee, forest elephant, and pygmy hippopotamus garner attention, but more than 2,000 vascular plant species, 140 mammal species, 600 bird species, and 75 species of reptiles and amphibians inhabit Liberia. The International Union for Conservation of Nature lists eighty-nine Liberian species as threatened or endangered. Western Chimpanzees are under particular threat, and populations have declined by 80 percent since 1990. New species of trees, arthropods, mammals, and amphibians have recently been described.

The forest ecosystems of Liberia are great assets to the country. However, these assets are not managed sustainably, and threats abound. Liberia lost 1.53 million hectares (ha) of tree cover from 2001 to 2018. Slash and burn agriculture, logging, and the postwar revival of large-scale agroforestry and mining have resulted in the conversion of dense forest to degraded forest, agricultural land, and thickets. Additionally, hunting for bushmeat and other wildlife products has decimated populations of terrestrial species.

Poverty, corruption, weak capacity, and lack of political will compound threats to biodiversity. Rural Liberians subsist on approximately one USD per day and rural communities suffer from growing food insecurity. Economic opportunities are limited throughout the country and scarce in rural regions. The Government of Liberia (GOL) generally lacks the resources necessary to implement effective conservation programs. The Forest Development Authority (FDA) is underfunded and this limits the FDA's ability to fully carry out its mission.

International donor support for forest conservation has been significant over the past fifteen years. Donors and NGOs have invested in a variety of biodiversity conservation initiatives with generally positive results. USAID/Liberia has focused on supporting community forests and their potential to enhance land and resource rights, improve and diversify rural economies, and protect biodiversity through sustainable forest use. USAID/West Africa has supported PAs in transboundary landscapes, built the capacity to combat wildlife trafficking (CWT), and strengthened knowledge, actions plans, and coordination across the region through the West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change activity (WABiCC).

From 2007-2020, USAID/Liberia invested more than $45 million in community forests. The forest conservation strategy included the development of a legal framework for community forestry, creation of a nine-step process for community forest recognition, and support for community forests to gain authorization. USAID/Liberia also supported livelihood programs to reduce communities' reliance on forest resources. To date, this work has supported eleven community forests and improved management of approximately 54,000 Ha.

Despite these efforts, significant challenges remain. The FDA offers limited support for community forests, has put a moratorium on new community forest applications, and has stopped authorization of new community forests. Additionally, community forests have the authority to make management decisions, which means that a community forest currently practicing conservation management can easily alter their management plan to focus on logging. Most community forests are relatively small and community forests may not be contiguous. This lessens their value for conservation as large, contiguous areas are key for protecting iconic species like the forest elephant, Western chimpanzee, and pygmy hippopotamus.

USAID/West Africa's efforts through WABiCC have supported PAs and proposed protected areas (PPAs) in transboundary landscapes. These include the twin Gola Rainforest National Parks along the Sierra Leone - Liberia border; the Massif du Ziama Biosphere Reserve in Guinea and the Wologizi-Wonegizi PPAs in Liberia; the Tai National Park in Côte d'Ivoire and the Grebo-Krahn and Sapo National Parks in Liberia. Support for PAs and PPAs has several advantages over community forests. PAs have legal protection, a bill for each PA is voted on and passed by the legislature and signed into law by the President. The generally large, contiguous PAs provide critical habitat and allow animals to move seasonally or to establish new territories, especially for larger species. With legal protection and relatively high populations of wildlife, PAs are assets that can attract tourists and researchers, who can bring much needed money into communities bordering the PAs.

Despite the benefits of PAs, Liberia has only five protected areas. Twelve PPAs are currently in one of several stages of gazettement. Additionally, the FDA lacks resources and capacity to provide full protection to PAs, with illegal mining, hunting, and logging reported in some PAs. International conservation groups, some supported by USAID through WABiCC, often act as unofficial management partners.

Rural economies are nearly stagnant and challenge the ability of forest communities to be good stewards of forests, to better manage forest use and to reduce their dependence on forests. Community livelihoods programs have succeeded in improving incomes through increased agricultural productivity, diversified cropping, post-harvest processing, and beekeeping. However, these increases in incomes need to be augmented and additional options for economic growth need to be considered.

Protected areas depend on the existence of, and can help attract investment in, conservation compatible livelihoods and land uses. Ecotourism centered on protected areas is a widely supported and utilized strategy to drive economic growth while supporting biodiversity conservation. This approach has been successfully deployed across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The potential for tourism and ecotourism in Liberia is significant and forests and wildlife long ago destroyed in other West African countries remain in Liberia. These forests are Liberia's strategic advantage over its neighbors and small efforts to exploit the tourism value of these forests are underway. The GOL has voiced strong support for ecotourism development, and other donors have offered support. However, lack of infrastructure, accommodations, hospitality services, guides, GOL capacity, and tourist-friendly visa policies are only a few of the barriers to developing this industry.

Scientific research also plays an important role in biodiversity conservation. Whether academic research in plant ecology, wildlife behavior, or applied research on forest cover loss or human-wildlife conflict, research can increase attention and funding for particular species or geographies, and improve PA management planning and execution. Additionally, researchers often pave the way for ecotourists and have many of the same needs. However, few local or international researchers work in Liberia despite opportunities for discovery of new species, relatively undisturbed forests, and rare species. This is likely due to limited local capacity to support researchers, lack of basic laboratory facilities, and infrastructure challenges.

3. Activity Description

A. Purpose, Goals, and Objectives

The purpose of the USAID Conservation Works (CW) activity is to conserve threatened and endangered species, especially western chimpanzees, by strengthening Protected Areas (PA) and helping communities be less reliant on protected resources for their livelihoods. The goal of the CW activity will be to conserve biodiversity while increasing sustainable economic growth and it is expected to be achieved by: 1) strengthening protection and management for existing PAs and Proposed Protected Areas (PPA) landscapes and 2) increasing sustainable economic growth in targeted PPA and PA landscapes. The majority of the CW efforts will be focused on targeted landscapes within Liberia.

B. Development Hypothesis

If PPAs are legally recognized as PAs (objective 1); and
If protection and management of PPA and PA landscapes improves (objective 2); and
If communities living near PAs adopt and benefit from sustainable livelihoods strategies (objective 3); and
If PAs can be leveraged to attract conservation-compatible businesses in PA landscapes (objective 4);
Then local and national constituencies for conservation will increase, biodiversity will be conserved, and sustainable economic growth will increase in target areas.

C. Results Framework

The goal of the CW will be to conserve biodiversity while increasing economic growth in targeted areas. The four Intermediate Results (IR) are:

IR 1: Increase the number of Proposed Protected Areas (PPA) that are legally recognized as PAs. Interventions implemented under this IR will focus on securing legal recognition for PAs. This will include supporting communities and the FDA to meet requirements established by the Forestry Reform Law of 2006, the National Wildlife and Conservation Protected Area Management Law of 2016, and other applicable laws, regulations, and policies governing establishment of PAs.

