USAID | UKRAINE
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Subject:	**NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) NUMBER: 72012119RFA00005**
Program Title:	**Agriculture Growing Rural Opportunities (AGRO) Activity in Ukraine**

NOFO Issuance Date:	May 24, 2019
Deadline for Questions:	June 10, 2019 by 10:00 am Kyiv local time
Concept Notes Closing Date:	July 1, 2019 by 6:00 pm Kyiv local time

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Regional Contracting Office in Kyiv, Ukraine is seeking applications from qualified U.S. or Non-U.S. non-profit or for-profit Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and other qualified non-U.S. Government organizations for funding of an activity entitled "Agriculture Growing Rural Opportunities (AGRO) Activity in Ukraine".

Eligible organizations interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this funding opportunity thoroughly to understand the type of program sought (Section I), application submission requirements (Section III and IV) and evaluation process and review criteria (Section V).

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO, and meet eligibility standards in Section III of this NOFO. Applicants who are not currently registered in DUNS and SAM, should do so as soon as possible as the process can take several weeks (see Section III (E) and Section IV(D)).

This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. Any future amendments to this NOFO can be downloaded from www.grants.gov. Potential applicants should regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this NOFO. It is the responsibility of the applicant 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.

Questions concerning the NOFO should be submitted in writing to Ms. Elena Parinova, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist at eparinova@usaid.gov and Ms. Olga Luchuk-Vysotska at oluchukvysotska@usaid.gov, with a copy to me at mtelevantos@usaid.gov, by the deadline above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice and posted to www.grants.gov, if necessary.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of USAID, nor does it commit USAID to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application, or participation in oral presentations. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. Further, USAID reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. Award will be made to that responsible applicant(s) whose application best meets the requirements of this NOFO and the merit review criteria contained herein. Final award cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal USAID procedures.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

/s/

Maria Televantos
Agreement Officer

Table of Contents

SECTION I – PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Program Title: **Agriculture Growing Rural Opportunities (AGRO) Activity in Ukraine**

1. Activity Goal

Accelerate economic development of rural Ukrainian communities with the greatest need in through a better governed agricultural sector, to encourage more productive, modern, and profitable small and medium agricultural businesses that are successfully integrated into competitive markets both in Ukraine and internationally.

High level results of AGRO are as follows:

- increased revenue of agricultural small and medium enterprises;
- increased access of agricultural SMEs to financing;
- establishment of fair and transparent agricultural land market (land reform);
- reducing corruption in the agriculture sector.

2. Problem Statement

Since independence, Ukraine has made little progress in developing its rural communities so that they can offer attractive livelihoods for citizens. Rural populations still suffer from poverty, outdated infrastructure, low-quality services, corruption, and lack of economic opportunities, which forces young people to leave, robbing rural areas of most productive forces that can drive their economic revitalization. The agriculture sector can be an engine of economic growth in rural areas and a driver for sustainable improvement of living standards for rural citizens. Ukraine has all key ingredients for success in agriculture: fertile land, access to water, and favorable climate. The agriculture sector can arguably be the driver of economic growth in Ukraine. It accounts for 11% of the country's GDP, almost 20% of employment, and nearly 40% of total exports. While these statistics seem encouraging, they mask considerable productivity gaps and missed opportunities to benefit from adding value to agricultural produce.

The Ukrainian agriculture sector is dominated by large, vertically-integrated companies (agroholdings) that produce commodities for export, mainly grain, and oil seeds. These types of low value-added commodities consistently make up almost 60% of Ukrainian agricultural exports. Domination of large mechanized farms in the sector, absence of an agricultural land market, and lack of access to finance, combine to limit economic opportunities for the 30% of Ukrainians who live in rural areas. Rural poverty is widespread, being almost two times higher than in urban areas of Ukraine. In this context, development of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SME) is critical to creating more attractive rural livelihoods. However, growth in sub-sectors with high SME concentration (e.g., fruits, vegetables, meat, and dairy) significantly lags behind growth rates in grain, sunflower, and soya production, which increased by 75%, 103%, and 187%, respectively, from 2010 to 2016, reaching 22%, 25%, and 21%, respectively. The dairy sector demonstrated a drop in production by 5%.

The Russian trade ban introduced in 2014 detrimentally impacted Ukrainian producers, especially in horticulture and dairy. Farmers lost their traditional markets not only in Russia, but also in Central Asia. In order to succeed, Ukrainian agricultural businesses need to access new markets and comply with new standards and demands. Access to finance, modern technology, and understanding of market demands are the key requirements for Ukrainian producers to succeed.

The lack of progress in land reform, particularly in establishing a fair and transparent agricultural land market, is a significant impediment for the sector to attract financial resources. Resources are severely needed for sector modernization and development of SMEs that focus on value-added production. The unfinished business of land reform is a source of endemic corruption, impeding growth in the sector. Prospects of establishing an agricultural land market before 2020 are limited, in light of the upcoming elections in 2019, as this topic is very politically sensitive.

The role of the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food as the lead Government of Ukraine (GOU) institution in the agriculture sector is critical to advancing balanced, inclusive, and evidence-based agricultural policies that would stimulate sector development. In 2018, the Ministry underwent institutional restructuring with the aim of strengthening its capacity to effectively lead sector reform.

3. USAID Assistance in Agriculture Sector

USAID currently implements two activities aimed at developing Ukraine's agriculture sector: the Credit for Agriculture Producers (CAP) activity and the Agriculture and Rural Development Support (ARDS) activity.

a) Credit for Agriculture Activity (CAP)

CAP is a four-year, $5 million credit union activity with a performance period of 2016-2020. CAP seeks to build stronger, better managed, and more transparent credit unions in order to increase the access of small farmers to finance. To date, CAP has introduced more effective regulatory oversight principles and procedures for credit unions; improved internal management standards for credit unions; and strengthened two national associations to provide better services to their credit union members. AGRO will not entirely replace CAP, though access to finance will be a significant component of AGRO.

b) Agriculture and Rural Development Support (ARDS)

ARDS is the Mission's flagship, four-year, $21.8 million agriculture activity with a performance period of 2016-2020. ARDS supports broad-based, resilient economic growth through a more inclusive, competitive, and better-governed agriculture sector that provides attractive livelihoods in rural areas of Ukraine. Two years into implementation, the activity has made considerable progress with private sector engagement, leveraging nearly $6 million in private sector resources in over 20 joint projects that engaged more than 40,000 small and medium farmers.

ARDS advances land reform to create a fair, open agricultural land market to combat corruption and unlock new investment in Ukraine. The activity's efforts focus on increased reform awareness and demand, as well as building consensus over the future land market by providing analytical advice to local stakeholders in the government and private sector.

In order to eliminate endemic corruption in public land management, sustainably mobilize domestic resources, and secure communities' commitment to drive local economic development through better land management, ARDS partners with local businesses and consolidated communities to roll-out an innovative and participatory local land management system to 79 communities in six oblasts in the east of Ukraine.

4. Approach to AGRO Implementation

In order to achieve the overarching objective of this activity, USAID seeks to support a program that will implement a set of interventions both at the grassroots and national levels in order to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of small and medium agricultural businesses. The activity will aim to diversify Ukraine's agriculture sector and stimulate more value-added production.

At the grassroots level, AGRO will support initiatives that will have a transformative effect on targeted agricultural value chains and create a critical mass of market system actors that will sustainably drive change across those value chains. Private sector engagement and resource leveraging will be at the center of this component to ensure local ownership and sustainability. Incorporating modern technology will be critical to increasing productivity, efficiency, product quality, and competitiveness of SMEs in target value chains. The activity is expected to build on partnerships that were established by previous USAID activities, including CAP and ARDS.

