



Issue Date: Nov. 22, 2024

Deadline for Questions: Dec. 13, 2024, 13:00 Manila Local Time

Closing Date: Feb. 12, 2025

Closing Time: 13:00 Manila Local Time

Subject: Notice of Funding Opportunity Number (NOFO): 72043825RFA00001

Program Title: Business Excellence for Sustainability and Transparency (BEST) Phase II Activity

Federal Assistance Listing Number: 98.001

To Prospective Applicants:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications for a cooperative agreement from qualified entities to implement the Business Excellence for Sustainability and Transparency (BEST) Phase II 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 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 B 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 NOFO and to ensure that it has been downloaded 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 Support Center at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance or if you need assistive technology and are unable to access any material on this site.

Unless an exception in 2 CFR 25.110 applies, applicants must comply with 2 CFR 25 requirements to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and register in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov), as applicable. See Section E, Submission Requirements and Deadlines, for more information. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section A. 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 NOFO 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 or 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,

Howard Weston  Date: 2024.11.22 15:12:53 +08'00'

Howard Weston
Agreement Officer

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SECTION A: BASIC INFORMATION

1. Executive Summary

The USAID Business Excellence for Sustainability and Transparency (BEST) Phase II Activity will further advance key elements of the original activity and incorporate new elements to improve long-term sustainability of the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector. BEST Phase II will work more closely with Mongolian government entities and civil society organizations (CSOs), providing training and capacity building so they can more effectively advise SMEs. In addition, BEST Phase II will include a component to work with SMEs directly to improve their energy efficiency and environmental sustainability to improve their overall competitiveness. Similar to BEST, the goal of BEST Phase II is to build the capacity of SMEs so they can more powerfully serve as an engine for Mongolia's economic growth and diversification. Best Phase II will

1. Improve capacity of Mongolian institutions;
2. Improve corporate governance of SMEs; and
3. Improve energy efficiency and environmental sustainability of SMEs.

2. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID intends to award one Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this NOFO but reserves the right to issue an award other than a Cooperative Agreement or issue more than one award or no award or cancel the solicitation or re-solicit the action.

Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide not more than \$10 million in total USAID funding over a five-year period.

3. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The anticipated period of performance is five (5) years. The estimated start date will be on or about May 1, 2025.

4. Agency Point of Contact

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5. 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

6. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this program is 937. Except as may be specifically approved in advance by the Agreement Officer (AO), all commodities and services that will be reimbursed by USAID under this award must be from the authorized geographic code specified in this NOFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

7. Selection of Instrument

Stakeholder consultations were carried out with government agencies, the donor community, commercial banks, non-bank financial institutions, and beneficiaries from the original BEST activity to craft BEST Phase II, ensuring that the program design is grounded in evidence.

The principal purpose of the relationship between the recipient and USAID is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose: helping build the capacity of host country government agencies, CSOs, and SMEs through initiatives that align with the objectives noted above (and these organizations would be the direct beneficiaries). The recipient will perform the activity for its own purpose, according to its organizational mission, programs or activities, and not acquire property or services for the direct use or benefit of USAID. The recipient will implement the activity not as an agent of the U.S. government; rather, the U.S. government will support but not directly control the activity. The objectives of this activity are best met by having an independent entity as the implementer, and not to do so as agents of the U.S. government. Based on these factors, an assistance award was recommended for this activity. Given that some level of substantial involvement will be advantageous to achieve the objectives of the award, the AO approved a cooperative agreement for the activity.

[End Of Section A]

SECTION B: ELIGIBILITY

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility for this NOFO is not restricted. For-profit entities may submit an application, but profit is not allowable under this NOFO.

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

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

Interested and eligible applicants may submit no more than one application under this NOFO. However, entities may be listed in more than one application as a potential subrecipient.

Each applicant must be found to be a responsible entity before receiving an award in accordance with ADS 303.3.9.

2. Cost Sharing

Cost Sharing is not required for this activity.

[End Of Section B]

SECTION C: 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 H.

USAID will have substantial involvement with any award made as a result of this NOFO. For more information on substantial involvement, please refer to [USAID’s ADS 303.3.11 Cooperative Agreements and Substantial Involvement \(10/01/2024\)](#).

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: Business Excellence for Sustainability and Transparency (BEST) Phase II

I. BACKGROUND

Despite recent progress, Mongolia’s economy still struggles with a lack of diversification. It remains highly dependent on the mining sector and animal husbandry (together accounting for nearly 40 percent of gross domestic product (GDP)), making it extremely vulnerable to fluctuations in global commodity prices and changing climate conditions. In addition, Mongolia is also dependent on the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as a mineral export market, transit country, and primary supplier of a range of imported goods. One of USAID’s core objectives in Mongolia is to diversify the economy so it is less dependent on mineral exports and the PRC, and the agency’s primary focus (along with other development partners) in recent years has been on building the capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to become greater contributors to the economy.

Mongolia also struggles with governance issues (particularly lack of transparency and accountability, as well as corruption) in addition to an inefficient energy sector that relies on coal-fired power generation and energy imports from the PRC and Russia. Addressing these shortcomings through BEST Phase II also represents key aspects of USAID’s strategy in Mongolia, as it relates to promoting clean energy and encouraging democratic governance. Supporting Mongolia’s transition to clean energy decreases harmful emissions from coal power and also guards against influence from these authoritarian, energy-supplying neighbors and economic “over-reliance” that threatens to degrade Mongolia’s sovereignty. Mongolia’s democracy is strong but young, and promoting homegrown economic diversification and energy independence are important measures to mitigate the risk of democratic backsliding.

While SMEs make up 90 percent of registered Mongolian businesses and employ over two-thirds of the overall workforce, they only contribute approximately 10 percent to GDP. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), SMEs account for only 25 percent of total outstanding bank loans, and while roughly half of SMEs are able to access some form of financing, it is often much less than requested, and frequently under unfavorable terms. Access to lending is impaired by a lack of recognized collateral, high interest rates, and the banks’ own

liquidity constraints. In addition, low financial literacy, weak corporate governance, and difficulties formulating viable business plans are also significant constraints for SMEs. Women-owned SMEs face even greater challenges, as banks generally perceive lending to women as more risky than men due to traditional gender biases and because women more often lack assets that can be provided as collateral.

II. PROGRAM GOAL AND PURPOSE

To address these limitations, since late 2019 USAID/Mongolia has supported an SME development activity (Business Excellence for Sustainability and Transparency (BEST)) focused on building capacity among both SMEs and the institutions that serve them. Through training and tailored consulting services, BEST helps to increase access to finance, improve corporate governance, and build institutional capacity. It advises SMEs on a wide variety of topics including financial management and accounting practices, loan literacy and business planning, and also provides assistance with preparing loan applications. BEST also provides training to government agencies at both the national and provincial levels to enhance transparency and develop policies to promote SME development.

BEST is widely regarded as a successful activity for building SME capacity, unlocking financing, and creating new jobs. With over four years of data accumulated, it has exceeded targets for most indicators in each reporting year, some by a significant margin. BEST has already helped to facilitate over \$80 million in loan financing, creating over 4,000 new jobs. The activity has a wide reach, operating not only in Ulaanbaatar but also 12 rural provinces. This wide reach and record of success has led it to become one of the most, if not the most, popular donor programs in the country. It has overwhelming support from the Government of Mongolia, as well as commercial banks and other financial institutions, which have strongly advocated for its continuation.

This new activity, “BEST Phase II,¹” is intended to not only keep certain elements of the original activity but also adjust in areas that are anticipated to improve long-term sustainability of the SME sector. Specifically, BEST Phase II will work more closely with Mongolian government entities and civil society organizations (CSOs), providing training and capacity building to them so that they can ultimately become more adept at advising SMEs. In addition, BEST Phase II will include a component to work with SMEs to improve their energy efficiency and environmental sustainability (and therefore improve their overall competitiveness).

II. PROGRAM FOCUS / APPROACH AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK

While the goal of BEST Phase II will remain essentially the same as the original BEST activity, i.e., growing and diversifying the economy through SME development, it will take a slightly different approach in that it will work more directly with government institutions and CSOs. The aim of increasing capacity within these institutions is to make SME development more locally led, and

¹ Given BEST’s strong name and brand recognition, USAID/Mongolia proposes to continue using this name.

thereby more sustainable. In addition, given USAID/Mongolia’s strategic focus on helping Mongolia become more energy independent, BEST Phase II will also work directly with SMEs to improve energy efficiency and environmental sustainability, which would address this goal and help SMEs become more competitive.

Theory of Change

The development hypothesis/theory of change asserts that:

IF Mongolian government institutions and civil society organizations have greater capacity to support SMEs in obtaining financing, improving corporate governance, and becoming more operationally efficient (including energy efficient) and resilient,

THEN SMEs will have enhanced capabilities, so they can become a larger part of the economy and strengthen Mongolia’s economic sovereignty.