Illustrative indicator: Number of new PAs in Liberia. Number of PPAs at each stage of the gazettment process.

IR 2: Improve protection and management of target PPA and PA landscapes at the local and national level. Interventions implemented under this IR will focus on increasing FDA and community capacity to protect and manage PPA and PA landscapes. Co-management with private sector entities may be utilized to attain this IR.

Illustrative indicator: Number of hectares under improved management.

IR 3: Increase prosperity and prospects for communities living around protected areas. Sustainable, local, community livelihood interventions will focus on catalyzing economic growth in forest communities by supporting sustainable livelihoods, including new community enterprises and improved access to financial services. These community-centered interventions will help shift dependence away from forest resources and towards more sustainable and resilient livelihood opportunities.

Illustrative indicator: Number of people with improved economic benefits as a result of natural resource management and/or biodiversity conservation.

IR 4: Increase economic growth by supporting conservation-compatible investment. Formal conservation enterprises may engage in a wide range of forest-friendly business activities, including but not exclusively in the ecotourism sector. National and community-level efforts will be necessary to ensure sustainable growth of formal conservation enterprises, including work to improve the policy and regulatory enabling environment for conservation enterprises. Continuous engagement and partnership with the formal private sector will be key to achieving this IR.

Illustrative indicator(s): Number of private sector partners engaged to establish or expand conservation enterprises. Number of jobs created by conservation enterprises. Number of tourist visitor days in national parks supported by the activity. Total dollar value invested by the private sector to establish or expand conservation enterprises.

Note: IR 3 and IR 4 are distinct in that IR 4 focuses on formal sector enterprises and engagement at the national and community level, while interventions supporting IR 3 will support less formal sustainable community livelihoods programs.

D. Geographic Focus

USAID, through consultations with stakeholders and the GOL, has identified the following PPA landscapes as priority for recognition as PAs. These landscapes were identified based on size, biodiversity, presence of USAID and other donor efforts, and other factors. The landscapes are ordered by priority and applicants should develop plans accordingly or provide detailed rationale for reprioritizing the list below. The applicants may propose working in alternate and/or additional landscapes and should provide detailed justification for working in these other landscapes. Work in these landscapes would support achievement of all four IRs. The priority landscapes are:

- Krahn-Bassa
- Cesto-Senkwhen
- Grand Kru - River Gee

USAID has similarly identified the East Nimba Nature Reserve (ENNR) landscape as a priority landscape for ecotourism and improved management. USAID considers this area to have high potential for ecotourism based on the existing transportation links with Monrovia, existing lodging and restaurants, and substantial natural attractions. Applicants may propose working in alternate and/or additional landscapes and should provide detailed justification for working in these other landscapes. Additionally, applicants should plan to create partnerships to promote growth of conservation enterprises throughout Liberia. applicants should also design interventions, such as marketing, that would benefit conservation enterprises throughout Liberia.

E. Implementation Approach: Key Principles

Key to the applicant's approach will be a partnership with the FDA and other GOL entities, civil society, efforts funded by USAID and other donors, and the private sector. Strong engagement and partnership with both the formal and informal private sector will be a critical element that contributes to the success of this activity. The applicant's approach should employ a theory of change and describe the sequence of proposed activities and/or results needed to achieve the intended results. The applicant should align activities to existing regional, national, and community plans, priorities, and capacities. The applicant should consult with other USAID-funded activities during work plan development to ensure that complementary areas are identified, efforts are aligned, and duplication is limited. Additionally, the applicant should consult with donor-funded efforts to ensure, where appropriate, that interventions are layered, sequenced, and "crowded in" to increase synergy and improve outcomes.

F. Sustainability

USAID/Liberia's investments aim to strengthen national and local institutions and systems to provide improved services after activities are completed. The portfolio takes a dual, topdown (i.e. national institutions) and bottom-up (i.e. civil society, local government, private sector, and community) approach. This approach helps ensure that the GOL supports implementers at the local level, while local learning and lessons are disseminated and vetted through national platforms to achieve greater impact and scale beyond the targeted intervention sites of the activity.

At the national level, the applicant should work with the FDA and other relevant national actors, as appropriate, to enable them to better meet their mandates related to the objectives of this activity. At the local level, the applicant should work closely with local governments and communities to develop skills and capacities that promote sustainable results. The applicant may work with Community Forests (CFs), but efforts should focus on engaging CFs to help meet CWA's objectives. The applicant should also work with the GOL to develop and clarify roles and responsibilities amongst institutions through support for policies, strategies, technical guidelines and protocols that will be in place after the activity ends. The applicant should also engage with and form strong partnerships with the private sector. These partnerships, and the resulting economic growth, will be a key element in conserving Liberia's biodiversity.

G. Gender, Youth, and Social Inclusion

Gender has been acknowledged as one of the basic areas that must be addressed if Liberia is to achieve its development goals. Gender inequalities, inequities, and stereotypes exist in all spheres of Liberian society, preventing women and men from developing and exercising their full human capabilities, affecting their quality of life, and limiting opportunities.

Gender parity is slowly improving in Liberia, but substantial disparities still exist. Women are less likely than men to own or manage firms and women are less able to access finance than men. Men tend to work fewer uncompensated hours than women, limiting women's ability to work paying jobs and their ability to accumulate wealth. Raising crops for household consumption is dominated by women while men typically cultivate cash crops. Harvest and management of forest products is dominated by men and women may be left out of forest management and ownership decisions. Activities implemented under this project should focus on eliminating barriers to gender parity and promoting female empowerment.

The applicant must contribute to bridging gender gaps by integrating gender in design, planning, implementation, and monitoring. The applicant must analyze gender dynamics associated with leadership and decision-making within relevant partner institutions, government, private sector, and civil society partners.

USAID/Liberia requires a detailed gender analysis at an early stage of award implementation. The analysis should build on previous assessments. The applicant must integrate the gender analysis findings in the annual work plans and propose how the identified gender disparities should be addressed, including the unique needs of children, women, displaced populations, and disadvantaged youth and men. The applicant must report results disaggregated by sex and age as appropriate.

This activity is rooted in a Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach, which is based on the belief that, "given guidance and support from caring adults, all youth (ages 10-29) can grow up healthy and productive, making positive contributions to their families and communities." PYD programs intentionally focus on developing competencies and behaviors that support pro-social attitudes, a clear and positive personal identity, and positive belief in the future. Services and opportunities are designed to support young people in developing a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and empowerment. For many, the PYD approach is a paradigm shift in the way that they think about youth, employment, leadership, health, environment, and its resources. The activity will include concrete and practical approaches that will not only address the challenges that youth face to enhance the activity results, but will also involve and support young people in the decision-making, management and leadership of this activity.