The primary beneficiaries of AGRO will be micro-, small-, and medium-sized agricultural enterprises (MSME) that demonstrate a commitment to adapting modern quality and safety standards. To maximize impact and sustainability of results, AGRO will prioritize working together with private sector partners (e.g., aggregators and/or processors) to help small farmers implement modern quality standards and increase their competitiveness instead of targeting multiple small farmers directly.

AGRO will partner with and build the capacity of rural communities to create a better enabling environment for business development, both agricultural and non-agricultural. This, in turn, will stabilize rural economies through expanded economic opportunities for rural citizens, especially youth.

The geographic focus of the activity will be eastern and southern Ukraine (Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, Mykolaiv, and Odesa Oblasts) with specific geographic areas to be identified after a thorough analysis. AGRO will conduct a baseline rapid assessment to determine the specific target geographic areas and value chains to select. At a minimum, the rapid assessment will consider the following factors:

- rural poverty rates;
- opportunities for agricultural SME business development at scale;
- commitment of local government authorities and the private sector to contribute;
- continuation of relationships developed by previous USAID programs;
- duplication, synergies, and/or existence of other agricultural activities being implemented by USAID and other donors; and
- impact of assistance to selected value chains on U.S. export of similar agricultural products.

While the focus should be eastern and southern Ukraine, AGRO may be implemented in other oblasts if and when evidence or other needs support this, including for replication of successful models.

Previous USAID agricultural assistance activities targeted fruit, vegetable, meat, and dairy value chains. AGRO will take a broader approach and consider additional value chains, based on factors that include, but are not limited to, potential for rapid and sustainable SME growth at scale, adding value, breadth of impact on disadvantaged categories of producers, and market demand. USAID will not support export commodities that are dominated by agroholdings, namely grain and oilseed crops.

Scalability and potential for broad replication will be a key consideration for design and implementation of models and solutions by the activity.

At the national policy level, anti-corruption will be the key priority across all assistance efforts. Assistance will be focused on building the capacity of GOU institutions and associations that have equities in the agriculture sector in order to develop more balanced, transparent, inclusive, and evidence-based policies that will create a better enabling environment for SMEs in the target value chains. AGRO will coordinate its policy agenda with that of the GOU, but at the same time will have a flexible approach to setting policy priorities for assistance, and actively take advantage of windows of opportunity to engage in areas that have a strong potential to impact agricultural SMEs positively. The activity will give special focus to land reform and to the establishment of a fair and transparent land market in Ukraine that would benefit agricultural SMEs as well as integrate mechanisms to protect land property rights of landowners and small disadvantaged farmers.

5. Cross-Cutting Factors to Integrate Into AGRO Activity Design and Implementation

- **Collaboration, Learning and Adapting (CLA).** USAID's CLA approach is based on the understanding that development efforts yield more effective results if they are coordinated and collaborative; test promising new approaches in a continuous yet also rapid, targeted search for generating improvements and efficiencies; and build on what works and eliminate what does not. More details about CLA are available in Section VI, B. Award Administration (reporting).

- AGRO will fully implement USAID's CLA policy and agenda. In the context of CLA, the implementing partner will closely collaborate with USAID throughout AGRO implementation and will actively adapt activities based on lessons learned.
- USAID and the World Bank have built a strong partnership in advancing agricultural sector development and will continue to build on this partnership during implementation of USAID and the World Bank's new programs. AGRO will play a central role in this collaboration between USAID and World Bank.

- **Market Systems Approach.** This approach will recognize the limitations of efforts that seek to address system constraints in isolation, without considering the larger scale — formal and informal rules, supporting functions, and the interplay between market system actors. AGRO will take a holistic approach and, in addition to targeting system actors directly engaged in the core functions of a value chain, it will involve participants from supporting functions of the value chain and those involved with regulations that govern the system.

- **Anti-Corruption.** The activity will address corruption by increasing transparency of government functions and information (especially using technology); strengthening the sector's watchdog organizations (such as business associations, investigative journalists, think tanks, government inspector general, and civil society); and engaging key stakeholders and the public in using public pressure to roll back corruption.

- **Adaptive Management.** The Ukrainian agriculture sector operates in an increasingly complex environment shaped by market and commercial forces, corruption, new technologies and techniques, the impact of a changing climate, policy pressures on and from the government, and an ambitious agenda of international donors. To be effective in this environment, AGRO must be agile, and structured to adapt to changes in needs and opportunities in a timely and intentional way. To better understand and respond to contextual dynamics, the activity must incorporate constant learning, measuring, innovating, and iterating. Adaptive management is a structured, iterative process of robust decision making in the face of uncertainty, with the aim of reducing uncertainty. This can be achieved over time via systems monitoring. AGRO will emphasize an approach that is flexible, employs systems analysis, relies on M&E data for informed decision-making, and integrates continuous learning and adaptation into its interventions.

- **Elections.** The design and award process of the AGRO activity is expected to take place during 2019, a year of presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine. The design should integrate flexible approaches that will allow reorientation as needed, if/when shifts in the political landscape and GOU and broader local partners' agendas occur.

- **Gender**. Views of women's roles in the agricultural sector in Ukraine reflect longstanding gender stereotypes and barriers, which is further accentuated by the lack of women in key decision-making roles in businesses and government. This provides an opportunity for increased integration of gender considerations into AGRO activities, including efforts to promote dialogue with both men and women about existing gender barriers. AGRO will support women to develop formal businesses in agriculture, link them to formal markets, and also introduce them to other viable rural-based business options. The Recipient will encourage more diversified labor opportunities, including management and technical roles for women. As part of ongoing reform efforts, AGRO should support GOU and agricultural or rural development associations to develop support mechanisms for rural women, such as programs that would encourage female entrepreneurship. Additionally, AGRO should expand activities to publicly promote successful female-owned SMEs, including encouraging greater peer mentorship among female owned businesses and farms.

To achieve the overarching objective, USAID plans to co-design the AGRO activity with the apparently successful applicant. The activity will focus on three areas as shown below.

6. Focus Area 1: Productivity and Market Access

Agricultural productivity in Ukraine still lags behind mature agricultural markets. Productivity gains are especially important for MSME agribusinesses and farmers who produce roughly 50-90% of Ukraine's fruit, vegetable, meat, and dairy output, and face significant production inefficiencies. The activity will select target value chains based on analysis and then design and implement specific interventions to increase their productivity. An important part of the approach should be to improve supporting infrastructure, including irrigation and post-harvest handling.

Irrigation. Access to irrigation is increasingly important for agricultural productivity, especially in the south of Ukraine. Existing irrigation infrastructure is largely inefficient and dilapidated. AGRO will assist local partners and communities with solutions that will ensure sustainable access to irrigation for farmers and rural communities. The activity will give particular focus to smart energy and water efficient irrigation technologies. These technologies will be integrated into small-scale irrigation solutions to support rural agricultural development and yields. When the new National Irrigation Strategy is approved by the Cabinet of Ministers, the activity will provide assistance in its implementation, such as training and building capacity of new, local institutions that will be integrated into the decentralized management of existing and future irrigation systems. AGRO will be expected to scale up and replicate successful intervention models.

Infrastructure for Post-Harvest Handling, Storage, and Processing. Ukraine's agricultural output and exports are dominated by grain, sunflower oil, and oilseeds. These low value-added commodities collectively contribute to 60% of total agricultural exports. The lack of an efficient processing industry and limited high value-added services and processes presents a missed opportunity for Ukraine in increasing revenues from agri-food product sales. To maximize profitability, Ukrainian farmers need access to supporting infrastructure, technology, markets, knowledge transfer, and services. Efficient modern infrastructure for supporting value-added products does not exist in Ukraine at the scale that could transform Ukrainian agriculture into a more inclusive and diversified sector. AGRO will help develop modern post-harvest handling, storage, and processing facilities, necessary to stimulate the development of target value chains for SMEs.