As noted, SMEs make up 90 percent of registered Mongolian businesses and employ over two-thirds of the overall workforce. However, despite the progress made under the original BEST activity and the work of other donors in the sector, they continue to face barriers in accessing finance, and many do not have the expertise or resources to implement energy efficiency and environmental sustainability measures to improve their competitiveness. While government and civil society support to SMEs is growing, there is still limited capacity to advise SMEs on the various considerations for obtaining financing, implementing best practices on corporate governance, and becoming more operationally efficient and competitive. Given the importance of the SME sector to Mongolia’s economy, building domestic capacity to advise SMEs in these areas will help to build a more robust and sustainable SME sector and promote greater economic diversification.

Results Framework

SF Development Objective	DO 1: Democratic Governance Strengthened		DO 2: Diversified and Inclusive Economy Advanced
SF Intermediate Results (IR)	IR 1.1: Responsiveness of government institutions improved		IR 2.1: Competitiveness of private enterprises strengthened
Activity Purpose/Goal	Goal: Enhanced capabilities of SMEs, so they can become a larger part of the economy and strengthen Mongolia’s economic sovereignty.		
Objectives	1: Improving capacity of Mongolian institutions	2: Improving corporate governance among SMEs	3: Improving operational efficiency through energy efficiency and environmental sustainability measures
Intermediate Results	Capacity of government and civil society organizations to advise SMEs increased	Corporate governance among SMEs improved	Ability of SMEs to implement energy efficiency and environmental sustainability measures increased
	Corruption among government institutions and SMEs reduced	Compliance with government regulations and corporate best practices among SMEs increased	SMEs’ resilience to climate change and environmental shocks strengthened

The activity will comprise the following objectives:

- 1) Improving capacity of Mongolian institutions,
- 2) Improving corporate governance among SMEs, and
- 3) Improving operational efficiency through energy efficiency and environmental sustainability measures.

Objective 1: Improving Capacity of Mongolian Institutions

Government institutions and civil society organizations have limited capacity to support SME needs. The main national level government agency that provides support to SMEs, the SME Development Agency, is relatively small (approximately 35 staff in Ulaanbaatar, and no dedicated staff in its provincial offices). Certain provincial governments (14 out of a total of 21) currently operate “business incubator centers” that serve SMEs, although they vary widely in terms of the level of services offered (some just provide office space and support services, while others provide general training and even some specialized consulting services). The Ministry of Economy and Development, while involved in SME policy matters, does not provide training or support services. Therefore, there is an opportunity to build capacity among government institutions (particularly staff at business incubator centers) so that they can ultimately provide the types of services BEST currently provides. Building greater capacity among these institutions would also promote sustainability by increasing government effectiveness to address SME needs beyond the timeframe of this USAID activity.

Similarly, CSOs involved in SME causes are rare and understaffed. Industry associations generally cater to larger companies, although there are some that have SME members. There is also a growing industry of private business consultants focusing on SMEs. Interestingly, one of the unexpected successes of the current BEST activity is the formation of informal “mentoring” clubs among beneficiaries. Building capacity among CSOs such as these should also promote sustainability by further developing the business advisory space.

BEST Phase II will provide training to staff from these organizations across a range of relevant topics, including business planning/operations, accounting practices, financial literacy, and assistance navigating the loan application and repayment processes, in addition to any other topics that the applicant deems appropriate. This could include both structured as well as “on-the-job” training involving SMEs seeking government support, and embedded advisors at the SME Development Agency and business incubator centers.

This component would also include training to government and CSO representatives on measures to reduce corruption. Corruption remains a significant problem in Mongolia, evidenced by its rank of 122 (out of 180 countries) on Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (its score and ranking have remained essentially flat over the past several years). In addition, corruption has affected the SME Development Agency, with a scandal emerging in 2018 involving loans to politically connected individuals. In this area, training will

be provided on effective oversight of the lending program and other best practices to reduce corruption within government entities dealing with SME matters.

This component will replace the direct training/advisory services to SMEs that BEST currently provides, with the ultimate objective of developing a cadre of government and civil society/NGO representatives that have the capabilities to assist SMEs directly. BEST Phase II could also work with provincial government agencies that do not have business incubator centers to develop these operations. During initial stakeholder consultations with government and business incubator staff, representatives expressed a willingness to work with USAID in this area. Due to funding limitations, this objective may only include assistance to government officials and civil society/NGO representatives (i.e., no direct training/consulting to SMEs, as the current BEST activity provides - see Section VIII for further discussion on funding types and the effects on activity interventions).

At the conclusion of the activity, it is expected that the following intermediate results would be achieved under this objective: (1) capacity of government and civil society representatives to advise SMEs would be improved, and (2) corruption among government and SMEs would be reduced.

Illustrative Activities
● Training to government institutions and CSOs on areas to support SME development, including (but not limited to): ○ Business planning and operations ○ Accounting practices ○ Compliance with government regulations ○ Anti-corruption ○ Loan application processes and post-loan maintenance ○ Standards conformance ○ Navigating customs procedures (for SMEs targeting export markets) ○ Building/enhancing online presence ○ Developing market linkages (more effective relationships among producers, distributors and retail) ● Training to CSOs/NGOs in the aforementioned areas ● Development of a training and/or continuing education curriculum ● Development and enhancement of government and civil society operations to support SMEs (business incubator centers and industry associations) ● Embedded advisors at government institutions and CSOs/NGOs ● Coordinate with local banks, non-bank financial institutions, and international donors with SME support programs (including U.S. Development Finance Corporation (DFC) to identify promising opportunities
Illustrative Indicators

Standard

- DR.2.1.3: Number of policies and plans enhanced to improve service delivery governance and regulation
- DR.2.2.4-2: Number of government officials receiving USG-supported anti-corruption training
- DR.2.2.4-5: Number of people affiliated with non-governmental organizations receiving USG-supported anti-corruption training
- DR.4.2-2: Number of civil society organizations (CSOs) receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions
- EG.5-2: Full-time equivalent employment of firms receiving USG assistance
- EG.5.2-1: Number of firms receiving USG-funded technical assistance for improving business performance
- EG.3.2-26: Value of annual sales of producers and firms receiving USG assistance

Custom

- Value of financing accessed by SMEs as a result of USG assistance
- Number of loans received by SMEs as a result of USG assistance
- Number of SME loan applications finalized with USG assistance
- Number of initiatives successfully implemented to strengthen SME financing mechanisms with USG assistance
- Number of NGOs strengthened to promote policy dialogue, advocate for change and exercise oversight of public institutions
- Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance
- Number of organizations pursuing their own performance improvement priorities with USG capacity strengthening support.

Note: Interventions and indicators are neither restrictive nor comprehensive and are for illustration purposes only.

Objective 2: Improving Corporate Governance among SMEs

Despite notable progress under the current BEST activity, there are still a significant number of SMEs that have not implemented an appropriate system of corporate governance, and therefore many lack the formalized standard practices for combating corruption², complying with government regulations, and ingraining ethical business conduct. BEST Phase II will continue this critical work from the first activity by providing training and tailored advisory services in this area. In addition to working directly with SMEs, this component will also involve government and civil society representatives in order to build their capacity to serve as advisors in this area following the conclusion of the activity. Under this objective, assistance will go toward not only government and civil society representatives but also the SMEs themselves. At the conclusion of the activity, it is expected that the following intermediate results would be achieved under this objective: (1) corporate governance among SMEs would be improved, and (2) compliance with government regulations and corporate best practices among SMEs would be increased.

² Numerous programs (funded by USAID as well as other donors) have focused on anti-corruption measures within the government, but a relatively limited amount have targeted the “supply” side of corruption, i.e., the private sector. As part of this objective, the implementing partner will develop and implement training programs to address this.

Illustrative Activities
• Training to government institutions and SMEs on various aspects of corporate governance, including (but not limited to): ○ Overall principles (responsibility, accountability, transparency, fairness) ○ Leadership structures/shareholders ○ Compensation ○ Financial controls, auditing and disclosure ○ Risk management ○ Anti-corruption • Development of a training and/or continuing education curriculum • Mobilize the private sector and CSOs in policy dialogues or advocacy for reforms to improve the business environment for SMEs
Illustrative Indicators
Standard • DR.2.1.3: Number of policies and plans enhanced to improve service delivery governance and regulation • DR.2.2.4-2: Number of government officials receiving USG-supported anti-corruption training • DR.2.2.4-5: Number of people affiliated with non-governmental organizations receiving USG-supported anti-corruption training • DR.4.2-2: Number of civil society organizations (CSOs) receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions Custom • Number of SMEs adopted good corporate governance practices as a result of USG assistance • Number of SMEs trained in corporate governance • Number of SMEs in compliance with government regulations as a result of USG assistance

Note: Interventions and indicators are neither restrictive nor comprehensive and are for illustration purposes only.

Objective 3: Improving Operational Efficiency through Energy Efficiency and Environmental Sustainability Measures

Most Mongolian SMEs fail to adopt energy efficiency and environmental sustainability measures due to limited knowledge and access to finance. BEST Phase II will assist SMEs in overcoming these barriers, adopt environmentally sustainable business practices, strengthen their resilience to climate change and environmental shocks, and identify potential business opportunities focusing on “green” sectors/value chains and the circular economy. BEST Phase II will work directly with SMEs in this area, through workshops and tailored advisory services, on accessing finance to implement energy efficiency and environmental sustainability measures. In addition, this component will feature a subaward program for SMEs lacking capital to invest in new equipment and energy efficiency solutions.

