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**The USAID Broad Agency Announcement for
Adapting USAID's Democracy, Rights, and Governance (DRG)
Programming to Better Address Global Trends and Challenges**

I. Overview

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance is issuing this Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) to seek participants to co-create, co-design, co-invest, and collaborate on research and development interventions to improve delivery of Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Programs given the growing global challenges of closing civic and political space, disillusionment with democracy, violent extremism, the digital revolution, demographic and migration trends, among others. USAID invites organizations and companies to submit Expressions of Interest for the attached Addenda, as discussed below.

The intent of the BAA is to allow co-creation and co-design to the maximum extent to create high quality, effective partnerships with efficiency in time and resources and effectiveness in achieving results. USAID will invite selected for-profit and nonprofit, public and private organizations, as detailed below, to co-create research and development (R&D) solutions to the Problem and Challenge Statements stated in this BAA (and, more specifically, in the Addenda to this BAA), including those organizations that have ideas, expertise, resources, and/or funding to add to potential solutions.

Co-Investing: USAID wants to align goals with the partners under this BAA to facilitate shared responsibility, shared risk, and shared resourcing. Shared resourcing requires that cash and/or other resources, both tangible and intangible, such as in-kind contributions, expertise, intellectual property, brand value, high-value coordination, and access to key people, places, and information, are directed towards reaching the solution to the Problem/Challenge. Co-investing does not require equal shared resources (such as 1:1 leverage), but rather resource contributions that are appropriate to the specific project's objectives, considering the comparative advantages brought by the participation of each party.

B. Federal Agency Name:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

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- C. Opportunity Title: Adapting USAID’s Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) Programming to Better Address Global Trends and Challenges
- D. Opportunity Number: **BAA- xxx-xxx-2017 [NAMING CONVENTION INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND IN THE BAA STAGE 1 FAQs [HERE](#)]**
- E. Authority:
This BAA is issued under Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Part 35.016 (c). This is not a FAR Part 15 Procurement.
- F. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:
98.001 USAID Foreign Assistance Programs for Overseas

II. Problem and Challenge Statements

A. DRG Priorities

Inclusive, citizen-centered democratic governance and respect for fundamental human rights embodies U.S. values and advances U.S. influence, prosperity, and security. This is reflected in the President’s National Security Strategy (NSS), which demonstrates the commitment to fundamental human rights and freedoms under Pillar IV, “Advance American Influence” stating, “We will continue to champion American values and offer encouragement to those struggling for human dignity in their societies.” In its statement, “Governments that respect the rights of their citizens remain the best vehicle for prosperity, human happiness, and peace,” the NSS elaborates that promoting human rights and democracy is more likely to advance peace, stability and prosperity at home and abroad, and is therefore integral to our national security.

Assistance for democracy, human rights and governance (DRG) not only supports fundamental U.S. values, it also advances our core national interests in global security and prosperity. For decades, USAID has managed and implemented DRG programming as a key part of our development strategy. While we have made significant gains on advancing democracy, human rights and governance, new challenges and global trends are increasingly impacting our work, requiring us to adapt and evolve our approaches.

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PROBLEM:

While public demand for democracy continues to grow, global trends identify a clear decline in respect for democracy and human rights around the world over the past 12 years. The resurgence of authoritarian rule, manipulation of elections, the spread of disinformation, the manipulation of social media and Internet tools to discredit democracy and the rule of law, closing civic and political space, and the rise of “revisionist power” from countries like Russia and China threaten the rules-based international order and is negatively impacting our development assistance.

CHALLENGE:

USAID and its partners will work to harness the power of science, technology, and innovation to provide new knowledge, tools, and approaches to implement solutions that can effectively address global challenges that threaten U.S vital interests and impede USAID’s democracy, human rights and governance and broader development objectives. The partnerships and innovative solutions developed through this process will help create an environment for sustainability, scalability, and ultimately impact. Key challenges include, among others:

Closing Civic and Political Space. USAID has been instrumental in the design and implementation of innovative programs and policy responses to the global trend of closing civic and political space. However, in 2016, Freedom House reported the 10th consecutive year of global decline in civil liberties and political rights, with backsliding in 72 countries.