<u>Market Access</u>. Productivity and value-added at the farm level are suboptimal without efficient and effective marketing. Until the Euromaidan events in 2014, Russia and Central Asia were the largest buyers of Ukrainian fruits, vegetables, and dairy products. These traditional markets had a low threshold with respect to food safety and quality; therefore, Ukrainian producers had little or no incentive to invest in higher quality produce compliant with international food safety standards. Since Euromaidan, Ukraine has shifted exports of its fruits and vegetables from Russia towards the European Union, Middle East, Asia, and Africa. To be successful in these new markets, Ukrainian companies have to implement higher standards of product safety and food quality, which requires them to learn how to meet these new standards and market demands.

The activity will assist partners in target value chains to evaluate and enter new markets, both in Ukraine and internationally. A key element will be to build the capacity of these partners to better understand and implement international food safety and quality standards.

7. Focus Area 2: Access to Finance

Achieving productivity gains and meeting the demands and requirements of new markets presents Ukrainian agricultural producers with significant economic investment challenges. AGRO will build linkages with the financial sector, both bank and non-bank financial institutions, to increase access to financial products and services that are fair and affordable. With the establishment of an agricultural land market in Ukraine, the activity will develop and implement solutions to unlock availability of financing for land markets as soon as possible. Examples of interventions may include, but are not be limited to, building the capacity of financial service providers to issue loans for land purchases, and facilitating financial transactions that will help in Ukraine’s rural finance transformation.

8. Focus Area 3: Policy and Enabling Environment

The activity will partner with public and private sector stakeholders to develop more inclusive, transparent, and effective agricultural policies that reduce corruption opportunities. As the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food underwent major institutional restructuring in 2018, AGRO will look for opportunities to support the Ministry’s efforts in developing and implementing sector reforms. It will also continue building the capacity of and engaging sector associations in meaningful policy dialogue. AGRO will also seek to streamline sector regulations, by building the capacity of associations to assume regulatory functions over select sectors in line with best EU and international practices. Land reform will be the area of central focus in the activity's policy engagement.

Land Reform. Ukraine has unfinished business in establishing an agricultural land market. This is one of the country's most critical reforms with the potential to transform the economy, attract billions in new investment, and stimulate long-term development of the agriculture sector. While the exact date for establishing the land market is yet to be determined, the market will likely be established during the life of the activity. AGRO will combine top-down and bottom-up approaches to build commitment to, and demand for, reform among stakeholders and the broader public.

Local Enabling Environment. AGRO will partner with rural communities to build their capacity to determine and address community development priorities, mobilize domestic resources, combat corruption, increase investment in community infrastructure, and manage available resources, such as land. These efforts will create a more attractive operational environment for agricultural SME development. Under this focus area, the activity should also build opportunities and capacity of non-agricultural SMEs that have potential to drive economic development in rural areas, especially those concentrating on service provision.

[END OF SECTION I]

SECTION II – FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

The award under this NOFO will be administered through and managed by USAID/Ukraine.

1. Estimated Total Funding Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

Subject to funding availability, USAID anticipates awarding one (1) Cooperative Agreement with a total estimated amount up to $35,000,000 over a 5-year period. The actual funding amount is subject to availability of funds.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The estimated start date will be on or about September 30, 2019. The anticipated period of performance will be five (5) years from the effective date of the award.

3. Type of Award

The award under this NOFO is anticipated to be a Cooperative Agreement. In accordance with ADS 303.3.11, Cooperative Agreements permit the "substantial involvement" of USAID in certain aspects of the supported project.

4. Substantial Involvement

USAID considers collaboration with the awardee crucial for the successful implementation of this program. Substantial involvement is deemed necessary and, therefore, is anticipated between USAID and the Recipient during the performance of this activity.

Substantial involvement under the AGRO award shall include the following:

a. Approval of Implementation Plan: The Recipient shall prepare and provide the annual implementation plan for the AOR's approval. This also includes the initial implementation plan. Any significant changes to the plan will also require additional approval from the AOR.

b. Approval of specified key personnel assigned to the positions listed below: The following positions are designated as key personnel positions and are subject to approval by the Agreement Officer:

- Chief of Party,
- Deputy Chief of Party,
- Land Reform Team Lead,
- Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Advisor,
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager.

USAID will be consulted early in the process of any proposed changes, and USAID will approve any changes in key personnel prior to the change.

c. Agency and Recipient Joint Collaboration or Participation:

i. *Approval of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:* The AOR will review and approve the Recipient's monitoring and evaluation and learning (MEL) plan, inclusive of realistic and appropriate performance indicators and plans for periodic evaluation of activities.

ii. *Approval of Sub-Awards:* 2 CFR 200.308 already requires the recipient to obtain the AO's prior approval for the subaward, transfer, or contracting out of any work under an award. USAID shall have substantial involvement in the criteria and selection of sub-award recipients through means of collaboration and joint participation. Subawards less than $150,000 shall be approved by AOR. Subawards of $150,000 or more shall be approved by AO.

iii**.** *Agency Authority to Immediately Halt a Construction Activity*: If construction is authorized as part of the award, the AO may immediately halt a construction activity if identified specifications are not met.

iv. Collaboration with USAID: The Recipient will collaborate with the AOR to provide technical input to inform USAID about the agricultural sector and the activity, including but not limited to, policy brief and activity updates. Specific activities will be detailed in AGRO implementation plans.

The recipient will be expected to meet regularly (via phone, email or in person) with the AOR or his/her designee to review the status of activities, and should be prepared to make periodic briefings to USAID as appropriate.

Recipients shall immediately notify USAID of developments that have a significant impact on the award-supported activities. Also, notification shall be given in the case of problems, delays, or adverse conditions which materially impair the ability to meet the objectives of the award. This notification shall include a statement of the action taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation.

5. Title to Property

Property title under the resultant agreement shall vest with the Recipient in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700.

6. Authorized Geographic Code

The authorized Geographic Code for procurement of goods and services under this award is 937 and 110 as described in 22 CFR 228.

For accurate identification of prohibited sources, please refer to 22 CFR 228 and Automated Directive System (ADS) 310 entitled “Source and Nationality Requirements for Procurement of Commodities and Services Financed by USAID.

7. Purpose of the Award

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient and under the subject activity is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support of the AGRO Program in Ukraine described in the Program Description, in Section I of this NOFO.

The Recipient will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the activity 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, activity objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award. The Recipient using its own unique combination of staff, facilities, and experience, has the primary responsibility for employing whatever form of sound organization and management techniques may be necessary in order to assure proper and efficient administration of the resulting award.

[END OF SECTION II]

SECTION III - ELIGIBLITY INFORMATION

A. Types of Entities Eligible to Apply

USAID encourages applications from potential new partners. USAID will not accept applications from individuals.

To be eligible for award of a Cooperative Agreement, in addition to other conditions of this NOFO, organizations must have a commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries and adherence to equal opportunity employment practices. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation.

The following types of entities are **eligible** to apply for funding under this NOFO:

1. **U.S. and Non-U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

   a) **U.S. and Non-U.S. Non-Profit Organizations**

   U.S. and non-U.S. private non-profit organizations may apply for funding under this NOFO.

   b) **U.S. and Non-U.S. For-Profit Organizations**

   U.S. and non-U.S. private for-profit organizations may apply for funding under this NOFO. Potential for-profit applicants should note that, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.400(g), profit, which is any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs, is not an allowable cost for recipients of USAID assistance awards, and cannot be part of the project budget. However, the prohibition against profit does not apply to procurement contracts made under the assistance instrument when the recipient procures goods and services in accordance with the Procurement Standards found in 2 CFR 200.317 to 326.

   c) **U.S. and Non-U.S. Colleges and Universities**

   U.S. and non-U.S. colleges and universities may apply for funding under this NOFO. USAID generally treats colleges and universities as NGOs, rather than governmental organizations; hence, both public and private colleges and universities are eligible, except public colleges and universities in countries that are ineligible for assistance under the FAA or related appropriations acts. Please note, however, that this NOFO is focused on people-to-people programming that addresses divisions within a community and is not intended to fund academic research.

