

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Locally Led Development ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT (APS)

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INTERESTED APPLICANTS - PLEASE READ: This Locally Led Development APS is not a Request for Applications or a Request for Proposals, and this APS does not serve as a general request for locally led development concepts. Do not email concepts to LLD-APS@usaid.gov or submit concepts via grants.gov, as they will not be accepted. Interested Applicants must respond to specific documents that share USAID priorities in a specific country(ies) called “addenda” that may be issued throughout the year on grants.gov. These addenda, when added, can be found on grants.gov under “Related Documents” on the Locally Led Development APS page. Please visit this page periodically for opportunities that may be relevant to your country and focus areas.

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Section 1: APS Description

Pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, the United States government as represented by the U.S Agency for International Development (USAID), Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment (E3), Office of Local Sustainability (E3/LS) invites concepts from a wide variety of local actors for assistance awards that advance locally led development. **Locally led development** refers to the extent to which local actors are empowered to lead priority-setting, decision-making, management, measurement, and other processes through which development assistance contributes toward improving systems and outcomes for development. It is a key tenet of [USAID's Mission, Vision, and Values](#) that "Our objective is to support partners to become self-reliant and capable of leading their own development journeys."

This Annual Program Statement (APS), issued to specifically support locally led development, offers USAID Operating Units (OUs: Missions, Bureaus, and Independent Offices) a mechanism to support locally led development approaches while upholding U.S. foreign policy objectives of promoting national security, advancing American values, and supporting global prosperity and self-reliance. Awards resulting from this APS will support the [Journey to Self-Reliance](#) by empowering local actors to take the lead in identifying and addressing development challenges in their own communities, countries, and regions. Furthermore, this APS seeks to build upon Agency policy, guidance, and emerging practice in the areas of systems thinking, collaboration, learning, and contextually-informed and adaptive design and management. It aims to advance USAID's capability to work with local partners, to learn from these engagements, and to share this learning broadly.

This APS is global and open to local actors working in all sectors. Under this APS, USAID intends to fund a wide range of flexible, innovative, and experimental approaches to encourage locally led development.

Section 2: Applicant Eligibility

USAID welcomes concepts from a wide variety of local actors who bring an understanding of the development challenges facing their communities, countries, or regions or who demonstrate a way to determine local priorities in their approach. Eligible applicants:

1. Must be local actors. When determining if an entity is a "local actor" for the purposes of this APS, USAID will consider:
 - a. Whether the entity is legally organized under the laws of the host country;
 - b. Whether the entity has its principal place of business or operations in the host country;
 - c. Whether the entity is majority owned and controlled by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the host country;

- d. Whether the entity is managed by a governing body, the majority of whom are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the host country; and
 - e. Whether the entity has projects, offices, and/or registration in other countries, and whether key management decisions are taken by the office located in the host country or elsewhere.
2. Cannot have received more than \$5 million in direct funding from USAID in the past five years.
3. Cannot be a U.S.-based organization. U.S.-based organizations are not eligible as prime awardees under this APS.

USAID especially encourages applications from local organizations that have not worked with USAID before.

While not an exhaustive list and provided for illustrative purposes only, the following types of non-U.S. organizations are encouraged to participate:

- Civic groups
- Colleges and universities
- Cooperatives
- Faith-based organizations (FBOs)
- Foundations
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Private businesses
- Trade associations

Section 3: Learning Priorities

This APS is designed to catalyze a process through which local actors can work with USAID to achieve development impact by testing and learning from approaches that incorporate **at least one** of the following learning priorities:

1. **Feedback Mechanisms** to ensure that information flows in various directions among local actors, partners, and USAID to improve program effectiveness and sustainability.
2. **Systems-and-Networks-Based Analytical Approaches**, which may allow us to better understand the complex environments in which we operate.
3. **Participatory Decision-Making**, which includes locally led priority-setting, collaborative design, and other means of devolving control and ensuring inclusive local leadership.
4. **Strengthening Local Networks** to connect local needs with local resources.
5. **Local Ownership Approaches to Design, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning** that prioritize local definitions of success.

6. **Supporting Strategic Transitions**, which includes strengthening the role of local institutions and actors to sustain outcomes without foreign assistance.

Section 4: Local Resources

This APS supports activities that incorporate a mix of USAID and local resources to ensure that there is strong local support for proposed approaches both during and after the life of an award. In addenda to this APS, OUs must require one or a combination of approaches to incorporate local resources that are appropriate for the country context. This may include cost share, leverage, an/or an activity component that strengthens the capacity of local awardees to generate or leverage local resources beyond those provided by international donors.

Section 5: Funding

This APS is not supported by specific funds. Any funding for activities proposed under this APS will be requested from the specific USAID OU with which the Applicant seeks to collaborate and to which the concept will be submitted.

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted under this APS. Please note that the determination of potential substantive and resource support DOES NOT constitute a commitment to fund a subsequently submitted full application.

Section 6: Award Amount Considerations for Self-Reliance

As part of the Journey to Self-Reliance, [USAID must ensure that foreign assistance contributes to local capacity to plan, finance, and implement solutions to local development challenges](#). It is not prudent for donor resources to temporarily flood a local organization with funding that artificially expands its size beyond what can reasonably be sustained through local resources after an award ends. Under this APS, both OUs and local organizations must take responsibility for determining appropriate award amounts. OUs must ensure that awards under this APS do not exceed an awardee's capacity to grow sustainably in the local context (sometimes referred to as "absorptive capacity"). As equal partners in this effort, Applicants must propose a budget that reasonably reflects their existing resources and capacity to grow. OUs' final determinations of award amounts will be based on the outcomes of pre-award surveys.

OUs are strongly encouraged to issue smaller, multiple awards to local organizations and consortiums under this APS.

There are no limits on the number of awards that may be made by OUs under this APS to a single organization. However, each organization or consortium may only respond to each addendum with a single concept.

Section 7: Addendum and Co-Creation Instructions for USAID OUs

OUs request concepts for locally led development approaches that respond to specific OU objectives by issuing OU-specific addenda to this APS. Addenda are developed in collaboration with E3/LS, and one member of the E3/LS team will serve on the full application Selection Committee for each addendum.

OUs interested in issuing addenda are encouraged to contact the Locally Led Development APS Activity Manager at LLD-APS@usaid.gov as early as possible. The Activity Manager will provide an addendum template that identifies the information and material that an OU must include in the addendum. E3/LS will review and approve each proposed addendum to ensure it is in the spirit of the Locally Led Development APS. In its addendum, an OU must specify whether concepts must be submitted in written form, presented orally, or any combination of the two. OUs are strongly encouraged to translate addenda into relevant local language(s). E3/LS requires a submission window of no less than four weeks to ensure that local organizations have sufficient time to respond to opportunities. Six weeks or more is recommended.

Based on concept submissions, the OU will determine whether to co-create an activity or set of activities with any Applicant and then request a full application. If an OU decides a full application is warranted, full application instructions and/or templates will be provided to Applicants by the OU. OUs are encouraged to allow oral presentations and other creative formats for the full application. Prior to submission of a full application, the OU and Applicant must have significant interaction in-person, via phone, and/or electronically to co-create the full application's programmatic approach.

An OU may also review all concepts and decide to invite selected Applicants to enter a period of multi-stakeholder co-creation, in which they will collaborate on and refine approach(es) with one another. Individual Applicants and/or groupings of two or more Applicants will then submit full applications for consideration by the OU.

The submission of a concept under this APS helps USAID determine whether there is potential substantive and resource support for the concept before the prospective Applicant invests significant time and resources in the development of a full application. The co-creation process enables activity design that focuses on local priorities and draws on the knowledge of the people who will carry out the activities. E3/LS can provide consultations, templates, and facilitation support to OUs for the co-creation process.

Section 8: Concept Submission Instructions and Next Steps for Applicants

This Locally Led Development APS is not a Request for Applications or a Request for Proposals, and this APS does not serve as a general request for locally led development concepts. Do not email concepts to LLD-APS@usaid.gov or submit concepts via grants.gov, as they will

not be accepted. Interested Applicants must respond to specific documents that share USAID priorities in a specific country(ies) called “addenda” that may be issued throughout the year on grants.gov. These addenda, when added, can be found on grants.gov under “Related Documents” on the Locally Led Development APS page. Please visit this page periodically for opportunities that may be relevant to your country and focus areas.