Authoritarian governments share strategies and tools to stifle independent voices, and have grown adept at using communications technologies to monitor and censor their citizens. Because CSOs make so many contributions to poverty reduction and environmental protection, closing civic and political space is not just a DRG problem; it undermines our investments in all development sectors.

Disillusionment with Democracy. The evidence is clear that over time, democracies outperform autocracies on a broad range of development indicators, so promoting country strategies that integrate DRG principles and practice into all development sectors is important to achieving sustainable and equitable development outcomes. While that may be the case, challenges arise as citizens look for immediate results. Diminished citizen confidence in democratic institutions and processes make existing democracies more vulnerable to backsliding and degradation, and public hostility or cynicism toward democracy complicates efforts to open up authoritarian and hybrid regimes. In countries that have experienced political transitions, the persistence of corruption, rising income inequality and failed democratic reforms enable populist and authoritarian leaders to exploit frustrations and reverse democratic gains.

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Digital Revolution. Whereas the digital revolution initially promised a global movement for democracy, authoritarians have figured out how to use the Internet as a tool of political control and to corrupt the information landscape in order to retain power. State and malign non-state actors project influence and advance their objectives by silencing media and journalists and through new forms of propaganda, spreading disinformation, falsely amplifying messages, drowning out the voices of legitimate democratic actors, and exploiting social cleavages online. As use of the Internet continues to grow, new technologies will continue to pose opportunities and challenges for how we work in the DRG sector. USAID needs more research, tools and expertise to maximize the benefits of the digital revolution in development while protecting our partners and beneficiaries.

Violent Extremism. DRG tools are increasingly being employed to help counter insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan and to counter violent extremism (VE) in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Violent extremism poses security challenges, hampers our ability to operate on the ground, fuels intolerance, and provides justifications for governments to impose undue restrictions on basic freedoms. While adapting to operating in a changing security environment, USAID's distinct role is employing development programming to address VE drivers and designing more strategic interventions at early stages prior to VE expansion to help build community resilience to VE threats and reduce the need for security responses, but gaps still remain in determining which DRG tools are most effective in which environments and when to use them.

B. DRG Challenge Addenda

USAID is issuing Addenda to this BAA that present specific challenges related to the global trends noted above. These Addenda focus on identified problems, solutions, scalability opportunities, feasibility studies, and other research and development initiatives, and include contributions to:

- (1) Enabling and Protecting Civic Space (EPCS); and,
 - (2) Advancing Integrity in Media (AIM)
- Potential partners will respond to the individual Addenda, not to this BAA.

III. The BAA Process

The amount of resources made available under this BAA will depend on the concepts received and the availability of funds from USAID and other resource partners. Some award types may not include any funding. The award process under this BAA has the following steps:

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STAGE 1 - SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOIs)

Please submit an Expression of Interest, addressing the criteria below, in the format required in Section VII. More than one expression of interest can be submitted. Please note that the Expression of Interest should be targeted to the attached Addenda.

USAID will review the Expressions of Interest to determine the extent to which each Expression of Interest addresses the criteria/eligibility criteria identified below and in the respective Addendum. Not all organizations that submit an Expression of Interest will be invited to proceed to Stage 2. Due to the number of Expressions of Interest likely to be received, USAID is unable to provide details on why Expressions of Interest were not selected.

Criteria for Expressions of Interest:

1. Expressions of Interest must indicate the research or development idea which will work towards discovering potential solutions to the Problem and Challenge Statements identified in the Addenda, by increasing knowledge and understanding of potential solutions, exploiting scientific discoveries or improvements in technology, materials, processes, methods, devices, or techniques, advancing the state of the art, or using scientific and technical knowledge in the design, development, testing, or evaluation of a potential new product or service (or of an improvement in an existing product or service). ***Again, please direct Expressions of Interest to the problem and challenge statements identified in the Addenda, not in this umbrella BAA statement.***

Any awards issued under this solicitation will be for Applied Research or Development, as those terms are defined in 48 USC 35.001, as follows:

“Applied research” means the effort that:

(a) normally follows basic research¹, but may not be severable from the related basic research;

(b) attempts to determine and exploit the potential of scientific discoveries or

¹ The primary aim of basic research is a fuller knowledge or understanding of the subject under study, rather than any practical application of that knowledge. (FAR 2.101)

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improvements in technology, materials, processes, methods, devices, or techniques; and

(c) attempts to advance the state of the art. When being used by contractors in cost principle applications, this term does not include efforts whose principal aim is the design, development, or testing of specific items or services to be considered for sale; these efforts are within the definition of “development,” given below.