2. **Public International Organizations (PIOs)**

PIOs may apply for funding under this NOFO. Please see ADS 308 for USAID policy on PIOs: http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/308

B. Registration as a Private Voluntary Organization (PVO)

NGOs that meet the definition of a Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) as defined in 22 CFR 203 https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2016-title22-vol1/xml/CFR-2016-title22-vol1-part203.xml are encouraged to register as a PVO with USAID. Applicants may find registration instructions here: http://www.usaid.gov/pvo .

C. New Partners

USAID encourages applications from new partners that have not previously received U.S. Government funding. However, resultant awards to these organizations may be delayed because USAID generally must conduct pre-award surveys of these organizations in order to make a risk assessment decision, in accordance with ADS 303.3.9 (for NGOs; ADS 308 for PIOs). Please refer to Section V of this NOFO, for additional information on pre-award surveys.

D. Number of Applications that May be Submitted

Any one entity may submit one application for funding in response to this NOFO.

E. Registration

Each Applicant is required to provide a valid DUNS number and be registered in SAM before submitting the Concept Note required under Phase 1. USAID will not make an award to applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements as stated in Section IV, SUBMISSION INFORMATION, below.

F. Cost Sharing

ADS 303.3.10 (Cost Share) defines "cost share" as "the resources a recipient contributes to the total cost of an agreement. It is the portion of project or program costs not borne by the Federal Government." Although cost share is not required for this NOFO, USAID/Ukraine encourages the potential applicants to propose cost sharing since "it is critical that the activity continues after USAID assistance ends." These cost sharing requirements can ensure that the project establishes adequate alternate sources of funding, as well as give the applicant a financial stake in the success of the program. The applicants' proposed cost share may enable additional worthwhile activities to be undertaken which USAID funds could not support. Cost share may secure the programmatic and financial sustainability of the initiatives. USAID encourages applicants to propose for which activities and in which amount cost sharing will be applied. The exact level of cost share is left to applicants to propose per

303.3.10.1 (https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303.pdf). For NGO recipient contributions to qualify as cost share, the cost share must be verifiable from the recipient's records; for U.S. organizations it is subject to the requirements of 2 CFR 200.306, and for non-U.S. organizations it is subject to the Standard Provision, "Cost Share"; and can be audited. If the recipient does not meet its cost sharing requirement, it can result in questioned costs. The USAID Mission Agreement Officer will determine whether any proposed cost share shall become a condition of the award. For PIO recipients, while the term "cost sharing" is not used in USAID grants and cooperative agreements with PIOs, the concept of cost sharing is manifested by the USAID requirement that USAID must have audit rights, and the recipient must comply with USAID's procurement requirements, if USAID will be the sole contributor to a trust fund established by a PIO.

Any proposed cost share will be reviewed for compliance with applicable regulations and policies describe above in this section.

G. Third Country Participant Training

Third-country training must **not** take place in countries that are:

- Considered unfriendly by the U.S. Department of State and to which travel by U.S. citizens is prohibited; or
- Identified as terrorist countries by the Department of State.

[END OF SECTION III]

SECTION IV – SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. POINT OF CONTACT INFORMATION

The point of contact for this NOFO is Ms. Elena Parinova at eparinova@usaid.gov and Ms. Olga Luchuk-Vysotska at oluchukvysotska@usaid.gov, with a copy to Ms. Maria Televantos at mtelevantos@usaid.gov. The point of contact will receive all questions related to this NOFO by the deadline specified in the cover letter. Responses to the questions will be made available to all potential applicants through an amendment to this NOFO and posted on www.grants.gov. The point of contact will also receive all applications related to this NOFO by the closing date specified on the cover letter.

To be considered for this funding opportunity, all applicants must follow the procedures set out in this NOFO. USAID may exclude applicants from further consideration if any submission is not within these parameters. All submissions must be in English.

B. CONTENT AND FORMAT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The award process for AGRO contains three phases:

- Phase 1 - Concept Note,
- Phase 2 - Oral Presentations, and
- Phase 3 - Program Description Co-Design.

Only eligible and successful applicants from Phase 1 will be invited to participate in Phase 2. Only one eligible and successful applicant from Phase 2 will be invited to participate in Phase 3.

Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of the NOFO. Applicants are required to submit applications according to the instructions below.

PHASE 1 - CONCEPT NOTE

By the deadline indicated on the cover letter of this NOFO, applicants are invited to submit a Concept Note not to exceed six pages, and two Annexes, each not to exceed one page. Concept Notes will be evaluated by USAID, and then a limited number of applicants, no more than five, will be invited to Phase 2. No budget or cost application will be accepted during this phase. All concept notes must be in English.

The concept note should be specific, complete and presented concisely. The applicant should take into account the requirements of the activity and evaluation criteria found in this NOFO.

The Concept Note must contain the following information:

(A) Vision

To present the vision, the applicant must describe:

- the role of AGRO in advancing both the broad land reform agenda and establishment of an agricultural land market in particular;
- the role of AGRO in advancing the national level reforms and mobilizing partners at the grassroots level to ensure effective water and irrigation systems management for the benefit of sustainable development of small and medium farmers and rural communities.

(B) <u>Annex 1 - Chief of Party</u>

The applicant must provide a description of qualifications and experience of the proposed Chief of Party as they relate to accomplishment of the initial Program Description of the AGRO activity included in the NOFO. The Chief of Party must have substantial experience in managing large, multi-dimensional international technical assistance projects in agriculture of similar scope and size. Experience in the Europe and Eurasia region is desired.

(C) <u>Annex 2 - Capability Statement</u>

Applicant must describe their capacity, expertise and experience to implement AGRO.

The format of the Concept Note and Annexes is the following:

- Concept Note: no more than six pages;
- Annex 1 - Chief of Party qualifications: no more than one page;
- Annex 2 - Capability Statement: no more than one page;
- For all documents:
    - File: PDF;
    - Paper size: Letter or A4;
    - Font: Times New Roman, 12 point font.

<u>PHASE 2 - ORAL PRESENTATIONS</u>

Applicants who submitted the best technically acceptable concept notes, not to exceed five applicants, from Phase 1 will be invited to present their applications orally, in person to USAID/Ukraine in Kyiv. This in-person oral presentation is a requirement. Oral Presentations are expected to occur after the selected applicants have been notified and invited to participate in the oral presentations. Participation of the proposed Chief of Party in the oral presentations is desired but not required.

One week prior to Oral Presentations, applicants must submit to USAID PowerPoint slides for their Oral Presentations along with CVs and letters of commitment for the proposed key personnel. Applicants who succeeded from Phase to Phase 2 will be informed about the exact submission deadline.

<u>Timeline</u>: Selected applicants from Phase 2 should be ready to travel to Kyiv, Ukraine

for oral presentations two weeks after USAID notification.

The format and technical requirements for oral presentations are provided below. Additional information with regards to oral presentations, if any, will be made available to those applicants invited to participate in the oral presentations.

1. Technical Approach

Applicants must present an overview of their technical approach and explain how they will achieve results in all the focus areas outlined in the Program Description in Section I of this solicitation. The applicant must incorporate the detailed expected results that they will achieve under each of the high level results of AGRO:

- increased revenue of agricultural small and medium enterprises;
- increased access of agricultural SMEs to financing;
- establishment of fair and transparent agricultural land market (land reform);
- reducing corruption in the sector.