Interested applicants responding to a specific addendum must follow the steps below. Concepts must conform to the requirements outlined in Attachment A, and be submitted via email to the appropriate OU. Applicants are encouraged to reach out to the OU point of contact listed on the addendum with any questions during this process.

Step 1: Interested Applicants must reflect on their own experience working in the local context and do any additional needed research to understand the objectives set forth in the OU-issued addendum to the Locally Led Development APS. Applicants must research and understand locally led development approaches, including the learning priorities in Section 2, Applicant Eligibility. Local actors are not required to propose a fully designed activity for this APS - an approach that suggests a process to identify and then act on solutions from the local context is fully within the intent of this APS. Applicants are encouraged to identify and collaborate with other stakeholders to the development challenge(s) in their community; cross-sector partnerships/consortia are especially encouraged.

Step 2: Applicants submit a concept to the OU POC, following the guidance in Attachment A, Concept Format Instructions for Applicants. Concepts may be submitted in written form, presented orally, or any combination of the two. Concepts may be submitted in English or in a language acceptable to the OU as agreed with the applicant.

The OU responds with a confirmation receipt within one week of submission. All concepts are reviewed based upon the criteria outlined in Section 9, Concept Review Criteria.

Step 3: If selected to participate in the full application process, the Applicant is contacted by an Agreement Officer (AO) from the relevant OU and given a due date and template/instructions for the full application. Applicants not selected to advance will also be notified.

An OU may also review all concepts and decide to invite selected Applicants to enter a period of multi-stakeholder co-creation, in which they will collaborate on and refine approach(es) with one another. Individual Applicants and/or groupings of two or more Applicants will then submit full applications for consideration by the OU.

Step 4: The Applicant collaborates with the OU and prepares the full application. Prior to submission, the OU and the Applicant must have significant interaction in-person, via phone,

and/or electronically to co-create the full application's programmatic approach. Applicants are encouraged to ensure that any technical assistance/support for capacity development proposed as part of the application is sourced from organizations/individuals registered in the country. If in-country support is not available, Applicants are encouraged to look at possibilities in their region.

Step 5: The Applicant submits the full application via email by the due date specified in Step 3. If the Applicant experience technical difficulties in the submission process, the Applicant must consult the AO for instructions.

Step 6: The full application is reviewed by a Selection Committee. One member of the E3/LS team will serve on the full application Selection Committee for each addendum.

Step 7: The Applicant is informed by the AO of the Selection Committee's determination, which may include an "apparently successful" designation. The AO will also convey all other pre-award requirements. Additional negotiations regarding any technical and cost applications may be necessary.

All first-time Applicants for USAID funding that are deemed apparently successful are subject to a pre-award survey to verify that the Applicant has proper procedures in place to receive USAID funding. Please see [ADS 303.3.8](#) and [ADS 303.3.9](#) for details.

Step 8: The AO signs and ends the assistance document to the Applicant.

For general questions about this APS, please contact the Locally Led Development APS Activity Manager in the Office of Local Sustainability at LLD-APS@usaid.gov.

OUs issuing addenda must share the following items with the Locally Led Development APS Activity Manager:

- The proposed addendum (for approval)
- All submitted full applications (for information)
- Any monitoring, evaluation, and learning reporting from awardees (for information)
- Any knowledge products from awardees (for information)
- Financial reviews of awardees (for information)

Section 9: Concept Review Criteria

Minimum Requirements

Concepts and full applications that do not meet these requirements will not be considered:

1. The Applicant meets the eligibility criteria in Section 2, Applicant Eligibility.

2. The concept/full application incorporates at least one of the learning priorities set forth in Section 4, Learning Priorities
3. The concept/full application includes at least one of the approaches to local resources set forth in the relevant addendum
4. The level of funding requested by the Applicant does not exceed the Applicant's capacity to grow sustainably in the local context

Merit Review Criteria

The merit review criteria below will be used by the relevant OU to review and evaluate concepts and full applications that meet the minimum requirements. OUs will assign each criterion a qualitative rating using the following scale:

- Outstanding
- Very Good
- Good
- Marginal
- Deficient

While merit criteria are paramount, cost considerations may also be a factor for award. The U.S. Government is not obligated to make an award on the basis of lowest proposed cost or to the Applicant with the highest merit evaluation score.