H. Social Safeguards

Because this activity involves work to establish and/or strengthen protected areas, certain requirements in the Joint Explanatory Statement to the FY 2020 Appropriations Act are applicable and a "Social Risk Mitigation Plan" describing how those requirements will be met must be included in the proposal (and by reference in any resulting award). The Plan must include the following required elements, including a means of documenting each element (engagement, assessment, monitoring, grievances and training):

- A description of how the applicant intends to provide for community engagement about the project and its potential environmental and social impacts, including consultation in accordance with USAID's Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Pro-IP Policy) when Indigenous Peoples are likely to be affected;
- A description of how the applicant intends to evaluate and assess environmental and social impact of the proposed project;

- A description of how the applicant will monitor the environmental and social impacts of its proposal, and mitigate such impacts as necessary;
- A Grievance and Redress Mechanism allowing members of the affected community to bring environmental and social grievances (including potential human rights violations) to the applicant, and a means for the applicant to report all such grievances to USAID.
- A plan for ensuring and monitoring that any eco-guards, park rangers, and other law enforcement personnel authorized to protect biodiversity are trained in and adhere to human rights standards.

I. Private Sector Engagement (PSE)

PSE is a strategic approach to planning and programming through which USAID consults, strategizes, aligns, collaborates, and implements with the private sector for greater scale, sustainability, and effectiveness of development. The private sector is an inextricable stakeholder in driving and sustaining outcomes capable of moving countries beyond the need for assistance. Today, the private sector is playing an unprecedented role in creating and shaping opportunities that improve the lives of the people and communities the U.S. Government supports. Private sources now represent nearly 90 percent of financial flows to developing countries worldwide.

PSE enables the USG to catalyze private sector markets, and partner expertise, interests, and assets in a manner that solves critical development problems and promotes effective market led development. Partnerships with the private sector are characterized as a collaboration between one or more private sector actors (as defined by USAID's PSE Policy) with aligned objectives, shared risk and shared reward.

The applicant must propose a plan or to engage and partner with the private sector to address biodiversity conservation challenges in Liberia.

J. COVID-19

The near and long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic remain largely unknown. The shock caused by the pandemic and efforts to mitigate its effects have impacted food and economic security, especially for rural Liberians. Given the substantial uncertainty about the impact of the pandemic, applicants should design interventions that are responsive to the effects of the pandemic and flexible enough to respond to potentially dynamic working conditions. applicants are encouraged to propose innovative interventions that address the effects of the pandemic-related shocks while meeting the CW goals and objectives.

K. Coordination

Coordination with other GOL and donor efforts will be critical to the success of CWA. The USAID West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emission Development (WABiLED) activity will commit substantial resources to biodiversity conservation in Liberia. Additionally, USAID/Liberia will initiate the Customary Land Management activity, which will work in the same landscapes as CWA to support community land tenure. The applicant should plan to coordinate with the two USAID activities as well as the Liberia Forest Section Project and similar activities funded by the European Union and other donors. Additionally, applicants should consider coordination with development efforts focused on education, health, and other sectors to improve outcomes.

L. Resilience

USAID is committed to helping build the resilience of vulnerable communities in areas subject to recurrent crises, increasing their ability to manage through crises without compromising their future well-being. Resilience building should be considered in designing interventions, building relationships with USAID-funded and other donor-funded projects, and establishing linkages with the private sector. Strengthening resilience capacities at the community level is critical, and shocks, stresses, and crises at the community level must be considered.

M. Environmental Safeguards

As part of its initial Work Plan, and subsequent Annual Work Plans, the Recipient will review all ongoing and planned activities to determine if they are within the scope of the Initial Environmental Examination (IEE). As required by ADS 204.5.4, the applicant, in collaboration with the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR), will actively monitor ongoing activities to ensure compliance with approved IEE recommendations, and modify or end activities that are not in compliance. The applicant must adhere to all requirements contained in 22 CFR 216 and must conduct an environmental review prior to any rehabilitation or construction activities that could potentially have environmental impacts. The Recipient will collaborate with the AOR to develop an Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP), and undertake periodic field visits to assess the implementation and performance of mitigation and monitoring measures, and to identify appropriate areas of improvement where necessary. Mitigation measures on environmental issues from the EMMP must be incorporated in the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan with further detail provided in the annual work plans.

Climate Risk Management (CRM) improves the effectiveness and sustainability of USAID's efforts in supporting countries in their journey to self-reliance. Liberia is highly vulnerable to climate variability and change. Increasing temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns may result in both water scarcity and extreme flooding, and environmental degradation that affects livelihoods, food security, and threatens biodiversity conservation efforts. Given these and other challenges, the applicant must articulate practices and interventions that will enable climate resilient approaches to support the sustainability of the investments to be made under this activity.

N. Key Personnel

The following positions are considered essential for this activity:

1. **Chief of Party:** The resident Chief of Party candidate is expected to have both technical and management experience and will be responsible for overall program management, including providing leadership to attain objectives, ensuring adequate communications with USAID, and identifying and mitigating program risks.

2. **Deputy Chief of Party:** The resident Deputy Chief of Party candidate is expected to have both technical and management experience.

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID intends to award one Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide $19,500,000 in total USAID funding over a five-year period.

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

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.301, the goal of the CW activity will be to conserve biodiversity while increasing economic growth in targeted areas. The four Intermediate Results (IR) are:

IR 1: Increase the number of Proposed Protected Areas (PPA) that are legally recognized as PAs. Interventions implemented under this IR will focus on securing legal recognition for PAs. This will include supporting communities and the FDA to meet requirements established by the Forestry Reform Law of 2006, the National Wildlife and Conservation Protected Area Management Law of 2016, and other applicable laws, regulations, and policies governing establishment of PAs.

Illustrative indicator: Number of new PAs in Liberia. Number of PPAs at each stage of the gazettment process.

IR 2: Improve protection and management of target PPA and PA landscapes at the local and national level. Interventions implemented under this IR will focus on increasing FDA and community capacity to protect and manage PPA and PA landscapes. Co-management with private sector entities may be utilized to attain this IR.

Illustrative indicator: Number of hectares under improved management.

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Illustrative indicator: Number of people with improved economic benefits as a result of natural resource management and/or biodiversity conservation.

IR 4: Increase economic growth by supporting conservation-compatible investment. Formal conservation enterprises may engage in a wide range of forest-friendly business activities, including but not exclusively in the ecotourism sector. National and community-level efforts will be necessary to ensure sustainable growth of formal conservation enterprises, including work to improve the policy and regulatory enabling environment for conservation enterprises. Continuous engagement and partnership with the formal private sector will be key to achieving this IR.