Applicants are discouraged from proposing generic, standard approaches to implementation of agricultural activities which could be applicable to any region. The expected results and the technical approach to achieving them must be clearly tailored to Ukraine's specific context and incorporate, at a minimum, the following considerations:

- Opportunities to engage private sector to achieve the activity objectives;
- Challenges and opportunities that pertain to small and medium agricultural producers in Ukraine;
- Context and challenges that are specific to the regions of AGRO's geographic focus, namely east and south of Ukraine;
- National and local context for land reform in Ukraine;
- Opportunities to eliminate corruption in the sector, specifically related to land governance, regulation, control, and certification.

Applicants must also address the cross-cutting factors identified in the Program Description in Section I in presenting their technical approach.

2. Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) Approach

Applicants must demonstrate an understanding and ability to effectively coordinate and collaborate with USAID, GOU initiatives, USAID programs and other donor programs, and other stakeholders; demonstrate an approach and system for monitoring, evaluating and managing performance while incorporating learning; and demonstrate the adaptability, flexibility and responsiveness to a dynamic context, including significant political, economic, and security constraints. Applicants must also demonstrate the ability to mobilize, especially at the onset of the activity, but also during the implementation of the project in the event of significant changes in the region (including demobilization if required).

3. Management and Staffing Plan

Applicants must present their approach to managing the activity. This includes the composition and organizational structure of the proposed team. Applicants must specify the structure and responsibilities of the entire program team, including home office support and subawardees, if any, and explain each team member's role in achieving the results and cross-cutting factors. Applicants must demonstrate how they will ensure effectiveness and efficiency, in order to achieve maximum benefits and results, and how they will utilize Ukrainian professionals for country staff. Additionally, applicants must present a management approach and dedicated personnel to ensure collaboration with the World Bank throughout implementation of AGRO.

The staffing plan must include key personnel and long-term staff positions (no names are required for the latter) and a description of each team member's role, technical expertise, and estimated amount of time to be devoted to each relevant activity. Applicants must present the following for all five key personnel positions identified below: job descriptions, qualifications, and a strategy to retain key personnel throughout the life of the AGRO activity, as well as its contingency plan in the event key personnel leave the activity.

The following positions are designated as key personnel:

- **Chief of Party (COP) – proposed in Phase 2**
- **Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) – proposed in Phase 2**
- Land Reform Team Lead – proposed in Phase 3
- Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Advisor – proposed in Phase 3
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager – proposed in Phase 3

At the Oral Presentation stage (Phase 2), applicants must propose the COP and DCOP as detailed below. Applicants must provide resumes for these key personnel (no longer than 3 pages each). Each resume must include multiple (maximum of three) references per candidate ideally from supervisors, colleagues, employees, and relevant donor organizations. Applicants must include a letter of commitment for each key personnel.

Of the COP and DCOP positions, at least one candidate is expected to have:

- substantial experience in market systems approach and/or using adaptive management techniques, and
- strong command of the Ukrainian language, both oral and written.

a) Chief of Party (COP)

The Chief of Party must have substantial experience in managing large, multi-dimensional international technical assistance projects in agriculture of similar scope and size. Experience in the Europe and Eurasia region is desired.

b) Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP)

The Deputy Chief of Party must have substantial experience in managing international technical assistance projects in agriculture. Experience in the Europe and Eurasia region is desired.

PHASE 3 - PROGRAM DESCRIPTION CO-DESIGN

After Phase 2 has concluded, the apparently successful applicant will co-design the program description with USAID/Ukraine and the World Bank.

The apparently successful applicant must propose the three additional key personnel (including the same resume and reference requirements noted in Phase 2) during Phase 3:

- Land Reform Team Lead,
- Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Advisor,
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager.

Additionally, the apparently successful applicant will develop a full cost application at this stage.

Timeline: An apparently successful applicant from Phase 2 must be ready to travel to Kyiv, Ukraine for the co-design process two weeks after USAID notification. We expect that the co-design process will take about one month. Applicants must provide a team that will be available to participate in the co-design process both in Ukraine and remotely.

Note: USAID may authorize pre-award costs (See Section IV, E. Funding Restrictions) for the travel and logistics of the apparently successful applicant to participate in Phase 3 (only one applicant).

C. RISK ASSESSMENT PRIOR TO ANY AWARD

Prior to making an award, the Agreement Officer will make a risk determination as required by ADS 303.3.9 and 2 CFR 200.205 prior to making an award.

Specifically, applicants will be requested to submit the following information:

1. **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement**

   The applicant must submit a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement NICRA if the organization has such an agreement with an agency or department of the U.S. Government. If no NICRA the applicant should submit the following:

Reviewed Financial Statements Report: a report issued by a Certified Public Account (CPA) documenting the review of the financial statements was performed in accordance with Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services; that management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation. The account must also state the he or she is not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the financial statements; or

Audited Financial Statements Report: An auditor issues a report documenting the audit was conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS), the financial statements are the responsibility of management, provides an opinion that the financial statements present fairly in all material respects the financial position of the company and the results of operations are in conformity with the applicable financial reporting framework (or issues a qualified opinion if the financial statements are not in conformity with the applicable financial reporting framework.

2. Certifications, Assurances and other Statements of the Applicant

Required assurance, certifications and representations: Applicants are required to complete Certifications, Assurances and other Statements of the Recipient. Please note that these certifications are required for both the applicant and all sub-grantees. Applicants may view the current Certifications, Assurances and Other Statements of the Recipient in ADS 303: http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mav (Parts I-V).

3. Additional Information

Applicants shall submit any additional evidence of financial responsibility deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to make a positive risk assessment to manage USG funds. The information submitted should substantiate that the applicant:

- Has adequate financial, management and personnel resources and systems, or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the award;
- Has the ability to comply with the award terms and conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the applicant, both nongovernmental and governmental;
- Has a satisfactory record of performance. Generally, relevant unsatisfactory performance in the past is enough to justify a finding of non- responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance or the applicant has taken adequate corrective measures to assure that it will be able to perform its functions satisfactory;
- Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics;
- Is otherwise qualified to receive an award under applicable laws and regulations.

4. 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).

5. **Statutory and Regulation Certifications**

   The applicant shall complete the certifications in Required Certifications (see above) and sign and date in the signature space provided. The signed and dated printout must then be submitted with the application as an attachment to the cost application.

D. DUN AND BRADSTREET UNIVERSAL NUMBERING SYSTEM (DUNS) NUMBER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (SAM)

USAID may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements 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.

Each applicant (unless the applicant has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

(i) Be registered in SAM (www.sam.gov) **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;
(ii) Provide a valid unique entity identifier DUNS number in its application; and
(iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active U.S. Government award or an application or plan under consideration by a U.S. Government awarding agency.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary documentation is complete and received on time.

Prospective applicants who are not currently registered in SAM are advised to begin the registration process IMMEDIATELY. For assistance with registering in SAM, please contact the supporting Federal Service Desk (FSD) at https://www.fsd.gov/. To obtain a DUNS number, please visit http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.

Quick reference guides for new grantee registration in SAM are provided in **Annexes** of this NOFO.

E. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

USAID may authorize pre-award costs only to the apparently successful applicant to participate in the co-design process. The Agreement Officer must provide prior approval to the apparently successful applicant for the specific pre-award costs. USAID will not consider reimbursement of any other pre-award costs.

USAID policy is not to award profit under assistance instruments to the Prime recipient. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the agreement program and are in accordance with applicable cost principles under 2 CFR 200 Subpart E. of the Uniform Administrative Requirements may be paid under the anticipated award.