At the conclusion of the activity, it is expected that the following intermediate results would be achieved under this objective: (1) ability of SMEs to implement energy efficiency and environmental sustainability measures would be increased, and (2) SMEs' resilience to climate change and environmental shocks would be strengthened.

Illustrative Activities
• Training on energy efficiency and environmental sustainability measures • Development of training and/or continuing education curriculum • Advisory services on green financing opportunities • Subaward program targeted toward purchases of energy efficient equipment, building energy efficiency solutions, etc. • Coordinate with local banks, non-bank financial institutions, and international donors with clean energy/green financing programs to identify potential financing
Illustrative Indicators
Standard • EG.12-1: Number of people trained in clean energy supported by USG assistance • EG.12-4: Amount of investment mobilized (in USD) for clean energy as supported by USG assistance • EG.12-6: Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, estimated in metric tons of CO₂e, reduced, sequestered, or avoided through clean energy as supported by USG assistance Custom • Value of financing accessed by SMEs as a result of USG assistance (toward energy efficiency/environmental sustainability measures) • Number of loans received by SMEs as a result of USG assistance (toward energy efficiency/environmental sustainability measures) • Number of SME loan applications finalized with USG assistance (toward energy efficiency/environmental sustainability measures) • Number of startups, SMEs or relevant local stakeholders receiving subawards (toward energy efficiency/environmental sustainability measures)

Note: Interventions and indicators are neither restrictive nor comprehensive and are for illustration purposes only.

In addition to these objectives, USAID will work with the awardee during implementation to explore options for BEST Phase II to provide training and advisory services (such as financial management, accounting, loan literacy, and general business planning) directly to SMEs under a fee-for-service model, where SMEs would pay the BEST II Implementing Partner a fee based on a sliding scale. Payments for these services would be used to offset USAID's contribution to the activity. Applicants should not address this potential objective in their applications.

USAID anticipates finalizing the Results Framework through co-creation with an Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA), during which time the ASA will be encouraged to build upon this framework and propose revisions or innovations to its applications.

III. GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS AND TARGET POPULATIONS

As noted, one of the strengths of the current BEST activity is its wide geographic coverage – including its main office in Ulaanbaatar as well as branches in 12 of the country’s 21 provinces. As funding constraints are likely to limit the ability to maintain this footprint, it is proposed that the applicant look into the establishment of regional “hubs” in strategically located provincial capitals (potential locations include Erdenet, Choibalsan, Uliastai, and Sainshand). The criteria for selecting regional hubs should be based on the concentration of SMEs and access to other provinces, and the applicant will be encouraged to propose (with justification) regional hubs from which to operate. Initial research on the aforementioned potential regional hubs is presented below³:

Erdenet, Orkhon Province (North): Erdenet is Mongolia’s second largest city (population ~100,000) and a hub for the northern provinces. It was founded in the 1974 around a major copper deposit, and the mine is still the region’s main economic driver. Other industries include textiles, food production, and timber processing. The original BEST activity has maintained an office in Erdenet since 2019. The local business incubator center, the Erdenet Science and Technology Park, currently provides assistance to approximately 20 SMEs in various industries. Erdenet is located approximately 180 kilometers from Mongolia’s third largest city (Darkhan) and could also coordinate with the other northern provinces of Selenge, Bulgan, Arkhangai, and Khuvsgul.

Choibalsan, Dornod Province (East): Choibalsan is Mongolia’s fourth largest city (population ~45,000) and a hub for the eastern region. It has long been a trading route and continues to maintain strong economic linkages to Russia and the PRC. Major industries include coal mining, wool/cashmere processing and meat production. The original BEST activity has maintained an office in Choibalsan since 2019. The local business incubator center, the SME Support Center, currently provides assistance to approximately 15 SMEs in various industries. In addition to serving Dornod Province, a hub in Choibalsan could also coordinate with the eastern provinces of Khentii and Sukhbaatar.

Uliastai, Zavkhan Province (West): While Uliastai is not a major city (population ~15,000), it is strategically located to serve Mongolia’s far western provinces (Govi-Altai, Khovd, Bayan-Ulgii and Uvs) in addition to Zavkhan. The original BEST activity has maintained an office in Uliastai since 2019. The Zavkhan Provincial Government is working to establish a local business incubator center, and it is anticipated to open by the end of 2024.

³ Note: The establishment of regional hubs (in these cities or elsewhere) is not required, and applicants will be encouraged to develop their own strategies for engaging with rural government offices, CSOs, and SMEs. The original BEST activity maintained regional hubs in Erdenet, Choibalsan, Sainshand and Khovd in addition to its provincial offices.

Sainshand, Dornogovi Province (South): While Sainshand is also relatively small (population ~25,000), it is situated along Mongolia’s main railway line and strategically located to serve the other southern provinces of Dundgovi and Umnugovi. The original BEST activity has maintained an office in Sainshand since 2019. While there is currently no local business incubator center, this hub could coordinate with centers in both Mandalgovi and Dalanzadgad.

In addition to regional hubs, the applicant may explore the potential to leverage existing provincial and/or local government facilities to support the activity outside of these locations (during the activity planning process, some local governments and banking institutions raised the potential for cooperation of this nature).

Beneficiaries would include government agencies, CSOs, and SMEs. The activity will provide training to employees primarily at government agencies dealing with SME issues, including the SME Development Agency, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Light Industry (MOFALI), and business incubator centers (a list of current centers is provided below). Training would also be provided to CSOs (NGOs and industry associations). Finally, BEST Phase II will provide training and advisory services directly to SMEs, but only under objectives 2 and 3. SMEs owned by women and marginalized groups will be prioritized.

Business Incubator Centers

Province (City)
Arkhangai (Tsetserleg)
Bayankhongor (Bayankhongor)
Bulgan (Bulgan)
Darkhan-Uul (Darkhan)
Dornod (Choibalsan)
Dundgovi (Mandalgovi)
Govi-Altai (Altai)
Khovd (Khovd)
Khuvsgul (Moron)
Khentii (Chinggis)
Orkhon (Erdenet)
Uvurkhangai (Arvaikheer)
Umnugovi (Dalanzadgad)
Zavkhan (Uliastai)

V. PROGRAMMATIC AND STRATEGIC LINKAGES

U.S. Government Policies and Frameworks

- **Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States**⁴: The Indo-Pacific Strategy states the United States' commitment to "an Indo-Pacific that is free and open, connected, prosperous, secure, and resilient." To realize this future, the Strategy outlines five objectives to: advance a free and open Indo-Pacific, build connections within and beyond the region, drive Indo-Pacific prosperity, bolster Indo-Pacific security, and build regional resilience to 21st century transnational threats. In the Strategy, the United States commits to work with partners to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth, strengthen democratic institutions and good governance, and improve resilience to climate threats, among other areas.
- **USAID Economic Growth Policy**⁵: USAID's Economic Growth Policy elevates the importance of economic growth as central to reducing poverty and dependency. Inclusive, sustained, resilient, private sector-led economic growth delivers the increased incomes and domestic resources that make developing countries self-reliant and fosters demand for more transparent and accountable governance.
- **USAID Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) Strategy**⁶: USAID's DRG Strategy aims to support the establishment and consolidation of inclusive and accountable democracies to advance freedom, dignity, and development. To achieve this goal, the Strategy sets four strategic objectives: (1) Promote participatory, representative, and inclusive political processes and government institutions; (2) Foster greater accountability of institutions and leaders to citizens and to the law; (3) Protect and promote universally recognized human rights; and (4) Improve development outcomes through the integration of DRG principles and practices across USAID's development portfolio.
- **USAID Climate Strategy (2022-2030)**⁷: USAID's Climate Strategy takes an unprecedented whole-of-Agency approach organized around two main strategic objectives. First, there is Targeted Direct Action, which will target climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts to the highest priority communities and locations—those with the most urgent needs or most immediate opportunities—to maximize impact. Second, there is Systems Change, which will take a systems approach to these larger transformations—such as transforming food systems to be more resilient, less wasteful and less environmentally destructive, or transitioning economic systems to be less carbon-intensive—in ways that are comprehensive, equitable, and locally led.

⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>

⁵ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/EG_Policy_Final_1.12.2021.pdf

⁶ <https://www.usaid.gov/democracy/democracy-human-rights-and-governance-strategy>

⁷ <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USAID-Climate-Strategy-2022-2030.pdf>

- **USAID Local Capacity Strengthening Policy**⁸: The Agency's localization efforts aim to put local actors in the lead, strengthen local systems, and be responsive to local communities. Under this commitment, USAID will strengthen local capacities, shift power to local actors, and ensure that diverse local voices are integrated throughout all aspects of development works. The shift also entails channeling a larger portion of assistance directly to credible local partners while ensuring accountability for the appropriate use of funds and achievement of development and humanitarian results. The Local Capacity Strengthening Policy advances the strategic and intentional investment in the process of partnering with local actors—individuals, organizations, and networks—to jointly improve the performance of a local system to produce locally valued and sustainable development outcomes.
- **USAID Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan (2021-2024)**⁹: USAID's DEI Strategic Plan sets forth the framework towards creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workplace, ensuring accessibility across all workforce, promoting equitable access to opportunities, and strengthening accountability in all development pathways. USAID promotes the rights and inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented populations in the development process, including but not limited to indigenous and tribal peoples, the LGBTIQ+ community, women and girls, youth, and persons with disabilities.
- **USAID 2023 Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment Policy**¹⁰: The GEWE Policy provides the vision for USAID's work to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. The updated operational and programmatic framework enables USAID to more effectively advance gender equality and women's empowerment across all programming and to meet the Administrator's goal to double USAID's gender work. USAID affirms that gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment are fundamental for the realization of human rights and key to effective and sustainable development outcomes.
- **USAID Private Sector Engagement Policy**¹¹: USAID sees private sector engagement as fundamental to ending the need for foreign assistance. This policy is a call to action for USAID and its partners to embrace market-based approaches as a more-sustainable way to support communities in achieving development and humanitarian outcomes at scale. This is based on the premise that private enterprise is one of the most powerful forces for lifting lives, strengthening communities, and accelerating countries to self-reliance.

Mongolia Strategic Framework (SF)

⁸ <https://www.usaid.gov/policy/local-capacity-strengthening>

⁹ <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/diversity-equity-inclusion>

¹⁰ <https://www.usaid.gov/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment>

¹¹ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/usaid_psepolicy_final.pdf

The [Mongolia Strategic Framework 2023-2028](#) goal is for Mongolia to become a self-reliant, well-governed, and prosperous Indo-Pacific partner. This goal statement supports the broader Indo-Pacific Vision including promoting economic prosperity, strengthening governance, and enhancing security. Under the SF, USAID is advancing citizen-responsive governance that adheres to a rules-based order for a more “well-governed” Mongolia; creating open and transparent markets to unlock private enterprise-led growth to foster a “prosperous” Mongolia; and building a network of partners from the government, civil society, and private sector capable of addressing threats to Mongolia’s independence and sovereignty. The ultimate goal is to empower Mongolia to become less reliant on its neighbors for its economic and democratic progress.

Mongolia Vision 2050 Long-Term Development Policy

USAID aligns its strategies and development pathways with host country government priorities and plans. The [Mongolia Vision 2050 Long-Term Development Policy](#) outlines a broad set of goals spanning education, health, general economic and rural development, democratic governance, and environmental and cultural preservation. The government’s long-term vision is to be among leading middle-income countries, have a multi-sector stable economy and a society dominated by middle and upper-middle income classes, which would preserve ecological balance, and have stable and democratic governance. Underpinning these goals are the development objectives for a diverse and sustainable economy; inclusive social development, environment; and governance.

VI. COORDINATION WITH OTHER USAID-FUNDED ACTIVITIES

Three ongoing USAID activities would complement BEST Phase II: Mongolia Energy Governance (MEG), Enhancing Production and Market Access for Vegetables (EPMAV), and Media and Civil Society Strengthening (MACSS).

- MEG is helping to develop and implement more favorable laws and regulations to encourage more private sector investment and promote greater adoption of modern energy technologies. One of its key goals is to boost energy efficiency and demand side management measures, which complements BEST Phase II’s objective of enabling SMEs to access financing to become more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable. BEST Phase II could facilitate interactions between SMEs and energy efficiency experts on ways to incorporate energy-saving technologies and best practices within their operations.
- EPMAV is working with SMEs across various parts of the agricultural value chain, including greenhouse operators and those involved in storage and distribution. It has been coordinating with the current BEST activity on working with SMEs involved in greenhouse vegetable production to improve productivity and could continue this cooperation with BEST Phase II.

- MACSS is assisting in building capacity of CSOs across a range of issues including combating corruption and increasing government transparency. One of the objectives of MACSS is to increase civil society capacity in rural areas, and under BEST Phase II it could work with industry associations and business groups that have a similar focus outside of Ulaanbaatar.

In addition to these USAID activities, several other bilateral and multilateral donors have ongoing programs to support SME development, and therefore applicants are encouraged to develop strategies to coordinate and limit duplication with them.

VII. MONITORING, EVALUATION, and COLLABORATION, LEARNING and ADAPTING (CLA)

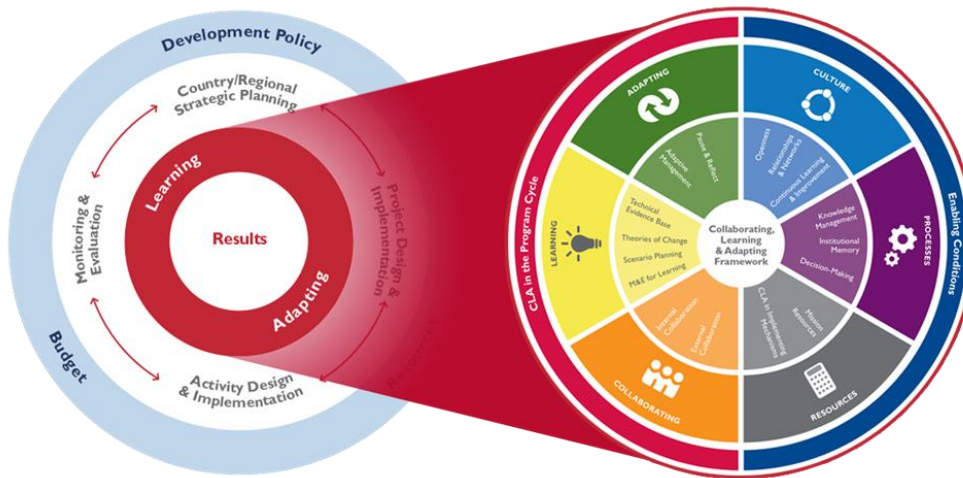
Performance Monitoring

This activity will utilize a combination of Democracy and Governance (DG), Economic Growth (EG), and Clean Energy (CE) funding types; therefore, the Implementing Partner (IP) will be required to collect data for and report on all relevant [foreign assistance standard indicators](#) in these areas in their Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan. The IP will also be responsible for monitoring participation and success in the activity by women, men, and ethnically or geographically vulnerable individuals and communities. USAID/Mongolia will work with the IP to finalize a MEL plan to measure the activity's development impacts.

In addition to standard indicators, IPs will be highly encouraged to incorporate custom indicators into their MEL plan to adequately track progress and outcomes of interventions, with reference to and in support of standard indicators. USAID is interested in innovative, cross-sectoral custom indicators to track integrated outcomes across the various objectives during the period of performance. The IP will monitor these outcome indicators, and their related disaggregates, to measure achievement of these objectives.

Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting (CLA)

Development work presents many opportunities to collaborate and engage with a broad set of stakeholders, to learn from both evidence and experience and to adapt iteratively to unexpected results or changes in context. This is why USAID places "Collaborating, Learning and Adapting" at the center of its Program Cycle, both as a connector between, and an integrated part of the components.



Collaborating

Collaboration enables cross-sector integration, convergence, and effective interventions to maximize development resources and enhance development results. The Recipient shall collaborate with USAID-supported activities in common regions of operation and engage with stakeholders (defined collaboratively with USAID AOR) to deliver integrated services to target populations.

Learning

Learning is intentional, systematic and resourced. Sources for learning include data from monitoring, portfolio reviews, findings of research, evaluations, analyses conducted by USAID or third parties, knowledge gained from experience, stocktaking exercises, and other sources. Those documents produced by USAID will be shared with the Recipient by the AOR for consideration in the learning phase of CLA.

These sources shall be used to develop and implement plans, manage adaptively, and contribute to the USAID/Mongolia knowledge base to improve development outcomes. A collaborating, learning, and adapting focus helps to ensure that programming is coordinated, grounded in evidence, and adjusted as necessary to remain relevant and effective throughout implementation.

Knowledge generated by learning shall be applied throughout programming to implementation approaches, processes, and stakeholder engagement. Knowledge generated by learning should also be disseminated to activity stakeholders, partners, and collaborators in an appropriate forum and format so that it may be translated into decisions and actions that enhance the success of approaches and interventions designed to achieve common intermediate results. The Recipient shall share information and knowledge generated by monitoring data, portfolio review results, research findings, evaluations, analyses, and experiences with other USAID implementing partners. Recipients will apply actionable information and knowledge gained from collaborating partners to activity implementation to improve results.

USAID implementing partners shall convene on a periodic basis to reflect on actions taken, exchange analysis, and propose decisions that affect implementation.

Adapting

The Recipient shall demonstrate adaptability that is informed by knowledge gained through learning and recognize behaviors and incentives necessary to create change. Knowledge gained through learning shall influence decision making, resource allocation, and adaptation to contextual shifts. Application of new knowledge to implementation decisions shall be reflected in the Annual Work Plan and Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP).

Decisions to adapt may be based on, but not limited to the following:

- Extraneous changes in the operating environment (i.e. emergency or natural disaster; national policy changes)
- Financial and human resource constraints
- Evidence that signals targets are unmet
- Emerging evidence that interventions are not working or could work better if adapted

Any changes to the scope of the award must be approved by the Cognizant Agreement Officer in a modification to the award. Changes in technical approach may be approved by the AOR by way of the AOR's authority to provide technical direction and approve Annual Work Plans.

VIII. CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS

A. Gender and Social Inclusion

Consistent with USAID's [Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy](#)¹² and related guidance, USAID expects that proposed activities will be sensitive to gender dynamics. The applicant is asked to explore opportunities to advance gender equality and female empowerment in designing new approaches. This includes pursuing an inclusive approach to foster equality, building partnerships across a wide range of stakeholders, harnessing science, technology, and innovation to reduce gender gaps and empower women and girls, and addressing unique challenges that affect women and men differently.

Mongolia's 1992 Constitution is considered one of the most progressive in the region in terms of gender equality. Barring discrimination based on sex, the Constitution guarantees men and women equal rights in political, economic, social, and cultural fields, as well as in family affairs. In practice, however, men predominate in business and politics in senior decision-making positions in government at all levels.

Even though women outpace men in education attainment and have increasingly joined the workforce, the wage gap and gender-based discrimination persist. Women are still taking on most household and family duties, which is reducing their labor force participation. Reform will be challenging as Mongolia ranks 120th globally in political empowerment due to below average female representation in parliament and in ministerial positions. The situation is also

¹² https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-03/2023_Gender%20Policy_508.pdf

getting worse: in the 2020 Global Gender Gap Report, Mongolia ranked 79th and is facing growing gender disparities across economic opportunity, educational attainment, health outcomes, and political empowerment; this marks a decline since the country's 42nd place ranking in 2006.

In the SME sector, women constitute a significant proportion of business owners; estimates widely range from nearly 40 percent to 60 percent of SMEs.¹³ However, the World Bank found that: "women's businesses are typically smaller, demonstrate lower turnover rates and have fewer employees."¹⁴ The Bank primarily points to gender biases both outside and within the home as factors for this trend.

Despite women's large share of the SME sector, familiarity with financial services, and higher loan repayment rates compared to men, banks perceive lending to women as riskier than lending to men. Although women entrepreneurs do still access banking services and receive loans, they typically receive smaller loans with higher interest rates. One reason banks cite for this situation is that women typically have fewer assets for loan collateral; this paradoxically limits their ability to expand their businesses and increase their assets, thus perpetuating gender gaps. The World Bank reported that 60 percent of women entrepreneurs surveyed acknowledged that "they are hesitant to approach a bank, most probably because they lack financial knowledge and/or are insecure about dealing with financial issues." An intersectional outlook on this finding indicates that women entrepreneurs who identify with other/additional marginalized groups (LGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, etc.) would probably be even less likely to approach a bank for fear of discrimination.

USAID prepared a [Gender Analysis](#), which recommends that BEST Phase II prioritize businesses owned by women and marginalized groups, which is essential given the high proportion of women-owned businesses in the Mongolian SME sector and the challenges they face due to gender norms and biases in Mongolian society.

B. Environmental and Climate Risk Management

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201.5.10g and 204 (<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/200.pdf>), 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.

¹³ <https://www.unapcict.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/862.%20Women-SME-Mongolia-Final.pdf>

¹⁴ Ibid.

An [Initial Environmental Examination \(IEE\)](#) recommending Categorical Exclusion has been prepared, covering the following classes of actions needing no further environmental review, pursuant to Reg. 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.);
- (ii) Analyses, studies, academic or research workshops and meetings;
- (iii) 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.);

The IEE also recommends a Negative Determination with Conditions for activities related to the subawards program component of the activity (under Objective 3). The recipient will be required to submit an Environmental Management and Mitigation Plan (EMMP) to ensure that activities related to this component will not negatively impact people and the environment.

Pursuant to ADS 201.3.4.5, USAID must factor climate resilience into international development programs to the extent allowable by law, assessing and addressing climate risk, as appropriate. Within the IEE, the Design Team conducted a climate risk screening and assessment using USAID's Climate Risk Screening and Management Tool.

C. Private Sector Engagement

Private sector engagement and collaboration is a core agency priority, and it is integrated in USAID's new development model. As a result, USAID/Mongolia strongly encourages collaboration and partnership with the private sector to identify innovative methods to support SME development. Stakeholder discussions revealed an interest in collaborating from several banks and non-bank financial institutions; applicants are encouraged to contact them directly to identify potential areas of engagement.

D. Sustainability

Mongolia's country roadmap indicates high capacity and commitment relative to other USAID partner countries in the region. Over the last three decades, Mongolia's political and economic transition has been a success story; however, democratic backsliding and Mongolia's challenging geographic location demonstrate the precarious nature of Mongolia's progress. While USAID has experienced past successes in DRG sector programs, a DRG assessment conducted in 2021 pointed out key reforms to strengthen and ensure sustainability through capacity development investments to organizations located outside of Ulaanbaatar. A Sustainability Plan shall be included in the Work Plan, which will identify issues and considerations that may hamper overall sustainability of BEST Phase II as well as opportunities

to optimize activity outcomes. It will also recommend approaches or interventions necessary to mitigate, overcome and/or adapt to these issues, linking it with how benefits and results will continue and be scaled up following the conclusion of the activity. The Sustainability Plan will ensure that outcomes are sustainable after the end of activity through adaptive management, donor coordination, and capacity building. The activity will also have the adaptability and flexibility to shift priorities and also partner with champions of change either inside or outside of government.

VIII. SPECIAL COMPONENTS OF THE ACTIVITY

A. Emergency Response Provision

Mongolia is vulnerable to natural hazards, epidemics, and sociopolitical instability. These challenges, whether natural or human made, can quickly and significantly set back development gains. Hence, the IP should have the capacity to respond to these challenges by mobilizing resources, redirecting funds, or supporting new activities, which may include construction, at the request of USAID/Philippines and Mongolia, that may vary considerably from those activities in the approved award. Responses may include cooperating with other U.S. government departments, agencies or personnel, or assistance to the government of Mongolia and other key stakeholders, and revision of geographic focus.

Accordingly, an award resulting from this NOFO will allow redirection of the Program Description or funds, or the addition of other funds, to support activities to address unanticipated challenges and disaster events. Any use of this provision must be mutually agreed upon by USAID and the Recipient. Prior to any use of this provision, the Recipient and USAID shall identify objectives, activities to be carried out, and the cost of such activities, and obtain written concurrence from the AOR, with specific reporting instructions, and approval from the Agreement Officer.

The scope and deliverables expected from the realignment of activity resources will be mutually agreed upon by USAID/Philippines and Mongolia and the Recipient.

B. Explanation of Funding Types

This activity will utilize a combination of Democracy and Governance (DG), Economic Growth (EG) and Clean Energy (CE) funds.

All components of the activity funded with Congressionally-directed DG resources must fully align with the [USAID Democracy, Human Rights and Governance \(DRG\) Strategy](#). Under this activity, Objectives 1 and 2 fall under DG funding objectives.

All components of the activity funded with Congressionally-directed EG resources must both comply with the [USAID Economic Growth Policy](#) and be utilized for interventions to support

industry sectors in which Mongolia has historically imported products from the PRC. EG funds may be utilized for interventions under all three objectives.

All components of the activity funded with Congressionally-directed CE resources must fully align with the [USAID Climate Strategy \(2022-2030\)](#). Under this activity, Objective 3 falls under CE funding objectives.

Approximately 65% of the interventions under this activity are anticipated to be funded using DG funds, 10% EG funds, and 25% CE funds.

C. Additional Funding

Applicants should prepare their activity description based on the estimated funds available stated in Section B of this NOFO. However, should additional funds become available, the recipient and USAID will jointly determine and agree to the allocation of those funds towards the augmentation of results or interventions of the award.

D. Subawards to Subrecipients

Applicants are encouraged to develop innovative ideas for subawards utilizing funds for equipment purchases (under Objective 3) and other types of subawards that would meet activity objectives.

NOTE REGARDING SUBRECIPIENTS: Potential subrecipients of the applicant must have a UEI number prior to award. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure potential subrecipients complete their UEI number registration prior to award.

Applicants must also confirm that potential subrecipients

- Do not have active exclusions in the System for Award Management (www.SAM.gov)
- Do not appear on the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) and Blocked Persons list (<https://sanctionslist.ofac.treas.gov/Home/SdnList>)
- Are not listed in the United Nations Security Council Consolidated list (<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/un-sc-consolidated-list>)

E. Partnerships (other than subrecipients)

Applicants are encouraged to explore partnership opportunities with other donors involved in SME development as well as CSOs and the private sector.

[End Of Section C]

SECTION D: APPLICATION CONTENT AND FORMAT

1. General Content and Form of Application

Preparation of Applications:

Each applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO. Applications must be submitted as a single, unencrypted, searchable Word document or PDF document organized as instructed below. Applications that do not comply with the instructions below may be eliminated from consideration at the sole discretion of the Agreement Officer.

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.
- Applications must be submitted in English.
- Use standard 8 ½" x 11", single sided, single-spaced, 12-point Calibri font, 1" margins, left justification
- On all pages other than the cover page (described below) include headers with your organization name, date application submitted, NOFO number and Activity Name, and footers with page numbers.
- 10-point font can be used for graphs and charts. Tables, however, must comply with the 12-point Calibri requirement.
- Submitted as a single searchable Microsoft Word or PDF format. No ZIP, Folders or Encrypted files will be accepted.

Applicants should retain a copy of their application.

2. Application Format and Content

- a) **Cover Page** (not to exceed one page). Use Annex 1 to complete the cover page.
- b) **Table of Contents** (not to exceed one page).
- c) **List of Abbreviations** (not to exceed one page). All abbreviations used in the application must be written out in full the first time they are used.
- d) **Executive Summary** (not to exceed one page) - The Executive Summary must provide a high-level overview of key elements of the Technical Approach
- e) **Technical Approach** (not to exceed ten pages)

In this section, state your understanding of the key needs, challenges, and opportunities to achieve the desired goals, objectives, results, and outcomes of this NOFO. Applicants must provide a preliminary theory of change that is responsive to the

needs, challenges, and opportunities identified and that leads to the goals, objectives, results, and outcomes of this NOFO. The Technical Approach must also address how proposed interventions and results will be sustained. The Technical Approach should describe the expected benefits interventions will produce and how the approach will reduce gender gaps or address the unique needs and interests of women, men, and gender-diverse individuals. A strong Technical Approach will also include a partnerships strategy or plan that incorporates local partners and alliances. Applicants must also consider environment and climate risk mitigation in the application.

It is critical that the Technical Approach address all goals, objectives, results, and outcomes of the NOFO, and specifically, but not limited to, the allocation and objectives of Funding Types stated in Section C; Cross-cutting Considerations stated in Section C; Special Components of the Activity stated in Section C; and Integration with Related Programming stated in Section C.

Note: Construction is not anticipated under this NOFO but could become necessary to facilitate an emergency response to a natural or human made disaster after an award is made. Applicants must not include any construction in their application.

f) Management and Staffing Plan (not to exceed three pages, plus organogram - see below)

Applicants must state specifically and justify the composition and organizational structure of the entire country-based activity team. It should describe the role of all technical and operational staff, especially key personnel. Key personnel are those whose professional and technical skills are essential for the successful implementation of the activity and are directly responsible for management of the award. Applicants must state which positions will be designated as key personnel and qualifications required of the positions. No more than 5 key personnel are permitted. Applicants should provide a description of the expertise, experience and qualifications of key personnel positions including how skills and experience will allow them to provide leadership in addressing technical and administrative aspects required to meet the goals and objectives described in the program description. **Do not provide the names or resumes of potential key personnel.**

Applicants must describe the management approach including all the necessary resources to achieve results of the Technical Approach. Applicants' management and staffing plan must be aligned with its Technical Approach, and must be appropriate, comprehensive, and sustainable for achieving the results of the activity. The management approach must describe the overall structure of the activity, and how it will be managed to ensure efficient use of resources while leveraging partnerships to achieve results. The applicant must explain the roles and responsibilities of subrecipients or partners including a discussion of how they will be fully integrated into and add value to the award.

The management and staffing plan should describe the reporting relationship among staff and how each staff will contribute to successful implementation of the activity. The plan should specify the role and estimated amount of time each staff member will devote to the activity or specific components within the activity. Support staff from the applicant's central office should be included in this section with a brief description how they will support the activity.

Applicants must include an organogram of staff (not to exceed two pages) within the body of the Management and Staffing Plan, not as an annex. The organogram is not counted in the three-page limit of the Management and Staffing Plan.

g) Institutional Capability (not to exceed three pages)

Applicants must describe their organization's technical and managerial expertise demonstrated in prior relevant work that will directly benefit implementation of this activity. Applicants should also provide evidence of their capacity to respond to common and unusual challenges and widespread emergencies during prior interventions and describe the extent to which the applicant convincingly demonstrates effectiveness in the organization and management of complex development programs related to the NOFO objectives and a track record of effective partnership and capacity building of stakeholders. Inclusion of prior management of subawards that promoted innovative ideas, processes, and training and partnerships is also important.

Prior work in Mongolia or evidence of institutional knowledge of the geopolitical and cultural landscape of the country or the immediate geographic region will be highly rated within the Institutional Capability section. Such work or capability should be stated prominently in this section.

There is no specific format for institutional capability, but applicants should include the following as a minimum.

- Brief description of organization's history
- Institutional strength as represented by experience in managing successful activities of similar scope and complexity
- Financial management and resources
- Successful integration and monitoring of subrecipients' interventions within awards
- Gender and youth integration in Activities and other successful diversity outreach
- Environmental compliance
- Host country relations

Additional Information

h) Budget information

Detailed budget information is not required at this time. Only the total budget amount requested is needed on the cover page (see Annex 1).

Detailed budget information, a budget narrative, and other documentation will be required only of the Apparently Successful Candidate (ASA) as explained in Section F.

i) Funding Restrictions

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award.

Construction is not anticipated under this NOFO but could become necessary to facilitate an emergency response to a natural or human made disaster after an award is made. Applicants must not include any construction in their application.

USAID will not allow the reimbursement of pre-award costs under this award without the explicit written approval of the Agreement Officer.

j) Conflict of Interest Pre-award Term (October 2024)

a. Personal Conflict of Interest

- i. An actual or appearance of a conflict of interest exists when an applicant organization or an employee, officer, agent, board member 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 or interest may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, the obligations and duties of a USAID employee or applicant or recipient employee.
- ii. 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

k) Applications with Proprietary Data

Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation, should mark the cover page with the following:

"This application includes data that must not be disclosed, duplicated or used – 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."

[End Of Section D]

SECTION E: SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

1. Questions and Answers

Applicants may email questions about this NOFO to the Agency Point of Contact no later than the date and time indicated on the NOFO cover letter, as amended. Information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished to all 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 other prospective applicants.

2. Submission Requirements

Applications responding to this NOFO must be submitted by email to the Agency Point of Contact no later than the closing date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Late applications will not be reviewed. Applicants must retain proof of timely delivery in the form of system generated documentation of delivery receipt date and time.

Applications must be submitted

- as a **single searchable, unencrypted PDF or Word file** by email to manila-roaa-rfa@usaid.gov.
- **Do not send** zip files, folders, or encrypted files.
- File size must not exceed **10 MB**.
- In the subject field write this exactly:
Application For NOFO 72043825RFA00001 Organization Name
- **Do not send** more than one email.
- **Do not send** more than one file.
- **Do not send** any information not specifically asked for in the instructions.
- **Do not send** any annexes, literature, brochures, photos, news articles.

Any application failing to abide by these instructions will be summarily rejected without review at the Agreement Officer's sole discretion.

After submitting an application electronically, applicants should immediately check their own email to confirm that the attachments were indeed sent. **Only** if an applicant discovers an error in transmission, send the material again and write in the subject line of the email **Corrected Application For NOFO 72043825RFA00001 Organization Name**

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.

3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM.gov Registration

Each applicant, that does not have an exemption under [2 CFR 25.110](#), is required to:

- (1) Be registered in SAM.gov before submitting an application.
- (2) Maintain a current and active registration in SAM.gov at all times during which it has an active Federal award as a recipient or an application under consideration by USAID. The applicant or recipient must review and update its information in SAM.gov annually from the date of initial registration or subsequent updates to ensure it is current, accurate, and complete. If applicable, this includes identifying the applicant's or recipient's immediate and highest-level owner and subsidiaries, as well as providing information on all predecessors that have received a federal award or contract within the last three years; and
- (3) Include its UEI in each application it submits to USAID. A UEI is a unique, alpha-numeric 12-character identifier issued and maintained by SAM.gov that verifies the existence of an entity globally. The UEI is the official government-wide identifier for Federal awards.

The SAM registration process may take two or more months to complete. Therefore, applicants without UEI and SAM registration must begin the registration process immediately. If an applicant is unable to obtain a UEI and complete SAM registration before submitting an application, the applicant may request an exemption in accordance with the instructions below. 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. Applicants can find additional resources for obtaining a UEI and registering in SAM on a blog post on [WorkwithUSAID.gov](#).

Note: First-tier subrecipients (i.e., direct subrecipients) must obtain a UEI in order to receive a subaward, but are not required to complete full SAM registration.

Requests for UEI/SAM exemptions: An applicant may include in the body of its email when submitting its application a request to be exempted from the above UEI and/or SAM registration requirements, **only if the criteria for one of the exceptions in [2 CFR 25.110](#) apply**. The applicant may be required to submit additional justification or information in support of the request for an exemption. In certain cases where an exemption is approved, the selected applicant may still be required to obtain a UEI and/or register in SAM.gov within thirty (30) days after receiving the award.

When requesting an exemption, the applicant must submit proof of when the applicant first started the UEI/SAM registration process. Failure to begin the UEI/SAM registration process immediately will make an applicant ineligible for an exemption.

[End Of Section E]

SECTION F: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Responsiveness Review

Applicants must comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to comply with the NOFO may be considered as non-responsive and cause the application to be eliminated without review.