Illustrative indicator(s): Number of private sector partners engaged to establish or expand conservation enterprises. Number of jobs created by conservation enterprises. Number of tourist visitor days in national parks supported by the activity. Total dollar value invested by the private sector to establish or expand conservation enterprises.

<u>**Note:**</u> IR 3 and IR 4 are distinct in that IR 4 focuses on formal sector enterprises and engagement at the national and community level, while interventions supporting IR 3 will support less formal sustainable community livelihoods programs.

3. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The anticipated period of performance is five years. The estimated start date will be [to be included at time of award].

4. Substantial Involvement

Consistent with ADS 303.3.11, USAID/Liberia anticipates a close working partnership with the selected Applicant for this activity. USAID/Liberia, through the delegated Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) will exercise substantial involvement under this Cooperative Agreement in the following areas:

a. **Approval of the applicant's implementation plans during performance**: a detailed work plan for the first year of the program will be submitted within 60 days of award. An annual plan will be submitted one month to the end of each fiscal year, i.e. August 31st. The plans must incorporate scope, budget, and schedule, approvals, relationships, control and resource allocation. Plans will include the identification of responsibilities, critical completion milestones and activities, stored controls of all activity documents and hardware, financial and budget, scheduling and administrative procedures and technical standards as part of the design, procurement, and activity documentation/closeout procedures. The plan will indicate the interdependence of a wide variety of program functions, including administrative, legal, financial, institutional strengthening, operations and interface with USAID.

b. **Approval of key personnel:** key personnel positions will be identified and stated in the award. The Recipient must request prior approval from the USAID for the replacement of key personnel or changes in the key personnel positions:

   i. Chief of Party
   ii. Deputy Chief of Party

c. **Approval of the recipient's activity monitoring, evaluation and learning plan (AMELP).** The AMELP should reflect the expected project main results and specific outcome indicators and targets by year. The AMELP must demonstrate how all outcomes will support the activities' robust and evidence-based results. The AMELP will also include: the development hypothesis and critical assumptions; baseline values and targets to show progress over time; a summary of the key performance monitoring information, and; Performance Indicator Database System (PIDS) submission for each indicator that include detailed description of performance indicators to be tracked, source, method and schedule of data collection, appropriate disaggregation, known data limitations and planned actions to address the limitations. Baselines will be established within three months of award.

5. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this program is **935.**

6. 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 **Conservation Works** activity 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.

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility for this NOFO is not restricted.

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

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

Garth Patterson
Agreement Officer
Email: gpatterson@usaid.gov

Claudia Molina
Assistance Specialist
Email: cmolina@usaid.gov

2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO should be submitted via e-mail to the Agency's point of contacts in 1. above no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. 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.

Any information concerning this NOFO provided to a prospective Applicant will be provided to all other prospective Applicants through an amendment to the NOFO and posted publicly on www.grants.gov, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicant.

3. General Content and Form of Application

Preparation of Applications:

Each applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO. Applications must be submitted in two separate parts: the Technical Application and the Business (Cost) Application. This subsection addresses general content requirements applying to the full application. Please see subsections 5 and 6, below, for information on the content specific to the Technical and Business (Cost) applications. The Technical application must address technical aspects only while the Business (Cost) Application must present the costs, and address risk and other related issues.

Both the Technical and Business (Cost) Applications must include a cover page containing the following information:

- Name of the organization(s) submitting the application;

- Identification and signature of the primary contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address) and the identification of the alternate contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address);
- Program name
- Notice of Funding Opportunity number
- Name of any proposed sub-recipients or partnerships (identify if any of the organizations are local organizations, per USAID's definition of 'local entity' under ADS 303.

Any erasures or other changes to the application must be initialed 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.

Applications 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-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.
- 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 and PDF formats, except budget files which MUST be submitted in Microsoft Excel with accessible/unlocked formulas.
- The period of award identified in Section B of this NOFO must be used in the cost application.
- The technical application must be a searchable and editable Word format.
- The Detailed Budget must include an Excel spreadsheet with all cells unlocked and no hidden formulas or sheets. A PDF version of the Excel spreadsheet may be submitted in addition to the Excel version at the applicant's discretion, however, the official cost application submission is the unlocked Excel version.

Applicants must review, understand, and comply with all requirements 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.

4. Application Submission Procedures

Applications in response to this NOFO must be submitted no later than the closing date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Late applications will not be reviewed nor considered/may be considered at the discretion of the Agreement Officer. Applicants must retain proof of timely delivery in the form of system generated documentation of delivery receipt date and time/confirmation from the receiving office/certified mail receipt.

Applications must be submitted by email to cmolina@usaid.gov and gpatterson@usaid.gov. Email submissions must include the NOFO number and applicant's name in the subject line heading. In addition, for an application sent by multiple emails, the subject line must also indicate whether the email relates to the technical or cost application, and the desired sequence of the emails and their attachments (e.g. "No. 1 of 4", etc.). For example, if your cost application is being sent in two emails, the first email should have a subject line that states: "[NOFO number], [organization name], Cost Application, Part 1 of 2".

USAID's preference is that the technical application and the cost application each be submitted as consolidated email attachments, e.g. that you consolidate the various parts of a technical application into a single document before sending it. If this is not possible, please provide instructions on how to collate the attachments. USAID will not be responsible for errors in compiling electronic applications if no instructions are provided or if the instructions are unclear.

After submitting an application 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 or indicate in the file name if submitted via grants.gov 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 Liberia cannot guarantee their acceptance by the internet server. Email size must not exceed 10MB.

a. Initial Application

In order to help expedite the review process and alleviate the burden on Applicants, USAID/Liberia requests the submittal of Technical Applications limited to fourteen (14) pages. The proposed Estimated Total Amount may not exceed $19,500,000. The highest rated application will be invited to submit a Full Application for further review and evaluation (See SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION.)

b. Joint Program Description Development:

Following the evaluation of the initial applications, the highest rated, apparently successful Applicant will be invited to engage in a process of joint program description development with USAID and other stakeholders. The duration of this process is expected to be approximately three weeks. During this time the Applicant and any technical partners will join USG and other stakeholders virtually to develop a full Program Description jointly, as well as to discuss management issues, including proposed personnel and staffing plans. USAID plans to hold two meetings each week, with each meeting expected to last 2.5 hours. If your application is the highest rated, the details will be provided along with the invitation to develop the Full Application.

Proposed key personnel will be required to attend the joint program description development during local time in Liberia. Thereafter, the apparently successful Applicant will have additional time to prepare a final technical and cost application (the Full Application based on the results of the joint program description meeting) for USAID consideration for award. Any costs associated and incurred by the apparently successful Applicant will not be reimbursed by USAID. USAID will be responsible for logistic arrangements such as invitations to stakeholders for the joint program description meeting.