F. POTENTIAL REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

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

The information submitted should substantiate:

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

[END OF SECTION IV]

SECTION V – REVIEW INFORMATION

A. MERIT REVIEW

PHASE 1 - CONCEPT NOTE

a) CONCEPT NOTE REVIEW

USAID will conduct merit reviews of all Concept Notes received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO. Concept Notes will be evaluated in accordance with the merit review criteria set forth below. No budget or cost application will be accepted during Phase 1; therefore, no cost information will be evaluated.

Concept Notes will be evaluated using an adjectival evaluation scale (exceptional, very good, satisfactory, marginal and unsatisfactory).

The criteria set forth below will be used by the technical review committee to evaluate all concept notes submitted in response to this NOFO. The criteria are listed in descending order of importance.

1. Vision

USAID will evaluate the appropriateness of the applicant's vision related to the two priority areas identified in Section IV.

2. Chief of Party

USAID will evaluate the extent to which the proposed Chief of Party has substantial experience in managing large, multi-dimensional international technical assistance projects in agriculture of similar scope and size.

3. Capability Statement

USAID will evaluate the extent to which the applicant's demonstrated capacity, expertise and experience are appropriate to implement AGRO.

b) COST REVIEW

No budget or cost application will be accepted during Phase 1; therefore, no cost information will be evaluated during Phase 1.

PHASE 2 - ORAL PRESENTATIONS

a) ORAL PRESENTATIONS EVALUATION

Oral presentations will be evaluated on the basis of the following three technical evaluation criteria, which must be presented at the oral presentation in Kyiv, Ukraine

Criterion 1: Technical Approach

USAID will evaluate the quality and appropriateness of the applicant's technical approach in achieving results in all the focus areas outlined in the Program Description in Section I. This includes, but is not limited to, the ambitiousness of the detailed results and the extent to which the approach incorporates the cross-cutting factors.

Criterion 2: Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) Approach

USAID will evaluate the quality and appropriateness of the applicant's CLA approach.

Criterion 3: Management and Staffing Plan

USAID will evaluate quality and appropriateness of the proposed Management and Staffing Plan to achieve results of the Program Description, including the qualifications and experience of the proposed COP and DCOP. The performance of key personnel in previous roles and success in carrying out similar roles may be evaluated by checking references.

b) COST EVALUATION

As budget details depend on the specifics outlined in the program description, a full cost application will be developed by the apparently successful applicant selected to co-design the program description and USAID after the program description is finalized.

PHASE 3 - PROGRAM DESCRIPTION CO-DESIGN

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This phase is devoted to the program description co-design process. The apparently successful applicant will work collaboratively with USAID/Ukraine and the World Bank to co-design the Program Description which will be used for the resulting Cooperative Agreement.

COST APPLICATION

A full cost application will be developed by the apparently successful applicant selected to co-design the program description and USAID after the program description is finalized.

B. PRE-AWARD SURVEYS

Prior to making an award under this competition, the USAID Agreement Officer may perform a pre-award survey of a prospective NGO recipient if he/she determines that any of the following criteria apply, in accordance with USAID ADS Chapter 303.3.9.1:

- USAID is uncertain about the prospective recipient's capacity to perform financially or programmatically.
- The prospective recipient has never had a USAID grant, cooperative agreement, or contract. This requirement does not apply to Fixed Amount Awards.
- The prospective recipient has not received an award from any Federal agency within the last five years. This requirement does not apply to Fixed Amount Awards.
- USAID has knowledge of deficiencies in the applicant's annual audit (Single Audit or equivalent).
- The USAID Agreement Officer determines it to be in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

Accounting systems, audit issues, and management capability questions may be reviewed as part of this process in order to determine whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills in order to achieve the objectives of the program, or whether specific conditions will be needed. If notified by USAID that a pre-award survey is necessary, applicants must prepare in advance the required information and documents. A pre-award survey does not commit USAID to make an award to any organization.

[END OF SECTION V]

SECTION VI – AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. 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. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed Agreement or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

1. A written award mailed or otherwise furnished to the successful applicant within the application's validity time as specified either in the application or in this NOFO (whichever is later) shall result in a binding Cooperative Agreement without further action by either party. Before the application's specified validity expiration time, the Government may accept an application, whether or not there are negotiations after its receipt, unless a written notice of withdrawal is received by the applicant before award. Negotiations or discussions conducted after receipt of an application do not constitute a rejection or counteroffer by the Government.

2. Applicants must set forth full, accurate and complete information as required by this NOFO. The penalty for making false statements to the Government is prescribed in 18 U.S.C. 1001.

3. Neither financial data submitted with an application nor representations concerning facilities or financing, will form a part of the resulting Cooperative Agreement unless explicitly stated otherwise in the agreement.

4. USAID reserves the right to perform a pre-award survey which may include, but is not limited to: (1) interviews with individuals to establish their ability to perform agreement duties under the project conditions; (2) a review of the prime recipient's financial condition, business and personnel procedures, etc.; and (3) site visits to the prime recipient's institution.

B. Award Administration

USAID/Ukraine will be responsible for the negotiation and obligation, and subsequent management and administration, of award which develop from successful application. The Agreement Officer will be responsible for conducting negotiations, making the awards, and obligating costs to recommended partner(s). He/she will only do so after making a positive risk assessment or responsibility determination that the applicant possesses, or has the ability to obtain, the necessary management competence in planning and carrying out assistance programs and that it will practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided by USAID. The Agreement Officer will also designate an Agreement Officer Representative (AOR) to assist in the technical management and oversight of the award.

Resulting awards to **U.S. non-governmental organizations** will be administered in accordance with 2 CFR 700, 2 CFR 200, and Chapter 303 of USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS), including ADS 303maa, Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations. These policies and federal regulations are available at the following websites:

- 2 CFR 700:

https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=531ffcc47b660d86ca8bbc5a64eed128&mc=true&node=pt2.1.700&rgn=div5

- 2 CFR 200:

https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=2:1.1.2.2.1

- ADS 303maa, Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations:

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303maa.pdf

- ADS Chapter 303:

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303.pdf

Resulting award to **non-U.S., non-governmental organizations** will be administered in accordance with Chapter 303 of USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS), including ADS 303mab, Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations.

- ADS 303mab, Standard Provisions for non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations:

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf

ADS Chapter 303 is available at
https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303.pdf

Additional policies and federal regulations are available at the following websites:

- 2 CFR 700:

https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=531ffcc47b660d86ca8bbc5a64eed128&mc=true&node=pt2.1.700&rgn=div5

- 2 CFR 200:

https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=2:1.1.2.2.1

Resulting awards to **public international organizations** will be administered in accordance with Chapter 308 of USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS), including the Standard

Provisions set forth in ADS 308. ADS Chapter 308 is available at https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1876/308.pdf.

Authority to Obligate the Government: The Agreement Officer is the **only** individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditures of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Cooperative Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed Cooperative Agreement or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

REPORTING:

1. Financial Reporting

Financial reporting requirements shall be in accordance with the Standard Provision RAA1. "Advance Payment and Refunds (December 2014)"

2. Program Reporting

The Recipient will provide the following documents to the USAID Agreement Officer (AO) and the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR), as specified below and in the Substantial Involvement Provisions.

A. Initial Implementation Plan:

Within 60 days of the effective award date, the Recipient will present an Initial Implementation Plan to the USAID AOR for review and approval (electronic copy).

The Initial Implementation Plan should include a list of tasks to be completed during the year, grouped under the objective that they seek to support. For each task, the Recipient should 1) explain in brief its connection to the objective; 2) define the necessary steps to complete the tasks; 3) assign responsibilities for completing those steps; 4) provide any quantitative or qualitative targets; and 5) a timeline for the implementation of the task.

As part of the Initial Implementation Plan, the recipient will conduct a baseline rapid assessment to determine the specific target geographic areas and value chains for AGRO. The results of the rapid assessment should inform the initial implementation plan and will be presented to USAID to collaboratively design the Initial Implementation Plan.