A. Local Ownership, Leadership, and Relevance to Local Priorities

The Applicant demonstrates a strong understanding of the local context and is transparent, accountable, and responsive to the people they serve. The proposed approach substantively responds to local priorities or demonstrates a way to determine local priorities before beginning implementation. The proposed approach and any teaming arrangements effectively shift the locus of development priority setting and response to local actors.

B. Development Impact

The proposed approach aligns with objectives set forth in the OU-issued addendum and demonstrates a clear theory of change leading to anticipated outputs, outcomes, results, and impacts. The proposed approach integrates issues of gender equality and female empowerment through program design, implementation, and staffing in accordance with USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy.

C. Learning

E3/LS is very committed to enabling and sharing learning that advances the practice of locally led development for USAID, local partners, and the development community. The Applicant demonstrates an understanding of the proposed learning priority(ies) and how utilizing learning related to the priority(ies) will advance the overall goals of their approach. The Applicant

demonstrates a commitment to flexibility, learning, and adaptive management in response to shifting realities as they carry out the proposed approach.

D. Strengthening Local Systems

USAID's investment in this work is expected to contribute to local resources strengthening and greater country self-reliance. The approach itself strengthens a local system within a country or region to sustain a development result over time. The outcomes, results, and impacts, as well as any activities that need to continue beyond the duration of a USAID award, will be sustainable without continued USAID funding or involvement after the award ends.

Section 10: Sharing of Concepts

If USAID identifies opportunities to strengthen or fund a concept or application by connecting it with other USAID mechanisms, other potential funders, and/or external partners, USAID may make that concept or application available internally or externally for appropriate consideration.

Attachment A: Concept Format Instructions for Applicants

The concept and supporting information must be submitted to the POC at the USAID OU from which the Applicant seeks to have an award. Applicants must consult the relevant addendum for specific submission guidance from the OU. Concepts may be submitted in a variety of formats at the discretion of the OU, including but not limited to:

- A concept paper not exceeding five pages in total length
- A slide deck not exceeding 10 slides
- An oral presentation not exceeding 20 minutes. If an OU determines that an oral presentation is appropriate, Applicants must submit the summary information explained below via email to the OU. The OU will then contact the Applicant to schedule the oral presentation.
- Any combination of written and oral formats that the OU deems appropriate

Applicants may submit concepts in English or in an approved local language. Concepts must, at a minimum, include the information below:

A. SUMMARY INFORMATION

A. Name and contact information of Applicant

B. Organization type and country of legal registration

C. Certification that the Applicant has not received more than \$5 million from USAID in the past five years

D. Title of proposed activity

E. Location of proposed activity

F. Name, contact information, and country of legal registration for other partner organizations collaborating on concept (if any)

G. Name of the USAID OU to which this application is submitted

H. Overall objective of activity (1-2 sentences)

I. Brief description of the learning priority(ies) included in the proposed activity (1-2 sentences)

J. Brief description of the approach to local resources included in the proposed activity (1-2 sentences)

K. Amount of funding requested from USAID \$ _____

L. Explanation of how the requested funding amount reasonably reflects the organization's existing resources and capacity to grow

B. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Successful narrative descriptions will include a discussion of the components below. Please note that each component aligns with a specific merit review criterion in Section 9, Concept Review Criteria.

Local Ownership, Leadership, and Relevance to Local Priorities:

- What is the development challenge the concept addresses?
- How do local people experience the challenge, and what is important to them? How do you know?
- What is the proposed approach?
- How will local actors lead priority setting and response?
- How will any partners be involved in the approach?

Development Impact:

- How does the approach align with the addendum objectives?
- What is the theory of change?
- How does the approach integrate gender equality and female empowerment?

Learning:

- How will the approach enable and share learning to advance the practice of locally led development? What are the specific learning priority(ies)?
- How will focusing on the priority(ies) advance the overall goals of the approach?
- When realities shift in the local context, how will the approach adapt?

Strengthening Local Systems

- How does the approach contribute to local resources strengthening and greater country self-reliance?
- How does the approach strengthen a local system within a country or region to sustain a development result over time?
- How will the outcomes, results, and impacts, as well as any activities that need to continue beyond the duration of a USAID award, be sustainable without continued USAID funding or involvement after the award ends?

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