5. Technical Application Format

The technical application should be specific, complete, and presented concisely. The application must demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this program. The application should take into account the requirements of the program and merit review criteria found in this NOFO.

(a) Cover Page (1 page)

(b) Table of Contents (1 page)

Include major sections and page numbering to easily cross-reference and apply merit review criteria.

(c) Technical Application (no more than 14 pages)

The technical application body will include the following subsections:

i. Technical Approach
ii. Institutional Capability and Past Performance.
iii. Key Personnel and Management Plan;

A single page that includes the activity title, RFA number, the name of the organization(s) submitting application, contact person, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail, and address. Any proposed sub-awardees (or implementing partners) must be listed separately. If applicable, the TIN (Tax Identification Number) and DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) must also be listed on the cover page.

Technical Application: (no more than 14 pages)

The Technical Application body must be divided into the following three sections:

Technical Approach: (10 pages)

This section of the application must address each of the following issues:

- Strategy: describe the strategy to be used to achieve the proposed objectives.
- Activity Description and Timeline: describe the interventions that will be undertaken to achieve the proposed objectives. Provide a general timeline of interventions, including the implementation of an exit strategy and sustainability plan.
- Geographic Coverage: briefly describe the target landscapes and rationale for selection of these landscapes.
- Expected Impact: outline expected results and impacts and the mechanisms proposed to measure and monitor progress, achievements, and sustainability.
- Environmental Compliance: describe the approach to achieving environmental compliance.

- Social Safeguards and Protected Areas: in order to minimize or avoid social risks, the applicant must describe in one page or less how, in its support to PPAs and PAs, it will:
  - Engage communities regarding potential environmental and social impacts, including consultation in accordance with USAID's Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Pro-IP Policy) when Indigenous Peoples are may likely to be affected;
  - Consistent with international best practices, (a) assess the environmental and social impacts of the proposed project (consider IAIA social impact assessment guidance (https://www.iaia.org/uploads/pdf/SIA_Guidance_Document_IAIA.pdf), (b) avoid, mitigate or address negative impacts as appropriate, and (c) monitor the impacts of its proposal, particularly potential project impacts on land or resource rights claimed by affected local communities;
  - Train and monitor any eco-guards, park rangers, and other protected area law enforcement personnel regarding the professional and ethical execution of their duties, including upholding human rights, and document compliance with this requirement, as appropriate;
  - Establish and maintain a Grievance and Redress Mechanism, allowing members of the affected community to share environmental and social grievances (including potential human rights violations) with the offeror, and how such grievances will be reported to the USAID AOR within 72 hours.

Institutional Capability and Past Performance: (no more than 2 pages)

Institutional capability and past performance information must be provided and should relate to the specific technical nature of the Conservation Works Activity. Applicants should demonstrate experience and success in implementing comparable activities in terms of scope, magnitude, and complexity. The applicants should describe lessons learned during these past experiences and how these lessons-learned informed their proposed technical approach. Additionally, if sub-awarded implementer(s) are proposed, this same information should be provided related to their past experiences. Applicants must provide examples of significant impact of their past projects.

Key Personnel and Management Plan: (no more than 2 pages)

Key Personnel

Key personnel are those individuals whose performance is critical to the success of the Conservation Works Activity. USAID/Liberia has determined that these two positions must be the Chief of Party and Deputy Chief of Party.

The Applicant should propose individuals that they deem appropriate for the anticipated role of each position and have the sufficient managerial as well as technical capacity, expertise, experience, and academic qualifications.

Applicants must provide CVs for each proposed key personnel to demonstrate how each proposed individual is the best fit for the position. These CVs should not exceed two pages and should be included in an Annex. The Applicant should also submit three references, with complete contact information, for the proposed candidates, including their most recent supervisor. In cases where key personnel have worked for USAID-funded activities, the name and contact information for Contracting Officer Representative or Agree Officer Representative must be included. USAID reserves the right to contact other references not provided by the Applicant.

The list of references is not included in the two-page resume limit as should be included in an annex. The Applicant must also include a letter of commitment signed by each person proposed as key personnel confirming their present intention to serve in the stated position immediately upon award and their availability to serve for the term of the proposed Award.

Given the complexity of this program, USAID expects these key personnel to have the appropriate qualifications and experience to work as a team to manage a complex U.S. Government Program.

Chief of Party: The resident Chief of Party candidate is expected to have both technical and management experience and will be responsible for overall program management, including providing leadership to attain objectives, ensuring adequate communications with USAID, and identifying and mitigating program risks.

Deputy Chief of Party: The resident Deputy Chief of Party candidate is expected to have both technical and management experience.

Management Plan

Applicants should propose a comprehensive management plan that demonstrates the applicant's ability to effectively develop and manage a successful flagship activity that operates in both the public and private sectors, and functions in highly sensitive situations. The applicant should articulate the roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders, differentiating the Applicant versus proposed sub-awarded implementer(s) and the Home Office versus field-based staff. If the Applicant proposes sub-awarded implementer(s), they must briefly describe the method of identifying these sub-partners indicating whether or not they have existing relationships with these other organizations and the nature of the relationship. If the proposed management plan includes partners, the applicant should demonstrate experience leading an effective consortium.

In the event of two or more organizations applying together, USAID will award to a well-defined prime (legally registered entity) and sub-awardee relationship. Consortiums without a clear hierarchy and delineation of authority among members are discouraged. The applicant will present its strategy to retain key personnel throughout the life of the activity (especially the Chief of Party), as well as its contingency plan in the event any of the key personnel leaves the activity.

Annexes. The following should be presented as annexes not subject to the page limitations:

i. Resumes, letters of commitment, references, and table summarizing qualifications for proposed personnel.
ii. Draft Branding Strategy and Marking Plan
iii. Summary Staffing Plan and Organizational chart which, together, show the totality of positions proposed for all components of the implementation plan, inter-staff relationships and lines of communications. Include a narrative that helps explain the staffing plan and organization chart(s) and describes the advantages of the management approach.

6. Business (Cost) Application Format

The Business (Cost) Application must be submitted separately from the Technical Application. While no page limit exists for the full cost application, applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible while still providing the necessary information. The business (cost) application must illustrate the entire period of performance, using the budget format shown in the SF-424A.

Prior to award, applicants may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to assess the applicant's risk in accordance with 2 CFR 200.206. Applicants should not submit any additional information with their initial application.

The Cost Application must contain the following sections (which are further elaborated below this listing with the letters for each requirement):

a) Cover Page (See Section D.3 above for requirements)

b) SF 424 Form(s)

The applicant must sign and submit the cost application using the SF-424 series. Standard Forms can be accessed electronically at www.grants.gov or using the following links:

Instructions for SF-424	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424-instructions.html

Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html
Instructions for SF-424A	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424a-instructions.html
Budget Information (SF-424A)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html
Instructions for SF-424B	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424b-instructions.html
Assurances (SF-424B)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html

Failure to accurately complete these forms could result in the rejection of the application.

c) Required Certifications and Assurances

The applicant must complete the following documents and submit a signed copy with their application:

(1) "Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient" ADS 303mav document found at https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mav
(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).

d) Budget and Budget Narrative

The Budget must be submitted as one unprotected Excel file (MS Office 2000 or later versions) with visible formulas and references and must be broken out by project year, including itemization of the federal and non-federal (cost share) amount. Files must not contain any hidden or otherwise inaccessible cells. Budgets with hidden cells lengthen the cost analysis time required to make award, and may result in a rejection of the cost application. The Budget Narrative must contain sufficient detail to allow USAID to understand the proposed costs. The applicant must ensure the budgeted costs address any additional requirements identified in Section F, such as Branding and Marking. The Budget Narrative must be thorough, including sources for costs to support USAID's determination that the proposed costs are fair and reasonable.

The Budget must include the following worksheets or tabs, and contents, at a minimum:

- Summary Budget, inclusive of all program costs (federal and non-federal), broken out by major budget category and by year for activities implemented by the applicant and any potential sub-applicants for the entire period of the program. See Section H, Annex 1 for Summary Budget Template
- Detailed Budget, including a breakdown by year, sufficient to allow the Agency to determine that the costs represent a realistic and efficient use of funding to implement the applicant's program and are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.
- Detailed Budgets for each sub-awardee, for all federal funding and cost share, broken out by budget category and by year, for the entire implementation period of the project.

The Detailed Budget must contain the following budget categories and information, at a minimum:

1) Salaries and Allowances – Must be proposed consistent with 2 CFR 200.430 Compensation - Personal Services. The applicant's budget must include position title, salary rate, level of effort, and salary escalation factors for each position. Allowances, when proposed, must be broken down by specific type and by position. Applicants must explain all assumptions in the Budget Narrative. The Budget Narrative must demonstrate that the proposed compensation is reasonable for the services rendered and consistent with what is paid for similar work in other activities of the applicant. Applicants must provide their established written policies on personnel compensation. If the applicant's written policies do not address a specific element of compensation that is being proposed, the Budget Narrative must describe the rationale used and supporting market research.

2) Fringe Benefits – (if applicable) If the applicant has a fringe benefit rate approved by an agency of the U.S. Government, the applicant must use such rate and provide evidence of its approval. If an applicant does not have a fringe benefit rate approved, the applicant must propose a rate and explain how the applicant determined the rate. In this case, the Budget Narrative must include a detailed breakdown of all items included in fringe benefits (e.g., superannuation, gratuity, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in U.S. dollars and as a percentage of salaries.

3) Travel and Transportation – Provide details to explain the purpose of the trips, the number of trips, the origin and destination, the number of individuals traveling, and the duration of the trips. Per Diem and associated travel costs must be based on the applicant's normal travel policies. When appropriate please provide supporting documentation as an attachment, such as company travel policy, and explain assumptions in the Budget Narrative.

4) Procurement or Rental of Goods (Equipment & Supplies), Services, and Real Property – Must include information on estimated types of equipment, models, supplies and the cost per unit and quantity. The Budget Narrative must include the purpose of the equipment and supplies and the basis for the estimates. The Budget Narrative must support the necessity of any rental costs and reasonableness in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable property, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased.

5) Subawards – Specify the budget for the portion of the program to be passed through to any subrecipients. See 2 CFR 200 for assistance in determining whether the sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor. The subrecipient budgets must align with the same requirements as the applicant's budget, including those related to fringe and indirect costs.

6) Construction – If applicable

7) Other Direct Costs – This may include other costs not elsewhere specified, such as report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, as well as any other miscellaneous costs which directly benefit the program proposed by the applicant. The applicant should indicate the subject, venue and duration of any proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs. Otherwise, the narrative should be minimal.

8) Indirect Costs – Applicants must indicate whether they are proposing indirect costs or will charge all costs directly. In order to better understand indirect costs please see Subpart E of 2 CFR 200. The application must identify which approach they are requesting and provide the applicable supporting information. Below are the most commonly used Indirect Cost Rate methods:

   Method 1 - Direct Charge Only
   Eligibility: Any applicant
   Initial Application Requirements: See above on direct costs

   Method 2 - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)
   Eligibility: Any applicant with a NICRA issued by a USG Agency must use that NICRA
   Initial Application Requirements: If the applicant has a current NICRA, submit your approved NICRA and the associated disclosed practices. If your NICRA was issued by an Agency other than USAID, provide the contact information for the approving Agency. Additionally, at the Agency's discretion, a provisional rate may be set forth in the award subject to audit and finalization. See USAID's Indirect Cost Rate Guide for Non Profit Organizations for further guidance.

Method 3 - De minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC)
Eligibility: Any applicant that does not have a current NICRA
Initial Application Requirements: Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate an indirect rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. The applicant must describe which cost elements it charges indirectly vs. directly. See 2 CFR 200 for further information.

Method 4 - Indirect Costs Charged As A Fixed Amount
Eligibility: Non U.S. non-profit organizations without a NICRA may request, but approval is at the discretion of the AO
Initial Application Requirements: Provide the proposed fixed amount and a worksheet that includes the following:

- Total costs incurred by the organization for the previous fiscal year and estimates for the current year. Guidance *to AO: If the indirect costs are expected to be minimal or easily attributed to performance of a USAID agreement, the AO should delete this first bullet.*
- Indirect costs (common costs that benefit the day-to-day operations of the organization, including categories such as salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting, or that benefit and are identifiable to more than one program or activity, such as depreciation, rental costs, operations and maintenance of facilities, and telephone expenses) for the previous fiscal year and estimates for the current year
- Proposed method for prorating the indirect costs equitably and consistently across all programs and activities of using a base that measures the benefits of that particular cost to each program or activity to which the cost applies.

If the applicant does not have an approved NICRA, does not elect to utilize the 10% de minimis rate, and does not wish to use the Direct Charge method, the Agreement Officer will provide further instructions and may request additional supporting information, including financial statements and audits, should the application still be under consideration after the merit review. USAID is under no obligation to approve the applicant's requested method.

e) Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407

Inclusion of an item of cost in the detailed application budget does not satisfy any requirements for prior approval by the Agency. If the applicant would like the award to reflect approval of any cost elements for which prior written approval is specifically required for allowability, the applicant must specify and justify that cost. See 2 CFR 200.407 for information regarding which cost elements require prior written approval.

e) Approval of Subawards

The applicant must submit information for all subawards that it wishes to have approved at the time of award. For each proposed subaward the applicant must provide the following:

- Name of organization
- DUNS Number
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not appear on the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) list
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not have active exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM)
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not listed in the United Nations Security designation list
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not suspended or debarred
- Confirmation that the applicant has completed a risk assessment of the subrecipient, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.332(b)
- Any negative findings as a result of the risk assessment and the applicant's plan for mitigation.

f) DUN and Bradstreet and SAM Requirements

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier (DUNS number) and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements. Each applicant (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 DUNS number for the applicant and all proposed sub-recipients;
2. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. SAM is streamlining processes, eliminating the need to enter the same data multiple times, and consolidating hosting to make the process of doing business with the government more efficient (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.

DUNS number: http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform
SAM registration: http://www.sam.gov

Non-U.S. 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.

g) History of Performance

The applicant must provide information regarding its recent history of performance for all its cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs, not to exceed 5 as follows:
- Name of the Awarding Organization;
- Award Number;
- Activity Title;
- A brief description of the activity;
- Period of Performance;
- Award Amount;
- Reports and findings from any audits performed in the last 3 years, and
- Name of at least two (2) updated professional contacts who most directly observed the work at the organization for which the service was performed with complete current contact information including telephone number, and e-mail address for each proposed individual.

If the applicant encountered problems on any of the referenced Awards, it may provide a short explanation and the corrective action taken. The applicant should not provide general information on its performance. USAID reserves the right to obtain relevant information concerning an applicant's history of performance from any sources and may consider such information in its review of the applicant's risk. The Agency may request additional information and conduct a pre-award survey if it determines that it is necessary to inform the risk assessment.

h) Branding Strategy & Marking Plan

The apparently successful applicant will be asked to provide a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan to be evaluated and approved by the Agreement Officer and incorporated into any resulting award

1. Branding Strategy – Assistance (June 2012)

a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Branding Strategy," describing how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, and how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and host country citizens.

b. The request for a Branding Strategy, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.

c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Branding Strategy within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.

d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.

e. The Branding Strategy must include, at a minimum, all of the following:

(1) All estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth.

(2) The intended name of the program, project, or activity.

(i) USAID requires the applicant to use the “USAID Identity,” comprised of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline “from the American people” as found on the USAID Web site at http://www.usaid.gov/branding, unless Section VI of the RFA or APS states that the USAID Administrator has approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

(ii) USAID prefers local language translations of the phrase “made possible by (or with) the generous support of the American People” next to the USAID Identity when acknowledging contributions.

(iii) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity

(iv) If branding in the above manner is inappropriate or not possible, the applicant must explain how USAID's involvement will be showcased during publicity for the program or project.

(v) USAID prefers to fund projects that do not have a separate logo or identity that competes with the USAID Identity. If there is a plan to develop a separate logo to consistently identify this program, the applicant must attach a copy of the proposed logos. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

(3) The intended primary and secondary audiences for this project or program, including direct beneficiaries and any special target segments.

(4) Planned communication or program materials used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries.

(i) Describe the main program message.

(ii) Provide plans for training materials, posters, pamphlets, public service announcement, billboards, Web sites, and so forth, as appropriate.

(iii) Provide any plans to announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens, such as media releases, press conferences, public events, and so forth. Applicant must incorporate the USAID Identity and the message, "USAID is from the American People."

(iv) Provide any additional ideas to increase awareness that the American people support this project or program.

(5) Information on any direct involvement from host-country government or ministry, including any planned acknowledgement of the host-country government.

(6) Any other groups whose logo or identity the applicant will use on program materials and related materials. Indicate if they are a donor or why they will be visibly acknowledged, and if they will receive the same prominence as USAID.

f. The Agreement Officer will review the Branding Strategy to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.

g. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Branding Strategy will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement

2. Marking Plan – Assistance (June 2012)

a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Marking Plan," detailing the public communications, commodities, and program materials, and other items that will visibly bear the "USAID Identity," which comprises of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline "from the American people." The USAID Identity is the official marking for the Agency, and is found on the USAID Web site at http://www.usaid.gov/branding. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

b. The request for a Marking Plan, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.

c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Marking Plan within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.

d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.

e. The Marking Plan must include all of the following:

(1) A description of the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the applicant plans to produce and which will bear the USAID Identity as part of the award, including:

(i) Program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other sites physical in nature;

(ii) Technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audiovisual productions, public service announcements, Web sites/Internet activities, promotional, informational, media, or communications products funded by USAID;

(iii) Commodities, equipment, supplies, and other materials funded by USAID, including commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs; and

(iv) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.

(v) Events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences and other public activities. If the USAID Identity cannot be displayed, the recipient is encouraged to otherwise acknowledge USAID and the support of the American people.

(2) A table on the program deliverables with the following details:

(i) The program deliverables that the applicant plans to mark with the USAID Identity;

(ii) The type of marking and what materials the applicant will use to mark the program deliverables;

(iii) When in the performance period the applicant will mark the program deliverables, and where the applicant will place the marking;

(iv) What program deliverables the applicant does not plan to mark with the USAID Identity , and

(v) The rationale for not marking program deliverables.

(3) Any requests for an exemption from USAID marking requirements, and an explanation of why the exemption would apply. The applicant may request an exemption if USAID marking requirements would:

(i) Compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials. The applicant must identify the USAID Development Objective, Interim Result, or program goal furthered by an appearance of neutrality, or state why an aspect of the award is presumptively neutral. Identify by category or deliverable item, examples of material for which an exemption is sought.

(ii) Diminish the credibility of audits, reports, analyses, studies, or policy recommendations whose data or findings must be seen as independent. The applicant must explain why each particular deliverable must be seen as credible.

(iii) Undercut host-country government "ownership" of constitutions, laws, regulations, policies, studies, assessments, reports, publications, surveys or audits, public service announcements, or other communications. The applicant must explain why each particular item or product is better positioned as host-country government item or product.

(iv) Impair the functionality of an item. The applicant must explain how marking the item or commodity would impair its functionality.

(v) Incur substantial costs or be impractical. The applicant must explain why marking would not be cost beneficial or practical.

(vi) Offend local cultural or social norms, or be considered inappropriate. The applicant must identify the relevant norm, and explain why marking would violate that norm or otherwise be inappropriate.

(vii) Conflict with international law. The applicant must identify the applicable international law violated by the marking.

f. The Agreement Officer will consider the Marking Plan's adequacy and reasonableness and will approve or disapprove any exemption requests. The Marking Plan will be reviewed to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan. g. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Marking Plan, including any approved exemptions, will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement, and will apply for the term of the award unless provided otherwise.