2. Merit Review Criteria

USAID will establish a Merit Review Committee (MRC). The MRC will conduct a merit review of all applications received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO as per the Responsiveness Review. **Applications will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the following criteria shown in descending order of importance.**

Merit Review Criteria #1

Technical Approach - Extent to which the Technical Approach demonstrates a thorough understanding of the key needs, challenges, and opportunities presented in the Program Description (PD), and presents a clear, detailed, technically sound, scalable, sustainable, and ambitious yet feasible approach to achieving the goals, objectives and results identified in the PD particularly with respect to, but not limited to the Gender Issues, Cross-cutting Considerations, Special Components, and Integration with Related Programming in the PD.

Merit Review Criteria #2

Management and Staffing Plan - The extent to which the Management and Staffing Plan convincingly demonstrates how its allocation of staff, Mongolia and HQ team structure, comparative advantages of its partner strategy, and integration of existing USAID and other donor activities in Mongolia will contribute to the successful and cost-effective implementation of its technical approach.

Merit Review Criteria #3

Institutional Capability - The extent to which the application proves its organization's actual technical and managerial expertise as demonstrated in prior relevant work of similar scope that will directly benefit implementation of this Activity, including prior work in Mongolia or special knowledge of the region, evidence of the applicant's prior management of subawards, and its capacity to respond to common and unusual challenges of prior work.

3. Review and Selection Process

The merit review criteria prescribed above 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.

A USAID Merit Review Committee (MRC) will conduct a merit review of all applications received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO and make the recommendation on which should be considered for award.

As a result of this process, USAID intends to select the Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA) based upon the application submission. Once the selection is made, USAID may address any application concerns to the (ASA) for resolution. However, USAID reserves the right to negotiate with all applicants prior to selection of the successful applicant if in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

Only after an ASA is determined, will USAID contact the ASA to ask for detailed budget information for the full period of performance of the award. A budget narrative will also be required as will other federally required financial information.

If USAID and the ASA cannot come to a mutual understanding during the course of discussions, or if the apparently successful applicant is unable to provide satisfactory Technical and Business Applications, or does not meet deadlines for submissions, or presents an unacceptable risk as a result of the risk assessment, then the Agreement Officer may designate the next highest-evaluated applicant as the apparently successful applicant. This decision is at the sole discretion of the Agreement Officer. The Agreement Officer's decision regarding funding of an award is final and not subject to review.

The Agreement Officer will make the final determination whether the award will be made to the applicant. An award may be made with or without a request for additional detail on an application. USAID may elect to issue one award, no award, cancel the RFA or solicit the RFA and the Agreement Officer's discretion if in the best interest of the U.S. government.

4. Risk Review

The AO will perform a risk assessment ([2 CFR 200.206](#)) of the ASA. The AO may determine that a pre-award survey is required to inform the risk assessment in determining whether the applicant 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](#)).

Before making an award with a total amount of USAID share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, USAID must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov. USAID will consider any comments by the applicant in determining whether the applicant is qualified for an award.}

[End Of Section F]

SECTION G: 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, applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award. Notice of Federal award signed by the Agreement Officer is the official document that obligates funds and will be provided to the authorized official of the selected applicant by electronic means. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified of their status by electronic means within 90 days of the Agreement Officer's selection of the ASA.

Pre-award costs are only allowed when specifically included in the award terms, or otherwise approved in writing by the Agreement Officer. Without such written authorization, any costs incurred for application development or program performance prior to an award period of performance start date are at the applicant's own risk; do not assume that the AO will approve them as pre-award costs in the award.

[End Of Section G]

SECTION H: POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

1. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The resulting award from this NOFO will be administered in accordance with the following:

For U.S. organizations: [2 CFR 700](#), [2 CFR 200](#), and [Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental Organizations](#).

For Non-U.S. organizations: 2 CFR 200 Subpart E and [Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations](#).

For Fixed Amount Awards: [Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards](#)

For Public International Organizations (PIOs): [ADS Chapter 308](#). Refer to ADS 308 for Standard Provisions that may be applicable.

The actual Standard Provisions included in an award will depend on the organization that is selected. The award will include the latest Mandatory Standard Provisions and will also contain the “required as applicable” Standard Provisions when such provisions are determined to be applicable. The resulting award will include all standard provisions in full text. See Annex 2, for a list of the Standard Provisions that will be applicable to awards resulting from this NOFO.

2. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient

The principal purpose of the relationship between USAID and the recipient is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the program, as 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.

3. Reporting Requirements

All reports must be approved by the Agreement Officer’s Representative or other USAID officer as determined by the Agreement Officer or by statute or regulation.

- **Financial Reporting:**

Report/Deliverable	Submission Date
--------------------	-----------------

For awards other than fixed amount awards, the Standard Form 425 (SF-425) must be submitted via electronic format to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) via https://pms.psc.gov/ . The Recipient must also submit a copy of SF-425 to the Agreement Officer (manila-roaa-admin@usaid.gov), Agreement Officer's Representative, and Controller (aidmnlfsc@usaid.gov). Electronic copies of the SF-425, along with instructions, can be found at https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/post-award-reporting-forms .	
Quarterly Financial Report	Within 30 days following the end of each quarter corresponding to USAID's fiscal year from October 1, through September 30.
Final Financial Report shall be in accordance with 2 CFR 700 .	Within 120 days following the expiration of the award.
Foreign Tax Report: A report detailing foreign taxes assessed under the award must be submitted to the AO, Controller (aidmnlfsc@usaid.gov), and AOR	Annually by April 16.

If the AO determines that an award will be a fixed amount award, financial reporting will not be required; however, the resultant award may specify that recipients submit certain Standard Forms to request an advance payment, if any.

- **Performance Reporting**

All reports must be approved by the Agreement Officer's Representative or other USAID officer as determined by the Agreement Officer or by statute or regulation.

Report/Deliverable	Submission Date
Quarterly Performance Reports (includes progress to date on sustainability, gender, and environment)	Within 30 days of the completion of the fiscal quarter (except for the fiscal quarters the Annual Progress Report is due)
Annual Progress Reports	Within 30 days of the completion of the fiscal year
Final Report	Within 120 days after the award completion date

- **Other Submission:**

Report/Deliverable	Submission Date
Annual Implementation Plan (includes the Gender and Inclusive Development Action Plan and Environmental Risk Mitigation Plan)	Initial (from the effective date of award until September 30, 2025) within 45 days of the effective date of award. Subsequently, no later than 30 days before the start of the succeeding fiscal year.
Subaward/Grants Manual	Within 45 days of award effective date
Branding Strategy and Marking Plan (Final)	Within 45 days of award effective date
Communication Strategy	Within 120 days of award effective date
Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan	Within 90 days of award effective date
Security Plan	Within 90 days of award effective date
Closeout Plan	Within 60 days prior to the award completion date
Sustainability Plan	Within 90 days after the effective date of the award
Annual Certification on Human Trafficking Report	Within 30 days after the end of the fiscal year
Other Reports	AOR to advise the Recipient

4. Program Income

If the Recipient generates program income, its disposition will be determined by the Agreement Officer subject to law and regulation, particularly 2 CFR 200.307.

5. 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) Parts 201.5.10g and 204 (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ADS/200/>), which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities. 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 cooperative agreement 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 Asia 24-085 (Annex 3 of this NOFO) has been approved for Activity funding this cooperative agreement. The IEE covers activities expected to be implemented under this cooperative agreement. USAID has determined that a Negative Determination with conditions applies to one or more of the proposed activities. This indicates that if these activities are implemented subject to the specified conditions, they are expected to have no significant adverse effect on the environment. The applicant shall be responsible for implementing all IEE conditions pertaining to activities to be funded under this award.
- 5) As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the Recipient, in collaboration with the USAID Cognizant Technical Officer and Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this cooperative agreement 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.
- 8) When the approved Regulation 216 documentation is (1) an IEE that contains one or more Negative Determinations with conditions and/or (2) an EA, the Recipient shall:
 - a) Unless the approved Regulation 216 documentation contains a complete environmental mitigation and monitoring plan (EMMP) or a project mitigation and monitoring (M&M) plan, the Recipient shall prepare an EMMP or M&M Plan describing how the Recipient will, in specific terms, implement all IEE and/or EA conditions that apply to proposed project activities within the scope of the award. The EMMP or M&M Plan shall include monitoring the implementation of the conditions and their effectiveness.
 - b) Integrate a completed EMMP or M&M Plan into the initial work plan.

- c) Integrate an EMMP or M&M Plan into subsequent Annual Work Plans, making any necessary adjustments to activity implementation in order to minimize adverse impacts to the environment.
- 9) A provision for subawards is included under this award; therefore, the Recipient will be required to use an Environmental Review Form (ERF) or Environmental Review (ER) checklist using impact assessment tools to screen impact, to develop mitigation measures, as necessary, and to specify monitoring and reporting. Use of the ERF or ER checklist is called for when the nature of the grant proposals to be funded is not well enough known to make an informed decision about their potential environmental impacts, yet due to the type and extent of activities to be funded, any adverse impacts are expected to be easily mitigated. Implementation of subgrant activities cannot go forward until the ERF or ER checklist is completed and approved by USAID. Recipient is responsible for ensuring that mitigation measures specified by the ERF or ER checklist process are implemented.
- 10) The Recipient shall be responsible for periodic reporting to the AOR, as specified in Program description of this award. The AOR shall review and clear on the report. The AOR can seek guidance from the MEO and/or the BEO as needed.