“Development” means the systematic use of scientific and technical knowledge in the design, development, testing, or evaluation of a potential new product or service (or of an improvement in an existing product or service) to meet specific performance requirements or objectives. It includes the functions of design engineering, prototyping, and engineering testing; it excludes subcontracted technical effort that is for the sole purpose of developing an additional source for an existing product.

2. Expressions of Interest must demonstrate the potential to have a significant impact (e.g. breakthroughs, not incremental improvements), that ultimately could achieve greater impact at scale.

3. Expressions of Interest must indicate the ***background and expertise of the organization***, and the managerial and technical staff or team engaged in the endeavor.

4. Expressions of Interest must ***indicate what co-investment resources are available*** to bear on the solution, including those from the submitting organization and those from other third party businesses, donors, foundations, or other organizations. Such resources include cash and other resources, both tangible and intangible, such as in-kind contributions, expertise, intellectual property, brand value, high-value coordination, and access to key people, places, and information.

5. USAID will also consider the reputation of an organization and its past performance in assessing the ability of the organization to contribute to the co-creation.

STAGE 2 - CO-CREATION AND CO-DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT PAPER

During Stage 2, key stakeholders will Co-Create potential solutions to the Problem/Challenge by brainstorming and innovating solutions and resources, potentially leading to concept papers that USAID or other resource partners will consider for funding.

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Co-Creation

USAID will review the Expressions of Interest and will select those organizations that USAID determines have addressed the criteria/eligibility stated within the BAA to an extent that the organization will make a significant contribution to the Co-Creation. The Co-Creation will also include USAID and other co-investment organizations that may be able to contribute cash and other resources, both tangible and intangible, such as in-kind contributions, expertise, intellectual property, brand value, high-value coordination, and/or access to key people, places, and information.

Co-Creations may take the form of a workshop, conference, meeting, or other the method at the discretion of the USAID. For this BAA, the Co-Creation is expected to be [included details about expectations of the co-creation process]. For more information on co-creation and its design approaches, see <https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/co-creation-discussion-note-ads-201>.

Unless provided otherwise, organizations are responsible for all costs incurred by the organization to participate in the Co-Creation.

Co-Development of Concept Papers

Working together, USAID and the potential partner(s) will collaborate on Concept Paper(s), taking a holistic approach to addressing the Problem/Challenge based on learnings from the Co-Creation, and identifying creative approaches to resourcing projects. Such Concept Papers will consider and include additional implementing and co-investment partners to complement the project, including reasonable cost sharing, leverage, or other exchange of resource arrangements.

The Concept Paper, generally 5-10 pages, will further detail and explain the project.

STAGE 3 - REVIEW BY THE PEER AND SCIENTIFIC REVIEW BOARD

USAID and the organizations connected with each Concept Papers will present the Concept Paper to the Peer and Scientific Review Board, comprised of experts from USAID, partners, and/or outside parties. The Peer and Scientific Review Board will review Concept Papers and recommend which applicants should be considered Apparently Successful Partners. Using its technical expertise, the Peer and Scientific Review Board will recommend whether to move forward with the project, including revisions/additions to the project, and potential partners and resources.

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Not all organizations that present a Concept Paper to the Peer and Scientific Review Board will be invited to move to Stage 4.

STAGE 4: AWARD DETERMINATION

USAID will review the Peer and Scientific Review Board's recommendations and consider other information, such as resource availability and Agency priorities, and will make a determination whether to move forward with the Concept Paper. For Concept Papers that demonstrate a valid innovation to address the Problem/Challenge Statement, the Contracting/Agreement Officer will assess the partner's responsibility and identify the anticipated instrument type to facilitate project design.