(END OF PRE-AWARD TERM)

i) Funding Restrictions

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients 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.4 of this NOFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

j) 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 PRE-AWARD TERM)

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SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

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.

Technical and other factors will be evaluated relative to each other, as described here and prescribed by the Technical Application Format. The Technical Application will be scored by a Selection Committee (SC) using the criteria described in this section.

2. Review and Selection Process

a) Merit Review

USAID will conduct a merit review of all applications received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the following criteria shown in descending order of importance:

Technical Approach (Most important)

The extent to which the proposed technical approach comprehensively addresses how the Applicant will achieve the core objectives and provide a concise description of the strategy and methods, geographic coverage, environmental compliance, social safeguards, including collaborating with existing efforts and promoting sustainability and capacity building.

Institutional Capability and Past Performance (Second-most important)

The extent to which the Applicant and proposed sub-applicants (if applicable) demonstrates successful past performance in previous and/or ongoing projects.

Key Personnel and Management Plan (Least important)

This includes two sub-criteria of equal weight:
- Key Personnel: demonstrated appropriateness of key personnel.
- Management Plan: demonstrated ability to effectively develop, manage and maintain the proposed program outlined in the technical approach.

b) Business Review

The Agency will evaluate the cost application of the apparently successful applicant(s) under consideration for an award as a result of the merit criteria review to determine whether the costs are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.

The Agency will also consider (1) the extent of the applicant's understanding of the financial aspects of the program and the applicant's ability to perform the activities within the amount requested; (2) whether the applicant's plans will achieve the program objectives with reasonable economy and efficiency; and (3) whether any special conditions relating to costs should be included in the award.

Proposed cost share, if provided, will be reviewed for compliance with the standards set forth in 2 CFR 200.306, 2 CFR 700.10, and the Standard Provision "Cost Sharing (Matching)" for U.S. entities, or the Standard Provision "Cost Share" for non-U.S. entities.

The AO will perform a risk assessment (2 CFR 200.206). The AO may determine that a pre-award survey is required to inform the risk assessment in determining whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organizational, 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. Depending on the result of the risk assessment, the AO will decide to execute the award, not execute the award, or award with “specific conditions” (2 CFR 200.208).

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

Award of the agreement contemplated by this NOFO cannot be made until funds have been 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 for the award.

2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

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

For US organizations: ADS 303, 2 CFR 700, 2 CFR 200, and Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental organizations.

For Non US organizations: Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations.

3. Reporting Requirements

- **Financial Reporting:**

  Financial Reports must be in keeping with 2 CR 200.328. The SF 425 and the SF 425a will be used to report actual expenditures and are required on a quarterly basis. Quarterly financial reports within 30 days of the end of the reporting period must be submitted to the Agreement Officer (AO) and Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) via email.

- **Performance Reporting**

  The Recipient must submit a reporting format for AOR's approval prior to the submission of the reports.

  a) **Quarterly progress reports** not to exceed 20 pages excluding annexes within 30 days of the end of the reporting period. Quarterly progress reports should reference workplan activities, planned and implemented during the quarter, brief description of significant events during the reporting period, status of overall project progress and performance on key indicators, activities completed and not completed, results towards activity objectives, quarterly funds expended and projected by activity, total program expenses to date, and estimated amounts still available, pipeline analysis, and anticipated burn rates. The reports may cover cross-cutting areas and show the synergistic results of the activity. Quarterly reports should include success stories (not more than two-pages in length each). Success stories may be submitted during the quarter in question or along with the quarterly report.

b) The **fourth quarter or Annual Report** shall include an annual summary of performance and shall follow the same format as the quarterly reports, but additionally shall focus on accomplishments, progress and problems toward achievement of results, performance measures, indicators and benchmarks tied to the Annual Implementation Plan and the Performance Management Plan targets, for the quarter and the entire fiscal year. The final quarterly report of each fiscal year shall incorporate an annual cumulative result of data of indicators. It should also present lessons learned and make specific recommendations for further strengthening of the targeted intervention areas.

c) **Final Report.** The final report should follow the format and content guidelines for the annual report and include information from the entire activity implementation period. The Recipient shall submit the original and one copy to the Agreement Officer, the AOR, and to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC). Submission instructions to DEC can be found at: http://dec.usaid.gov .

4. Environmental Compliance

1 (a) 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 201.3.4.5c. 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. Recipient environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this NOFO/cooperative agreement.

(b) 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.

(c) No activity funded under this [CA] 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 (RCE), Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), or

Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO). (Hereinafter, such documents are described as "approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.")

(a) As part of its initial Implementation Plan, and all annual implementation plans thereafter, the [recipient], in collaboration with the Agreement Officer's Representative and Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this [CA] to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.

(b) 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.

(c) 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.

A Categorical Exclusion is recommended for the following classes of activities, as per CFR §216.2(c)(2): (i) education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.); (v) document and information transfers; (xiv) studies, projects or programs intended to develop the capability of recipient countries to engage in development planning, except to the extent designed to result in activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.); and (xv) activities which involve the application of design criteria or standards developed and approved by USAID.

This activity is captured under the Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) "Conservation Works". The IEE was concurred by the Bureau Environmental Officer, Brian Hirsch on March 17,2021. It was approved by Sara R. Walter, Mission Director, on February 20, 2021. The majority of current and planned health activities have received categorical exclusions with negative with conditions determination. The IEE covers the period June 2021 to June 2027.

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

1. NOFO Points of Contact

Garth Patterson
Agreement Officer
Email: gpatterson@usaid.gov

Claudia Molina
Assistance Specialist
Email: cmolina@usaid.gov

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-assistance-ombudsman

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.

<u>Applications with Proprietary Data</u>

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 purpose, 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."

<u>Taxes in Liberia</u>

USAID assistance to Liberia is provided a general exemption from any taxes imposed under laws in effect in Liberia pursuant to the Development Objective Grant Agreement between the United States of America and the Republic of Liberia signed May 22, 2020, which applies to, but is not limited to:

"(1) any activity, contract, grant or other implementing agreement financed by USAID under the agreement; (2) any transaction or supplies, equipment, materials, property or other goods under (1) above; (3) any contractor, grantee, or other organization carrying out activities financed by USAID under theAgreement; (4) any employee of such organizations; and (5) any individual contractor or grantee carrying out activities financed by USAID under the agreement."

ANNEX 1 - SUMMARY BUDGET TEMPLATE

Item/Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total USAID
A. Personnel						
B. Fringe Benefits						
C. Travel						
D. Supplies and Equipment						
E. Subawards						
F. Other Direct Costs						
G. Indirect Cost						
TOTAL						