The AOR will review the draft Plan and provide written comments and recommendations for changes no later than 30 days after receipt of the draft. The Recipient will incorporate the AOR's comments and recommendations into the final version of the Initial Implementation Plan and submit it for AOR's written approval. All substantial changes in the Initial Implementation Plan require prior written approval of the AOR.

The Recipient must take The Bumpers Amendment into consideration when developing the Implementation Plan. The Bumpers Amendment (originally appearing as P.L. 99-349, July 2, 2986, and appearing most recently in section 7025(b) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 113-235)), restricts the use of certain USAID funds from supporting the export of host country agricultural products into third country markets where they would compete with US agricultural commodities and have a significant impact on U.S. exports of those commodities.

In response to the legislation, USAID issued two Policy Determinations (PDs) that provided further guidance for Missions promoting agricultural development programs. The first issued was PD-71 titled “USAID Financing of Palm Oil, Citrus & Sugar Projects and Related Products” and the second was PD-15 titled “Assistance to Support Agricultural Export Development.”

Prior to commencement of activities, the Recipient will conduct and document an assessment to evaluate selected agriculture value chains to determine if they are compliant with the provisions of the Bumpers Amendment (7025(b)), USAID Policy Determination PD-15, and any other relevant legislation (e.g., Section 7025(a)) or USAID policy guidance. No funds will be spent on assistance to any subsector/commodity until USAID confirms in writing that support provided under AGRO is consistent with the Agency's requirements, including Agency Policy Determination 15 (PD-15).

B. *Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan:*

Within the 60 days of the Cooperative Agreement’s effective date, and before major activity implementation actions begin, the Recipient shall submit an activity MEL Plan together with the Initial Implementation Plan to the USAID AOR for review and approval.

The AOR will review the plan and provide written comments and recommendations for changes no later than 15 days after receipt of the draft. The Recipient shall incorporate the AOR’s comments and recommendations into the final version of the MEL Plan and submit it for AOR written approval. After the plan is finalized, the AOR will provide written approval. All substantial changes in the MEL Plan require prior written approval of the AOR.

The MEL Plan must be developed strictly in accordance with the criteria stipulated in ADS 201. The Activity MEL Plan submitted to USAID should include only those indicators that the USAID Mission needs for activity management, rather than the entire set of all indicators the Recipient will use for its management purposes.

The MEL Plan should include a comprehensive strategy for monitoring and reporting progress made towards activity purpose and results. The MEL Plan should contain the following required elements:

- activity purpose and results as well as brief description of the linkages between the activity outputs and its expected results;
- performance indicators and their descriptions;
- unit of data measurement;
- data sources;
- description of data collection methods;
- baseline information (year and value) or a timeline for collecting it;
- annual targets;
- disaggregation by sex, age, geographic locality, type of assistance, etc. as needed;
- rationale for indicator and target;
- reporting level;
- data limitations;
- schedule for data collection;
- names of individuals responsible for data collection;
- availability of data at USAID;
- detailed plans for data analysis, review and reporting; and,
- Learning Section.

The MEL Plan for this Activity will also be consistent with and meet the data collection needs of the Project (under which this activity has been approved) MEL Plan, the USAID Performance Management Plan (PMP), and the Mission's annual Performance Plan and Report (PPR).

Performance indicators should comply with the following criteria: direct, objective, practical, adequate, and useful in managing for results. MEL Plan data should be based on the US fiscal year.

According to USAID regulations, performance indicator data reported externally, including annual Performance Reports sent to USAID/Washington, must have a data quality assessment (DQA). The purpose of the DQA is to ensure that managers are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the data and the extent to which the data can be trusted to influence management decisions. DQA must be conducted within twelve months prior to reporting data to USAID for new indicators, and every three years thereafter. Conducting a DQA on a rolling basis will reduce the burden of handling indicators all at once.

To be useful in managing for results and credible for reporting, the Recipient should ensure that the performance data meet the following five data quality standards: validity, reliability, timeliness, precision and integrity. If performance data do not fully meet all five standards, the known data limitations should be documented. The AOR can combine a random check of partner data during a regularly scheduled site visit and include data quality items into site visit reports. This minimizes the costs associated with the DQA. When conducting a DQA, the AOR will examine the data in light of the five quality standards noted above, reviewing the systems and approaches for collecting data and whether they are likely to produce data of an acceptable quality over time.

An activity implementer, as part of the award, can conduct the DQA, provided that USAID staff review and verify DQAs. This may entail site visits to physically inspect records maintained by the activity implementing partner. In such a case, the Recipient will document DQA findings, including decisions concerning data quality problems and steps identified to address them. Then the Recipient will share DQA findings and action plan to address data quality issues with the AOR. The AOR will follow up with the Recipient to check progress on implementation of the action plan within the timeline outlined in the action plan against each action.

USAID reserves the right to propose that the Recipient integrate a number of indicators into the MEL Plan to help USAID measure the immediate activity results.

USAID may elect to organize and carry out an independent performance evaluation of this activity. The Recipient shall fully cooperate with USAID and the evaluation team to ensure that the evaluation accurately reflects activity results, outcomes, and/or impacts.

Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA)

The Recipient is expected to contribute to USAID/Ukraine's commitment to a multi-faceted Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) approach to development. The CLA approach is based on the understanding that development efforts yield more effective results if they are coordinated and collaborative, test promising, new approaches in a continuous yet also rapid, targeted search for generating improvements and efficiencies, and build on what works and eliminate what does not. The Recipient will incorporate a CLA Plan into its MEL Plan.

Collaborating: The Recipient will coordinate with other USG partners, other donors, civil society, private sector, development partners, and the Government of Ukraine to support land reform; enhance sector anti-corruption, better governance and transparency; develop and scale up successful models for enhanced agricultural small and medium enterprise competitiveness; support rural development. For the activity to succeed, the Recipient will employ a collaborative approach with other relevant USAID projects and donors, other stakeholders, exchanging knowledge and ensuring complementarity rather than duplication of activities.

Learning: The Recipient will systematically review evidence from program implementation and external sources to inform program strategy, design and management. The Recipient will generate evidence through program performance data, formative research to guide design of new interventions, periodic evaluations, and operational research - documenting and sharing results with stakeholders.

Adapting: The Recipient will translate learning from the implementation experience and external sources, while also considering changing conditions that impact achievement of expected results into strategic and programmatic adjustments throughout the course of the activity. A key feature of the activity will be its flexibility to rapidly adapt to effectively support implementation of land reform; enhance sector anti-corruption, better governance and transparency; develop and scale up successful models for enhanced agricultural small and medium enterprise competitiveness; support rural development, and facilitate an all-inclusive dialogue among key reform actors and stakeholders, including Government of Ukraine, international donors, civil society and private sector.

D. *Annual Implementation Plans:*

Annual Implementation plans for subsequent years are due to the AOR 60 days before the end of the preceding USG fiscal year (electronic copy). Annual Implementation Plans should include the same sections as the initial implementation plan discussed above. These subsequent Annual Implementation Plans shall propose program adjustments to reflect any lessons learned from previous implementation years.

The AOR will review the plan and provide comments and recommendations for changes no later than 30 days after receipt of the draft. The Recipient shall incorporate the AOR's comments and recommendations into the final version of the Implementation Plan and submit it for AOR written approval. After the Plan is finalized, the AOR will provide written approval. In addition, all substantial changes to the Implementation Plan require prior written approval of the AOR.