[End Of Section H]

SECTION I: OTHER INFORMATION

USAID reserves the right to fund one, more than one, or none of the applications submitted, or to cancel the NOFO, or re-solicit the NOFO. 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.

Emergency Response Provision

Mongolia is vulnerable to natural disasters, epidemics, and sociopolitical instability. These challenges, whether natural or human made, can quickly and significantly set back development gains in Mongolia. Hence, implementing partners should have the capacity to respond to these challenges by mobilizing resources, redirecting funds, or supporting new activities, which may include construction, at the request of USAID/Philippines and Mongolia that may vary considerably from those activities in the approved award. Responses may include cooperating with other U.S. government departments, agencies or personnel, or assistance to the Mongolian government or other key stakeholders, and revision of geographic focus.

Accordingly, an award resulting from this NOFO will allow redirection of the Program Description or funds or the addition of other funds to support activities to address unanticipated challenges and disaster events. Any use of this provision must be mutually agreed upon by USAID and the Recipient. Prior to any use of this provision, the Recipient and USAID shall identify objectives, activities to be carried out, and the cost of such activities, and obtain written concurrence from the AOR, with specific reporting instructions, and approval from the Agreement Officer.

The scope and deliverables expected from the realignment of activity resources will be mutually agreed upon by USAID/Philippines and Mongolia and the Recipient.

ANNEX 1 - APPLICATION COVER PAGE

(This page will not be counted towards the page limits)

A. Application Overview

1. Activity Name: Business Excellence for Sustainability and Transparency (BEST) Phase II
2. Proposed Period of Performance (start date and end date):
3. NOFO Number:
4. Submission Date (insert application submission date):
5. Total Award Amount Requested (in USDs):

B. Organization Information

6. Organization Name:
7. UEI NUMBER (or date applied for):
8. Contact Person (name, phone, e-mail):
9. Full Address for Organization:
10. Type of Organization e.g., US, non-US, local entity (as per ADS 303), multilateral, private, for-profit, non-profit) date of incorporation, etc.):
11. Name of Partners if applicable:

C. Obligating Information and Signature

12. Name and Title of individual with authority to obligate on behalf of your organization:
13. Signature of individual with authority to obligate your organization:

ANNEX 2 - STANDARD PROVISIONS

The selected applicant will be required to comply with USAID's standard provisions. The standard provisions included in the resultant award will be dependent on the organization that is selected or, in the case of a fixed amount award, the type of award.

The full text of these provisions may be found on USAID's website here:

- Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations:
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa>,
- Standard Provisions for non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations:
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>, and
- Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards:
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mat>.

The resultant award will include the full text of current Mandatory Standard Provisions and the Required As Applicable Standard Provisions. **The required as applicable standard provisions will be required if checked below.**

Required as Applicable Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations

Required	Not Required	REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS U.S. NGOs
Determined at award		RAA1. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rates – Predetermined (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA2. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rates – Nonprofit Provisional & Final (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA3. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate – For-Profit Provisional & Final (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA4. Indirect Costs – De Minimis Rate (August 2024)
		RAA5. Reserved
	✓	RAA6. Voluntary Population Planning Activities – Supplemental Requirements (January 2009)
	✓	RAA7. Protection of the Individual As A Research Subject (April 1998)
	✓	RAA8. Care of Laboratory Animals (March 2004)
	✓	RAA9. Title to and Care of Property (Cooperating Country Title) (August 2024)
	✓	RAA10. Cost Sharing (August 2024)
	✓	RAA11. Prohibition of Assistance to Drug Traffickers (June 1999)
✓		RAA12. Investment Promotion (December 2022)

Required	Not Required	REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS U.S. NGOs
✓		RAA13. Reporting Host Government Taxes (December 2022)
✓		RAA14. Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences (June 2012)
	✓	RAA15. Conscience Clause Implementation (Assistance) (February 2012)
	✓	RAA16. Condoms (Assistance) (September 2014)
	✓	RAA17. Prohibition on the Promotion or Advocacy of the Legalization or Practice of Prostitution or Sex Trafficking (Assistance) (September 2014)
		RAA18. Reserved
	✓	RAA19. Standards for Accessibility for the Disabled in USAID Assistance Awards Involving Construction (September 2004)
	✓	RAA20. Statement for Implementers of Anti-Trafficking Activities on Lack of Support for Prostitution (June 2012)
	✓	RAA21. Eligibility of Subrecipients of Anti-Trafficking Funds (June 2012)
	✓	RAA22. Prohibition on the Use of Anti-Trafficking Funds to Promote, Support, or Advocate for the Legalization or Practice of Prostitution (June 2012)
		RAA23. Reserved
✓		RAA24. Reporting Subawards and Executive Compensation (August 2024)
	✓	RAA25. Patent Reporting Procedures (December 2022)
	✓	RAA26. Access to USAID Facilities and USAID's Information Systems (August 2013)
✓		RAA27. Contract Provision for DBA Insurance under Recipient Procurements (December 2022)
		RAA28. Reserved
		RAA29. Reserved
Determined at award		RAA30. Program Income (August 2024)
✓		RAA31. Never Contract with the Enemy (August 2024)

Required as Applicable Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations

Required	Not Required	REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS Non-U.S. NGOs
Determined at award		RAA1. Advance Payment and Refunds (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA2. Reimbursement Payment and Refunds (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA3. Indirect Costs – Negotiated Indirect Cost Rates Provisional & Final (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA4. Indirect Costs – Charged As A Fixed Amount (Nonprofit) (August 2024)

Required	Not Required	REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS Non-U.S. NGOs
Determined at award		RAA5. Indirect Costs – De Minimis Rate (August 2024)
		RAA6. Reserved
✓		RAA7. Reporting Subawards and Executive Compensation (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA8. Subawards (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA9. Travel and International Air Transportation (December 2014)
Determined at award		RAA10. Ocean Shipment of Goods (June 2012)
✓		RAA11. Reporting Host Government Taxes (December 2022)
	✓	RAA12. Patent Rights (December 2022)
		RAA13. Reserved
✓		RAA14. Investment Promotion (December 2022)
	✓	RAA15. Cost Sharing (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA16. Program Income (August 2024)
✓		RAA17. Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences (June 2012)
	✓	RAA18. Standards for Accessibility for the Disabled In USAID Assistance Awards Involving Construction (September 2004)
	✓	RAA19. Protection of Human Research Subjects (June 2012)
	✓	RAA20. Statement for Implementers of Anti-Trafficking Activities on Lack of Support for Prostitution (June 2012)
	✓	RAA21. Eligibility of Subrecipients of Anti-Trafficking Funds (June 2012)
	✓	RAA22. Prohibition on the Use of Anti-Trafficking Funds to Promote, Support, or Advocate for the Legalization or Practice of Prostitution (June 2012)
	✓	RAA23. Voluntary Population Planning Activities – Supplemental Requirements (January 2009)
	✓	RAA24. Conscience Clause Implementation (Assistance) (February 2012)
	✓	RAA25. Condoms (Assistance) (September 2014)
	✓	RAA26. Prohibition on the Promotion or Advocacy of the Legalization or Practice of Prostitution or Sex Trafficking (Assistance) (September 2014)
	✓	RAA27. Limitation on Subawards to Non-Local Entities (July 2014)
✓		RAA28. Contract Provision for DBA Insurance Under Recipient Procurements (December 2022)
		RAA29. Reserved
		RAA30. Reserved

Required	Not Required	REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS Non-U.S. NGOs
✓		RAA31. Never Contract with the Enemy (August 2024)

ANNEX 3 - Mission Analyses of Operating Environment

[BEST 2.0 Mission Initial Environmental Examination and Climate Risk Management](#)

[BEST 2.0 Gender Analysis](#)

ANNEX 4 - ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADS	Automated Directives System
AO	Agreement Officer
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
ASA	Apparently Successful Applicant
BEST	Business Excellence for Sustainability and Transparency
CE	Clean Energy
CLA	Collaboration, Learning and Adapting
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFC	Development Finance Corporation
DG	Democracy and Governance
DO	Development Objective
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights and Governance
EG	Economic Growth
EMMP	Environmental Management and Mitigation Plan
EPMAV	Enhancing Production and Market Access for Vegetables
FAA	Foreign Assistance Act
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
IP	Implementing Partner
IR	Intermediate Result
MACSS	Media and Civil Society Strengthening
MEG	Mongolia Energy Governance
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)
MOFALI	Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Light Industry
MRC	Merit Review Committee
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NICRA	Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity Number
PD	Program Description
PRC	People's Republic of China
RAA	Required As Applicable
SAM	System for Award Management
SF	Strategic Framework
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

UEI	Unique Entity Identifier
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	U.S. Government

[End of NOFO]