Request for Additional Information. USAID will work with partners identified by the Peer and Scientific Review Board, and co-design the project and assist the partner to provide additional information with respect to the proposer's technical approach, capacity, management and organization, past performance, and budget, as well as representations and certifications, as needed.

Final Review and Negotiation. The USAID Contract/ Agreement Officer will engage in final review, negotiation, responsibility, cost reasonableness, etc., and will co-develop/craft an award instrument with the Apparently Successful Partner. If the Apparently Successful Applicant and USAID cannot arrive at a mutually agreeable arrangement, USAID may cancel the project at no cost to the Government.

Award. Awards under this BAA will be made to the Apparently Successful Partners on the basis of their ability to achieve solutions to the Problems/Challenges, as provided herein. The standard clauses or provisions for awards are generally prescribed by law and regulation and will vary considerably by award type. Information regarding clauses and provisions will be offered to the Apparently Successful Applicant when the award type is identified

IV. Additional Considerations

- A. Expressions of Interest are not evaluated against other Expressions of Interest, but solely whether USAID believes that the submitter will be a valuable contributor to the co-creation process. USAID may limit the number of initial submissions selected to move forward based on efficiencies.

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- B. Concept Papers are not evaluated against other Concept Papers, but solely based on USAID's determination that the Concept Paper will successfully address the Problem and Challenges set forth herein. USAID may limit the number of Concept Papers selected to move forward based on efficiencies.
- C. Decisions regarding USAID's pursuit of a particular project, technology or relationship are based on all available information, evidence, data, and resulting analysis.
- D. Eligibility Information. Public, private, for-profit, and nonprofit organizations, as well as institutions of higher education, public international organizations, non-governmental organizations, U.S. and non-U.S. governmental organizations, multilateral and international donor organizations are eligible under this BAA. All organizations must be determined to be responsive to the BAA and sufficiently responsible to perform or participate in the final award type.

V. Specific Rights Reserved for the Government under this BAA

The Government reserves specific rights, in addition to rights described elsewhere in this document or by law or regulation, including:

- 1. The right to award multiple awards, a single award, or no awards.
- 2. The right to make award without discussions, or to conduct discussions and/or negotiations, whichever is determined to be in the Government's interest.
- 3. The right to accept proposals in their entirety or to select only portions of proposals for award or co-investment.
- 4. The right to select for award an instrument type that is appropriate to the specific development context, partner relationship, and proposal selected for award. Instruments types include, but are not limited to, contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, public-private partnerships, Inter-Agency Agreements, Government to Government Agreements, Donor to Donor Agreements, and Memorandums of Understanding. In addition, the Government may craft a new instrument type to meet the needs of a specific relationship.

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5. The right to co-create projects with one or more proposers under the BAA, when it is in the best interest of the Government.
6. The right to request any additional, necessary documentation upon initial review. Such additional information may include, but is not limited to, a further detailed proposal, budget, and representations and certifications.
7. The right to fund or co-invest in proposals in phases, with options for continued work at the end of one or more of the phases.
9. The right to award instruments under this BAA that do not commit or exchange monetary resources.
10. The right to remove organizations from the BAA process if USAID determines it is no longer in the best interests of the Government to proceed with the organization.

VI. Information Protection:

USAID's goal is to facilitate research and development that will lead to innovative, and potentially commercially viable, solutions. Understanding the sensitive nature of submitters' information, USAID will work with organizations to protect intellectual property.

Expressions of interest should be free of any intellectual property that submitter wishes to protect, as the expressions of interest will be shared with USAID partners as part of the selection process. However, once submitters have been invited to advance beyond co-creation, submitters can work with USAID to identify proprietary information that requires protection.

Therefore, organizations making submissions under this BAA grant to USAID a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to use, disclose, reproduce, and prepare derivative works, and to have or permit others to do so to any information contained in the Expressions of Interest submitted under the BAA. If USAID further engages with the organization regarding its submission, the parties can negotiate further intellectual property protection for the organization's intellectual property.

Organizations must ensure that any submissions under this BAA are free of any third party proprietary data rights that would impact the license granted to USAID herein.

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VII. Expression of Interest Information

This BAA has addenda issued under the subject matter discussed above. Do not respond directly to this document. Expression of Interest information will be available within each addendum issued under this BAA.