E. *Geospatial Reporting Requirements:*

Activity Location Data
The Recipient must submit Activity Location Data to indicate the geographic location or locations where the activity is implemented according to the following requirements:

I. Level of Geographic Detail
The activity location(s) must be recorded at the National: whole Ukraine; Sub-national: oblast, rayon; Local: municipal/city or town. When collected, latitude and longitude coordinates must be submitted in Decimal Degrees (hddd.ddddd) with at least five decimal places using the Geographic Coordinate System World Geodetic System 1984 (GCS WGS 1984) spatial reference.

II. Data Submission Frequency
Activity Location Data must be submitted twice annually as part of the 2nd Quarterly Performance Report and the Annual Report. If the Activity Location Data has not changed since the previous data submission, it must be indicated when the data is submitted.

III. Data Submission Method
Activity Location Data shall be compiled in the "General Info & Locations" worksheet in the Geographic Location Report Template (GLR) and submitted electronically. If Activity Location Data exists in a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) format: 1) it must also be submitted in a Shapefile (.shp) or GeoJSON (.geojson) file format; 2) use the Geographic

Coordinate System World Geodetic System 1984 (GCS WGS 1984) spatial reference; and 3) include metadata ISO 19115 using the ISO 19139 XML implementation schema.

F. Quarterly Performance Reports

The Recipient shall submit quarterly performance reports (electronic copy only) to the AOR to reflect results and activities of each preceding quarter. Quarterly performance reports are based on a U.S. Government fiscal year (October 1 – September 30) and are to be submitted to the AOR within thirty (30) days of the end of each quarter. The annual report will be provided in lieu of the fourth quarterly report for the year.

The mandatory USAID/Ukraine Standard Reporting Template is provided in **Annex 9** of this NOFO.

G. Annual Performance Reports:

The Recipient shall submit annual performance reports (electronic copy only) to the USAID AOR in lieu of the fourth quarterly report for each project year. The Annual Report shall be due by October 30th of each year.

The mandatory USAID/Ukraine Standard Reporting Template is provided in **Annex 9** of this NOFO.

H. Final Report:

A Final Performance Report (two hard copies and one electronic) is required. The Final Report is due within forty-five (45) days after the award's completion date. USAID will review and comment within thirty (30) days of receipt. The Final Performance Report shall contain the following information:

- Overall description of the activities under the program during the period of this Cooperative Agreement, and the significance of these activities;
- Description of the methods of assistance used and the pros and cons of these methods;
- Life-of-project results towards achieving the project objectives and the performance indicators;
- Analysis of how the indicators illustrate the project's impact (impact data will be supplied as approved in the MEL Plan and will be measured against projections);
- Summary the program's accomplishments, as well as any unmet targets and the reasons for them;
- Summary of challenges, issues and problems that emerged during program implementation and the lessons learned in dealing with them;
- Comments and recommendations regarding unfinished work and/or future needs and directions for assistance in Ukraine;

- Recommendations for what issues no longer require donor assistance;
- Possible lessons learned; and
- Sustainability of the project results.

The Recipient shall submit the original and one copy of the USAID approved Final Performance Report to the AOR and Agreement Officer and one additional copy shall be submitted to the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination, Development Experience Clearinghouse PPC/DEC.

E-Mail all documents via the web at: http://dec.usaid.gov. Paper copies or non-electronic materials should be sent to:

Development Experience Clearinghouse
M/CIO/KM
RRB M.01
U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington DC 20523

The title page of all reports forwarded to USAID must include a descriptive title, the author's name, grant number, the project number and title, the grantee's name, the name of the USAID office, and the publication or issuance date of the report.

BRANDING STRATEGY AND MARKING PLAN:

It is a federal statutory and regulatory requirement (see Section 641, Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended and 2 CFR 700.16) that all USAID programs, projects, activities, public communications, and commodities that USAID partially or fully funds under a USAID grant or cooperative agreement or other assistance award or sub-award must be marked appropriately overseas with the USAID identity. In accordance with ADS 320.3.3 Branding and Marking Requirements for Assistance Awards USAID's policy is that programs, projects, activities, public communications, or commodities implemented or delivered under co-funded instruments – such as grants, cooperative agreements, or other assistance awards that usually require a cost share – generally are "co-branded and co-marked."

The Apparently Successful Applicant will be required to submit a branding strategy and marking plan for the Agreement Officer approval prior to award. The applicant may request a presumptive exemption to marking requirements established in 2 CFR 700.16. More information on Branding strategy and Marking plan are available at https://www.usaid.gov/branding/assistance-awards.

The branding strategy and marking plan will become a material element of the cooperative agreement. Information on USAID's branding "assistance" applies to this NOFO. ADS Chapter 320 sections concerning "acquisition" do not apply to this NOFO. ADS Chapter 320 can be found on USAID website: https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/320.

When requesting a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan, the Agreement Officer will establish a reasonable time frame for submittal, review, and negotiation. If the Apparently Successful Applicant(s) fail(s) to submit or negotiate an acceptable Branding Strategy within the time specified by the Agreement Officer, that/those applicant(s) become(s) ineligible for award.

The Agreement Officer will review the proposed Branding Strategy and Marking Plan for adequacy to ensure that it complies with the Agency branding and marking guidance that can be found at

http://www.usaid.gov/branding/ and at
https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/320.

Applicants need to include anticipated costs for branding strategy and marking plan in the budget and describe these costs in detail to the degree possible in the budget narrative. The Agreement Officer will ensure that any estimated costs associated with branding and marking are included in the Total Estimated Amount of the grant or cooperative agreement or other assistance award.

The Pre-Award Terms for the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan are provided in **Annex 2** of this NOFO.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:

1. 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) ADS 201 and ADS 204, 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. Applicant's environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this NOFO.

2. 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.

3. No activity funded under this award 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.”)

4. An Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) number DCN: 2019-UKR-031 (**Annex 1** of this NOFO) has been approved for the Program funding this NOFO. It will cover program activities through September 2024.

5. As part of its initial Implementation Plan, and all Annual Implementation Plans thereafter, the Recipient, in collaboration with the USAID Agreement’s Officer’s Representative (AOR) and Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this award to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.

6. 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.

7. 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.

Applicants need to account for resources required for implementing and monitoring the environmental compliance activities in the technical application and in the budget and describe associated costs in detail to the degree possible in the budget narrative.

[END OF SECTION VI]

SECTION VII – AGENCY CONTACTS

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation or interpretation of this NOFO must request it in writing by the deadline for questions specified in the cover letter to allow a reply to reach all prospective applicants before the submission of their applications. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment of this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicants.

Any questions or comments concerning this NOFO must be submitted in writing by emails to eparinova@usaid.gov and oluchukvysotska@usaid.gov with a copy to mtelevantos@usaid.gov by the deadline for questions indicated at the top of this NOFO's cover letter.

[END OF SECTION VII]

SECTION VIII – OTHER INFORMATION

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

[END OF SECTION VIII]

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 - Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) DCN: 2019-UKR-031 (ATTACHED)

ANNEX 2 - Pre-Award Terms (HYPERLINK ADDED)

ANNEX 3 - Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient (HYPERLINK ADDED)

ANNEX 4 - SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance) (HYPERLINK ADDED)

ANNEX 5 - SF-424A (Budget Information – Non-construction Programs) (HYPERLINK ADDED)

ANNEX 6 - SF-424B (Assurances – Non-Construction Programs) (HYPERLINK ADDED)

ANNEX 7 - What is System for Award Management (SAM)? (HYPERLINK ADDED)

ANNEX 8 - User Guides for Registration in SAM (HYPERLINK ADDED)

ANNEX 9 - USAID/Ukraine Standard Reporting Template (ATTACHED)

ANNEX 10 - Gender Analysis of Agriculture in Eastern Europe and Eurasia Regions (ATTACHED)

ANNEX 11 - Toward Gender Equality in Europe and Eurasia (HYPERLINK ADDED)

[END OF SECTION ANNEXES]

[END OF NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY]