



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SOUTHERN AFRICA

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Deadline for Questions: January 16, 2017
Closing Date: February 15, 2017
Closing Time: 17:00 (Pretoria time)

Subject: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) Number: SOL-674-17-000009

Program Title: Regional Political Party Strengthening

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications for a cooperative agreement from qualified Non-U.S. organizations in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region to fund a program entitled "Regional Political Party Strengthening" (RPPS). See Section C of this NFO for eligibility requirements.

Subject to the availability of funds, an award will be made to that responsible applicant(s) whose application(s) best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity and the selection criteria contained herein. While one award is anticipated as a result of this notice of funding opportunity (NFO), USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

For the purposes of this NFO the term "Grant" is synonymous with "Cooperative Agreement"; "Grantee" is synonymous with "Recipient"; and "Grant Officer" is synonymous with "Agreement Officer". Eligible organizations interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this funding opportunity thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and evaluation process.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NFO and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this NFO. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. Potential applicants should regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity. Applicants will need to have available or download Adobe program to their computers in order to view and save the Adobe forms properly. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the entire NFO has been received from the internet in its entirety and 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 NFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

The successful Applicant will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives. Please read each section of the NFO.

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

furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to www.grants.gov.

Issuance of this notice of funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of comments/suggestions or an application. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

/s/

Adam J. Walsh
Agreement Officer

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SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

I. Purpose

The project's goal is to strengthen democratic structures and institutions of political parties in SADC countries with an initial effort in Botswana, Lesotho, and Malawi to better respond to and represent the needs of its constituents, particularly in the areas of water and energy resource management. There may be an opportunity to add other SADC countries, should additional resources arise. This project will focus on intra-party and inter-party dialogues at both the bilateral and regional level in an effort to increase citizen representation and involvement in the political processes. Strengthening a political party's internal democracy is a conduit to strengthen a country's overall democracy.

To achieve this goal, the Regional Political Party Strengthening Project will build the skills of political parties to utilize surveys, focus groups, and other participatory methods to develop issue-based platforms and campaigns, increase the use of evidence-based policy making related to natural resource management, engage in ethical strategic planning, and increase political party commitment to internal democratic processes while building an innovative, accessible political party (PP) training curriculum. This project is wholly focused on facilitating democratic processes within the political landscape, encouraging balanced responsiveness to citizens, and not influencing political outcomes of elections. It will aim to achieve medium-term results and lay the foundation for progress towards long-term impact in promoting the stated program objectives while maintaining its neutrality in accordance with the USAID policy on political party assistance.

The project goal will be achieved through four key objectives:

- a. Build the capacity of parties to develop internal party structures that promote and reflect democracy, transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness.
- b. Strengthen participatory policy and platform development that accurately reflects citizen-identified needs to explicitly include access to sustainable water supply clean water and energy and management of these resources.
- c. Inculcate a political culture and behavior within parties that supports meaningful participation of women, youth and marginalized individuals in identifying party policy and leadership structures.
- d. Establish a regional network of political parties that share and support best practices, lessons learned and knowledge sharing on strengthening democratic party structures

This project will reinforce USAID/Southern Africa's vision to explore new and innovative avenues to support and strengthen democratic political processes throughout the region. With the integration of natural resource management, specifically surrounding access to clean water and energy, this project will provide a unique avenue for collaborative thinking among the region's leading political figures on a shared regional concern—climate change. Efforts must align with the Agency's Water and Development Strategy and approach to spur clean energy

growth and attract investments into renewable sources. A sustainable water supply is essential to both health and food production for communities; and clean energy can curb greenhouse gas emissions, improve local air quality, increase energy access and security, lower energy costs and spur economic growth. This integrated activity will ensure political leaders are equipped with the tools to develop and advocate for sound policies on natural resource management that respond to citizen needs balanced against evidence-based and economically sustainable approaches. The regional multiparty collaboration will be complemented with a suite of bilateral activities that strengthens Democratic Party structures and operations.

II. Background

Decisions within political campaigns in Southern Africa are made based on the opinions and perspectives of party leadership without employing modern approaches to understanding voter desires, without clear platforms designed to respond to those voter interests or effective organizational strategies. Many parties are organized around individual personalities or historical legacies and lack clear ideology or policy platforms to distinguish themselves in the field. In the rapidly changing landscape of politics in Southern Africa, political parties must present a vision and plan for the country to continue to appeal to voters, particularly young voters without historical allegiances.

One reason political parties struggle to reflect the interest of voters is in large part due to weak or inadequate intra-party governance and infrastructure within the context of the electoral cycle. As a result, there is a tendency to be reactive rather than proactive as political parties make a concerted effort to respond to citizen needs often resulting in one-off activities that are not sustainable and do not grow the capacity of the party. This reflects party leadership and citizens not considering the electoral cycle and their respective roles in it regarding pre-electoral platform development, voting based on platforms during the electoral period, and the accountability to those platforms in the post-electoral period. Many parties also lack systems to ensure transparency and accountability in the general governance of parties, which further perpetuates a top-down approach as many citizens are not aware of how to participate in intra-party governance or influence policies or platforms.

This may also fuel intraparty conflict and as is the case in Malawi, may be the reason many citizens, particularly youth, have disengaged from political parties over the past couple of years.

Southern Africa is a water-scarce and energy constrained region, and the trends are demonstrating that, as a result of climate change, access to sustainable water supplies and reliable energy will worsen. With demonstrated weak natural resource management capabilities within the targeted countries, the knock-on effect can be severe, especially with respect to food security. Therefore, in the current political environment, establishing access to clean water and clean energy is increasingly becoming a priority. When these natural resources are not properly managed, conflict can and will arise. Unfortunately, young or under-developed democracies often overlook the need to develop sound policies used to govern their natural resources, until the stressor has already hit. As representatives of citizens, political parties have an ability to influence the larger discourse, which can inform the decision-making process behind environment policy development, and lead communities, governments, and the private sector to

a better understanding of how to work together effectively, and across borders, to manage their natural resources efficiently.

Often existing structures do not allow the flexibility nor the input to reform in response to changing political landscape in an effective manner, which can contribute towards citizen dissatisfaction. The rigid structures can limit the development of new ideas, which may have an adverse effect on a parties' ability to respond to evolving citizen needs and build internal cohesion. Democracies are fluid structures that require a resilient support structure permitting reforms as countries evolve. In Botswana, the governing party has seen the splintering off of groups due to an inability of parties to effectively reform in response to concerns raised internally. In Lesotho, there are many political parties that lack internal cohesion, which has resulted in financially and policy-weak parties, with an inability to respond to citizen needs.

Despite these constraints in cementing democratic governance within political parties, the region, specifically Botswana, Lesotho, and Malawi, have seen a gradual shift from a one dominant party system to a viable multiparty system. This shift presents an opportunity for this project to provide technical assistance to political parties to strengthen their internal operations and address the growing concerns presented by climate change in order to serve as better citizen representatives.

I. Theory of Change

The 2014/2015 elections held in Botswana, Lesotho, and Malawi have exposed an evolving political environment in which greater competition and multiparty systems within the political processes are emerging. At this juncture, some political parties are examining their strengths and weaknesses in their ability to represent and meet the needs of its constituents in an increasingly democratic landscape. In the case of Malawi, the food insecurity crisis has brought the issue of natural resource management to the forefront of politics and all parties are looking for ways to better respond to the crisis and demonstrate leadership. This is an opportunity for parties to be introspective in examining their internal operations, leverage lessons learned from neighboring countries, and increase focus on evidence-based policy/platform formulation that responds to citizen needs. The RPPS is grounded in the following theory of change:

If:

- Political parties are equipped with the tools and structures necessary to better communicate with constituents and analyze their motivations and priorities;
- Meaningful participation of women, youth and marginalized populations in identifying party policy and leadership structures is prioritized; and
- Policy formulation is based on the expressed needs of citizens balanced against evidence-based and economically sustainable approaches; and
- A regional network of political parties is established that allows for the sharing and supporting of best practices, lessons learned and information at all levels of its party structures,

Then:

- Political parties within the region will be more democratic, transparent, accountable and inclusive, more effectively represent and respond to the needs of their

constituents, and better positioned to influence the political responsiveness to climate change leading to greater citizen involvement and representation in the political process

a. Key Assumptions

This theory of change assumes the following:

- Both the governing and non-governing parties participate meaningfully and respectfully in the activities together and are open to sharing experiences and new ideas.
- Targeted countries have laws that protect the rights of expression, media, and public gatherings, as well as laws that protect against intimidation.
- Citizens are willing participants in their respective country's political processes.
- There is a limited pool of qualified women, youth and marginalized individuals ready and willing to take on leadership roles within a party.
- Parties are willing to acknowledge areas of needed improvement.
- The political culture and behavior around the involvement of women, youth and marginalized populations is conducive for change.
- Parties which have internally democratic processes will be more representative of their constituents, and better able to adapt to changing political situations.
- A politically active, informed citizenry, given sufficient political choice and trust in the system to address their needs and concerns, will express its preferences in political elites.
- The private sector is a willing partner in the development of feasible policy platforms around water and energy issues.
- A peaceful and open political environment is critical for political compromise and consensus-building.

II. Program Goal and Objectives

The goal of RPPS is to strengthen the capacity of political parties in Botswana, Lesotho, and Malawi to better respond to and represent the needs of its constituents, particularly in the areas of water and energy resource management and access, leading to more democratic political processes.

- a. **Objective 1:** Develop a sustainable approach to building the capacity of internal party structures emphasizing democracy, transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness.*

Many parties have developed systems and structures that allow them to function during election years, however, most have weak infrastructure to support meaningful citizen engagement during non-election years or their structure is prone to elite capture as party leaders are also parliamentarians or ministers. Leveraging the systems' political parties create for engaging citizens during the pre-electoral/electoral period enables stronger citizen participation after the elections are over. In Botswana, non-governing parties do not have a well-developed political education system that would serve to train up their party staff or volunteers, for example, they

do not have demonstrated communications strategies to improve intra-party dialogue to effectively develop and communicate with members about their platforms, structures and priorities or fundraising strategies to ensure a party's financial viability. In Lesotho, some parties are prone to elite capture, which adversely impacts the democratic and inclusive nature of a party. More often than not, parties are not decentralized and very little decision-making authority falls outside of the national committees of some parties. Often, members of some of national committees are cabinet members and not individuals that have risen through the ranks of the party structure from the villages. This lends itself to party policies and platforms that are not representative of its constituents. The way in which the party structures itself is crucial to ensuring it has the systems in place to represent citizens.

Key Considerations

The Applicant will closely work with the identified political parties to design and carry out an organizational capacity development strategy that addresses the main challenges faced by the parties, and is sustainable and owned by the respective political parties. This strategy may encompass a combination of regional level training program, remote learning opportunities or may include targeted technical assistance and mentoring. Selected political parties will be in alignment with the USAID Political Party Assistance Policy. Development of the targeted technical assistance activities should consider the positive effects of a participative inquiry methodology to increase ownership and willingness for party reforms. Targeted technical assistance should maximize all possible forms of pedagogy and not be limited to in-class settings to ensure an effective and efficient transfer of skills.

i. Expected Results:

- Parties establish and implement policies promoting internal democratic governance with clearly communicated processes and procedures, including party elections, priority determinations, etc.
- Improved organizational capacity of political parties.
- Improved leadership skills of participating political party leaders.
- Increased transparency and accountability of party actions to its constituents.
- Institutionalized political party governance training curricula/modules that are tailored to specific party needs, sustainable, and innovative in areas such as roles and responsibilities of parties within the political process, internal operations, fundraising, sustainability, communication, constituent outreach, strategic planning in policy/platform identification, use of technology, and monitoring and evaluation. Training should have both an in-person and distance learning component.
- Increased capacity of members and constituents to monitor and evaluate party-specific projects and activities within the context of the electoral cycle.

ii. Illustrative Indicators: Indicators should be a combination of output and outcome.

- Number of parties with information on internal structures and management publically available.
- Number of parties with new member communication policies and procedures adopted.
- Percent change in citizen and/or party member participation in party organized events.

- Percent change in citizens and/or party members who believe there is a sufficient institutionalized feedback mechanism to influence party policies and platforms.
- Percent change within in parties of its leaders, staff and volunteers with the capacity to successfully execute party processes and procedures.
- Number of parties that demonstrated monitoring and evaluation tools to adjust party operations and structures.

- b. **Objective 2:** *Inculcate a political culture and behavior within parties that supports meaningful participation of women, youth, and marginalized individuals in identifying party policy and leadership structures.*

Despite the SADC Gender and Development Protocol which mandates equal participation of women in decision-making structures, women, youth and marginalized individuals are not well represented within the government or within political parties. Lesotho maintains a quota for women in Parliament, which increases the role of women within their political parties; however, party leadership is heavily male dominated. In both Botswana and Malawi, a drop in the number of women elected into Parliament dropped between 2009 and 2014 from 19% to 13% in Botswana and from 22% to 17% in Malawi. Both countries have voluntary party quotas, but again and just as importantly, women are not significantly represented within the decision-making bodies of the parties, despite active women's leagues. Women's poor representation in the leadership of political structures is often due to financial limitations or a culture in politics and society that is hostile to it.

Youth activism, through the assistance of increased access to social media, has led to an increase in youth participation in the political process and in party leadership (although mostly young men). This is also aided by the fact that the majority of population in Botswana, Lesotho and Malawi are under the age of 30. This has been evident in Botswana where a relatively new political party won seats in the 2014 election largely due to the youth vote. On the other end of the spectrum, other marginalized individuals, such as persons with disabilities or native populations or LGBTI have limited to no representation within the political system due to a political culture, social norms, or legal challenges.

Key Considerations

The Applicant will work with political parties identified in accordance with USAID's Political Party Assistance Policy to identify the barriers to participation by women, youth and marginalized communities. Efforts to reduce or eliminate those barriers should consider the reasonableness of activities to affect attitudinal change within the party and society given the time constraints of this project. The Applicant should consider activities that will establish a foundation for a shift in political culture and behavior within the political parties towards greater inclusivity, which parties can readily continue to support long after this project ends.

i. Expected Results

- Party leaders understand the importance and strategic value of inclusive policies and processes.

- Participating parties take steps to build and maintain an informed and diverse constituency base inclusive of women, youth, and marginalized populations.
- Translated party constitutions, processes, procedures into relevant languages are available.
- Increased participation of women, youth, and marginalized populations at all levels of the parties' structures through specific outreach and recruitment strategies.
- Parties adopt and institutionalize a training program that builds the capacity of future women, youth and marginalized individuals as leaders.
- Institutionalized an awareness strategy on the importance and added value of women, youth and marginalized individuals in political parties. .
- Established party-specific doctrine on the inclusion and empowerment of women, youth and marginalized communities in party structures in line with the SADC Gender Protocol.

ii. *Illustrative Indicators*

- Percent change in demographic support.
- Percentage of members participating in inclusive processes such as focus groups or surveys that are women, youth and marginalized population
- Percent change in women, youth, and marginalized populations in decision-making positions within the parties' leadership structures.
- Percent of those women, youth, and marginalized individuals who participated in leadership training were subsequently elected into party leadership positions.
- Number of political parties that have voluntarily implemented the SADC gender and development protocol.

c. **Objective 3:** *Strengthen participatory policy and platform development that accurately reflects citizen-identified needs to explicitly include access to clean water and energy and management of these resources.*

Many factors affect the strength of a democracy, not the least being the strength a political party's democracy. Political parties are the conduits through which citizens in Botswana, Lesotho, and Malawi elect their representatives in government. Given the intent and purpose of these representatives to respond to the needs of their citizens, it is paramount that political parties embody a participatory approach to policy and platform development. However, many parties do not consistently apply this approach due to a lack of qualified staff, resources, feedback mechanisms, strategic plans, private sector outreach etc. On the other end, some political parties hold regular conferences, but participation by the general members and citizens is superficial at best. Participatory policy and platform development ensures citizen-identified needs are accurately represented and parties remain accountable.

In Botswana, not all political parties consistently survey citizens or conduct an analysis to gauge citizen satisfaction with party representation and direction. In Malawi, party conferences that are held are not considered conducive for meaningful membership participation and feedback in identifying party direction or platform given party leadership is weary to relinquish that level of control.

Key Considerations

The Applicant should consider appropriate methodologies to transfer the necessary skills and tools to parties to strengthen community outreach and participatory policy/platform development. These tools and resources should be sustainable, relevant and accessible by all political parties to ensure ownership and adoption of a more inclusive approach. Applicants should consider the unique position that the private sector could play in building citizen trust in government policies and platforms. Platforms developed without private sector consultations may lead to economically unviable policies which leads to the government seen as not delivering on election promises and closes the door to opportunities for greater sustainable development. The challenge will be to incentivize businesses to get involved with the process and reflect citizen driven priorities, not just profit margins. Applicants should also consider framing the roles and responsibilities of political parties and citizens within the context of the electoral cycle to strengthen the connections between activities during the pre-electoral period, the electoral period, and the accountability phase during the post-electoral period.

Given the growing regional concern over access to water and energy, the Applicant should consider approaches to develop particular policy platforms as projects, which can increase knowledge on water scarcity and energy constraints and creates a new channel for policy influence. The escalation of limited access to safe water and energy constraints in the region presents itself as an opportunity for parties to apply skillsets over shared concerns. Such an opportunity could create a sphere for comparative analysis on effective participatory methodologies and enable parties to monitor and evaluate the ability of their policies and platforms to incorporate results from public consultations. Party policies and platforms also have the added benefit of influencing the larger debate over the appropriate government response to address citizen-identified concerns over water and energy resource management. Such sectoral projects also offer a mechanism through which this project can attract funding from other donors and sectors, which may help multiply the impact of this project.

i. Expected results:

- Capacitated political parties to conduct issue-based policy/platform development grounded on empirical data and broad consultations with constituent groups, think tanks, research institutions, private sector and other similar entities.
- Increased use of local CSOs, think tanks, research institutions, private sector and other similar entities as sources of empirical data and analysis to inform the platforms and policy positions of political parties.
- Institutionalized in-person and online training program focused on research and participatory policy/platform development.
- Formalized systems for communities to hold parties accountable and track progress against policy positions.
- Established feedback and monitoring mechanisms that allows for transparency and accountability to the citizen on party policies and platforms.
- Developed evidenced-based party policies and/or platforms that address access to water and energy constraints.
- Regional strategic plan for addressing cross-border water and energy issues developed by participating political parties.

ii. *Illustrative Indicators:*

- Percent of party policies and platforms that reflect citizen-identified needs.
- Number of political parties with institutionalized training programming on research and participatory policy/platform development.
- Number of new party platforms and/or policies which were accompanied by a written technical analysis, opinion papers, and/or legislative study;
- Number of new party platforms and/or policies that were the subject of a public consultation.
- Number of policies, laws, agreements, regulations, or investment agreements (public or private) that promote access to improved water supply and sanitation.
- Number of policies, laws, agreements, regulations addressing climate change (mitigation or adaptation) officially proposed, or adopted as result of USG assistance.
- Number of people who have received information on public participation in environmental decision making.
- Increased public consultations on access to water and energy.

d. **Objective 4:** *Establish a regional network of political parties to share and support best practices, lessons learned and knowledge on strengthening democratic party structures*

Some of the weaknesses found in political party strengthening activities have belied on the fact that many approaches have a Western/European bias, which may not be relevant in non-Western/European environments.¹ The integration of a regional approach into a political party strengthening activity is an opportunity for participating countries to hold a multiparty discussion on best practices or share lessons learned when facing commonly shared challenges for political parties in Africa. The regional approach permits parties the luxury of setting aside individual party ambitions to have a deeper technical discussion on strengthening internal party democracies. In doing so, it fosters the potential for greater coalition building as parties begin to find commonalities off of which to build greater interparty dialogue in their home countries. This will also serve as a forum to share and discuss regional policies intended to increase inclusive and participatory politics, such as the SADC Gender and Development Protocol. Lesotho and Malawi have ratified the 2008 Protocol, but Botswana has not. This would be an opportunity to discuss ways in which parties can voluntarily instill the spirit of the Protocol in an effort to change the political culture and behavior around gender and women.

Regional level discussions on access to water and energy would be beneficial as environmental implications know no boundaries. Access to water and energy are increasingly a priority for the region in light of the regional negative trends being seen due to climate change and its potential impact on communities coupled with the politicization of natural resource management. For example, Malawi is currently experiencing a widespread humanitarian crisis, with approximately 2.8 million receiving food assistance to avoid famine. Brought on by drought and changing El Nino weather patterns, the result has been a spiraling food security crisis affecting millions of subsistence farmers. Adopting climate-smart agriculture through improved natural resource management policies are critical to breaking the cycle of humanitarian disasters, which is fast

¹ Erdman, Gero, "Lessons to be Learned: Political Party Research and Political Party Assistance", German Institute of Global and Area Studies.

becoming a much politicized and potentially destabilizing issue. Information sharing across region can have the ability to more neutrally shape and inform the discourse around sound policies and platforms to respond to these issues and respond to a common threat.

Key Considerations

The Applicant should consider networks that reach beyond the leadership level of political parties to be truly effective and successful in instilling the technical discussions, lessons learned and best practices. Often regional trainings attract senior leadership and culminate in an agreement on a direction or position, but lacks sufficient follow through once individuals return to their home countries. Party leaders, especially women, youth and marginalized groups, at multiple levels must be included in regional activities, as appropriate, to ensure actionable items take root. Furthermore, the system developed would ideally be continued by the parties within the region and potentially be expanded to include other countries within the region, if the current participating countries so desired.

i. Expected Results

- Formalized structure for continued information sharing across political parties across the targeted countries.
- Established an easily accessible online repository for tools, best practices, lessons learned, and technical papers on inclusive and participatory policy development methods.
- Increased knowledge to address water and energy constraints.
- Increased knowledge on inclusive and participatory methods and approaches.
- Provision of a series of online and in-person technical assistance to address commonly identified challenges to political parties in the region.
- Greater comprehension on the importance and added value of interparty dialogues and coalition building in strengthening democracies.
- Signed declaration of best practices.

ii. Illustrative Indicators

- Number of political parties formalizing structures to continue a regional multiparty dialogue.
- Number of political parties who incorporated best practices, lessons learned or other technical skills within their respective parties as a result of participating in the multiparty training and dialogue.
- Number of political parties that have institutionalized the best practices declaration.

III. Other Technical Areas

a. Gender

Activities in this program must be responsive to gender considerations, and ensure that the assistance and results are beneficial to both men and women.

Women and men have differing needs and varied views about governance and politics, as well as distinct interests in political processes. Balanced gender representation and participation in political processes are closely tied to ensuring that men and women can exercise choices

regarding political, social, and economic issues. Lack of political representation can lead to social and economic exclusion.

Botswana, Lesotho and Malawi have not sufficiently addressed the ongoing gender imbalance within their respective political systems. Efforts have been made to facilitate greater gender diversity. For example, Lesotho has a constitutionally mandated quota requirement (25%) of women in Parliament. Both Lesotho and Malawi have ratified the SADC Gender and Development Protocol in 2008. Despite these efforts, there is a significant deficit of gender balance within the party leadership structures. There has also been a decline in women in Parliament in both Botswana and Malawi; from 19% in 2009 to 13% in 2014 for Botswana and 22% in 2009 to 17% in 2014 for Malawi.

With respect to LGBTI inclusion, significant cultural and legal barriers continue to inadequately ensure that their rights are not infringed upon in society. Though, none of the three countries have explicit laws that discriminate against the LGBTI community, societal norms and other efforts to limit the civil and political rights of LGBTI advocacy groups are still in existence. In the case of Malawi there are currently discriminatory laws that have been temporarily suspended while its government reviews their constitutionality. Thus, it is not surprising that political parties have limited or no LGBTI representation within their leadership structures.

USAID will therefore place a considerable focus on the integration of gender considerations throughout the project, ensuring that men and women both benefit from USAID's support and that gender awareness is a built-in component of the project activities. In supporting effective political processes, the project will not only enhance equitable participation in decision-making processes, but will also support women's leadership roles in political processes and will put in place mechanisms to incorporate gender considerations into indigenous dialogue and political consensus-building processes. The project shall aim to build the capacity of political parties and elected leaders to respond to the gender-specific interests of all citizens. In addition, it will also promote integration of gender equality in planning and measurement of results. The project will ensure that interventions support women's groups with proven roles in political process development, to take a leading role in interventions at all levels.

b. Youth

Youth play a critical role in politics and more broadly in development. Given the region's demographic make-up, the inclusion of youth in the political arena is critical to fostering democratic multiparty consolidation for future generations. Regionally, youth represent more than half of the current population between the ages of 15-24. In Malawi, nearly two-thirds of the population is under the age of 25; in Lesotho it is 60%; and Botswana it is roughly 53%. According to the World Bank, the current youth unemployment in Botswana and Lesotho hovers around 33%, while in Malawi, though lower, is still at 13% for those in the 15-24 age bracket. In all three countries, the youth cohort also played a pivotal role in mobilizing the electorate, establishing political parties, and challenging the existing governing system as they demand for change and greater inclusion in the decision-making process.

Through training and mentoring, the Recipient shall support activities that actively engage youth in political processes. With input from beneficiary political parties RPPS will support initiatives aimed at providing youth in the targeted political parties and communities with tools and leadership skills necessary to stimulate a lifetime of political participation and activism.

The activity will, in design and implementation, utilize the energy and potential of youth in political processes. In particular, it will innovatively use technology and other youth sensitive media platforms to promote participation in and oversight of political processes by youth.

c. STIP

USAID/Southern Africa seeks to increase the application of science, technology, innovation and partnerships (STIP) to achieve, sustain and extend the Agency’s development impact in Southern Africa. The Applicant should consider the use a diverse array of technological and innovative approaches that are easily accessible, replicable and sustainable to garner greater ownership for reforms.

d. Participant Training

Any proposed Participant Training activities will be in accordance with ADS 253(<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/253.pdf>) “Participant Training for Capacity Development”. (Note: In the application of the ADS the Applicant is considered a “Program Implementer” and USAID/Southern Africa is considered “Sponsoring Unit”.

IV. Geographic Scope

USAID/SA intends to implement this project in SADC countries with an initial emphasis in Botswana, Lesotho and Malawi. It is recommended, given the nature of the project and importance in providing real-time support and mentorship to political parties, that the Applicant plans for a physical presence in each of the three initial countries in which this project will be implemented.

V. Coordination

a. Relationship to Mission RDCS

This project directly falls under DO 3 “Improved rule of law and respect for human rights” and specifically IR 3.2 *Increase promotion of rule of law and human rights by regional networks and institutions*. Outcomes that fall under IR 3.2 include:

- Elections administration improved;
- Internal democracy in political parties improved;
- Oversight and constituency engagement of the legislative branch improved.

b. Relationship to other Donor programming

The Applicant should take into consideration other ongoing and complementary activities within the region when designing this project. Coordination will be done to reduce redundancy and increase complementarity in all relevant space. Activities should not compete with other existing efforts, but rather leverage each other's resource in order to amplify the development outcomes. The Applicant should reference other ongoing donor programming, if applicable, with whom coordination will be critical to ensure success, and how they envision that level of coordination to be facilitated. This is particularly the case with respect to U.S. State Department's Democracy Rights and Labor's regional parliamentary strengthening program, which is currently implemented in Botswana, Lesotho, and Malawi.

USAID/Southern Africa will ensure appropriate higher level donor coordination with other programming occurring either regionally or bilaterally within the same technical sphere. USAID/Southern Africa will work with the bilateral missions in identifying relevant donor programs and ways in which to leverage activities within those shared spaces.

VI. Partnership Approach

We encourage organizations to form a consortium that optimally combines complementary strengths and experience to best address the different target groups and approaches represented by the systemic approach of this program.

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

Subject to funding availability, USAID intends to provide \$3,500,000.00 in total USAID funding over a 3 year period. The ceiling for this program is \$3,500,000.00. Actual funding amounts are subject to availability of funds.

USAID intends to award one cooperative agreement pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity.

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

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The period of performance anticipated herein is three years. The estimated start date will be upon the signature of the award, on or about.

3. Substantial Involvement

USAID/Southern Africa considers collaboration with the Recipient crucial for the successful implementation of this program. Substantial involvement under the proposed award shall include the following:

1. Approval of Recipient's annual implementation plans.
2. Approval of Specified Key Personnel
3. Agency and Recipient Collaboration or Joint Participation
 - Concurrence on the substantive provisions of sub-awards. 2 CFR 200.24 already requires the recipient to obtain the AO's prior approval for the sub-award, transfer, or contracting out of any work under an award.
 - Collaboration in the preparation of program descriptions or scopes of work, selection criteria, and funding levels.
 - Consultation on technical review panels for sub-grants and sub-contracts, including the selection of the final list of applications accepted for funding.
 - Approval of the recipient's activity monitoring and evaluation plans.
 - Approval of the recipient's branding and marking strategy.
 - Monitor to authorize specified kinds of direction or redirection because of interrelationships with other projects.
 - Review of political parties recommended for inclusion in this activity. At a minimum, political parties included shall be those represented within the respective parliaments. Further, the AOR will ensure the identification process is in line with USAID's Political Party Assistance Policies.
 - Participation in the Recipient's CLA process, such as the completion of the political economy analysis, and any other evaluation exercises intended to validate

assumptions and assess changes in the political and local context off of which the technical approach and methodology is based.

4. Title to Property

Property title under the resultant agreement shall vest with the recipient in accordance with the Requirements of 2 CFR 200.311.

5. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for this program is **935**.

6. Purpose of the Award

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the Regional Political Party Strengthening project which is authorized by Federal statute.

The successful Recipient will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The Recipient will assume responsibility for administering Federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award. The Recipient using its own unique combination of staff, facilities, and experience, has the primary responsibility for employing whatever form of sound organization and management techniques may be necessary in order to assure proper and efficient administration of the resulting award.

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Only local and regional organizations from Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries as defined below are eligible for an award. USAID defines a local/regional organization as one that:

- Is organized under the laws of the recipient country;
- Has its principal place of business in a SADC country;
- Is majority-owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the recipient country or is managed by the governing body, the majority of whose members are citizens or lawful permanent residents of a SADC country, and
- Is not controlled by a foreign entity or by an individual or individuals who are not citizens or permanent residents of a SADC country.

The term “control” or “controlled by” in the above definition means having a majority ownership or beneficial interest, or the power, either directly or indirectly, whether exercised or exercisable, to control the election, appointment, or tenure of the organization’s managers or a majority of the organization’s governing body by any means, e.g., ownership, contract, or operation of law. The term “Foreign Entity” means an organization that fails to meet any part of the “local organization” definition.

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

Applicants must have established financial management, monitoring and evaluation processes, internal control systems, and policies and procedures that comply with established U.S. Government standards, laws, and regulations. The successful applicant(s) will be subject to a responsibility determination assessment (Pre-award Survey) by the Agreement Officer (AO).

The Recipient must be a responsible entity. The AO may determine a pre-award survey is required to conduct an examination that will determine whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, 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.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no cost sharing requirement for this NFO.

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Questions regarding this NFO as well as final applications should be submitted to tmokhele@usaid.gov with a copy to awalsh@usaid.gov no later the date and time listed on the NFO cover page to provide sufficient time to address the questions and incorporate the questions and answers as an amendment to this solicitation. Any information given to a prospective Applicant concerning this NFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective Applicants as an amendment to this NFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicant.

1. Content and Form of Application Submission

Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of the NFO.

Preparation of Applications:

Each Applicant shall furnish the information required by this NFO. Applications shall be submitted in two separate parts: (a) Technical Application, and (b) Cost/Business Application.

Any erasures or other changes to the application must be initiated by the person signing the application. Applications signed by an agent on behalf of the Applicant shall be accompanied by evidence of that agent's authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

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

“This application includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the U.S. Government and shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, a grant is awarded to this Applicant as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting grant. 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} and, mark each sheet of data it wished to restrict with the following legend:

“Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application.”

Applicants should retain for their records one (1) copy of the application and all enclosures which accompany it.

2. Application Submission Procedures

It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary documentation is complete and received on time. All application materials must be sent by email.

For an application sent by multiple emails, please indicate in the subject line of the email whether the email relates to the technical or cost application, and the desired sequence of multiple emails (if more than one is sent) and of attachments (e.g. "No. 1 of 4", etc.). For example, if your cost application is being sent in two emails, the first email should have a subject line which says: "[organization name], Cost Application, Part 1 of 2".

The technical application and the cost application should be submitted as single email attachments, e.g. that you consolidate the various parts of a technical application into a single document before sending them. If this is not possible, please provide instructions on how to collate the attachments. USAID will not be responsible for errors in compiling electronic applications if no instructions are provided or are unclear. All applications received by the submission deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the NFO and the application format. No addition or modifications will be accepted after the submission date.

After you have sent your applications electronically, immediately check your own email to confirm that the attachments you intended to send were indeed sent. If you discover an error in your transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email or indicate in the file name if submitted via grants.gov that it is a "corrected" submission. Do not send the same email more than once unless there has been a change, and if so, please note that it is a "corrected" email.

3. Technical Application Format

The Technical application should be specific, complete and presented concisely. The application should demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this program, and take into account requirements of the program and evaluation criteria mentioned in RFA.

The technical approach, responding to the specific objectives and expected results must be no more than 10 pages long. The remaining supplement submission requirements (Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, Key Personnel, Management Plan, Past Performance, Mobilization Plan, and Draft Year 1 Implementation Plan, Marking and Branding Plan) will be included as an annex in support of the technical approach.) The technical approach will serve as the project description for the selected recipient.

This section should provide a detailed description of the Applicant's proposed approach and methodology that will lead to the achievement of project goal and objectives. The Applicant should explain how their methodology will lead to achieving the expected results. The technical submission should follow the following format:

- I. Executive Summary –1 page max
- II. Introduction and background – 3 pages max
 - a. Provide an overview of the overarching approach/methodology to be applied to achieve the project goal. It should also discuss how the proposed approach/methodology responds to the unique country contexts.
 - b. Description of how the overarching proposed approach/methodology will lead towards achieving the project's goal.
- III. Objectives – The information requested below, bullets a-e, should be disaggregated by each of the four objectives. – 2.5 pages max per objective
 - a. Describe the specific approach/methodology to be applied and how its effectiveness leads to the objectives and expected results.
 - b. Describe the assumptions taken into consideration.
 - c. Describe the sustainability of this approach in terms of identifying an exit strategy and ensuring the longer term success of the objective outlined.
 - d. Outline any planned collaboration with other complementary projects implemented by the USG, other donor partners, or other organizations.
- IV. Flexibility and Adaptation – 1 page max
 - a. Describe how the proposed methodology and approach is flexible and adaptable should the political landscape shift or additional resources are made available to expand to new countries within SADC.

SUPPLEMENTAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DIRECTIONS

The following supplemental documents are required as part of the official application:

- Illustrative Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP)
- Management Plan
- Key Personnel
- Mobilization Plan
- Organizational Capability and Experience

Illustrative Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP) –3 pages max not including any matrices.

The illustrative AMEP tracks progress towards the objectives and expected results listed in this Program Description Framework. The Applicant is encouraged to use both the U.S. State Department's Standard F indicators and propose other custom indicators that will assist in gauging project performance. The illustrative AMEP shall contain project objectives and results, performance indicators, data sources and collection methods, baseline information or a timeline for collecting it, annual targets. Performance indicators should comply with the following criteria: direct, objective, practical, adequate, and useful in managing for results. AMEP data should be based on fiscal year calendar. The successful Recipient will submit an official and more detailed AMEP after signing of the agreement.

The AMEP shall have the following structure:

- List of key indicators disaggregated by project objective that is a combination of output and outcome indicators. Include a brief description of the linkages between the indicators and to the expected results.
- Targets for each indicator for each fiscal year of planned implementation.

The Applicant should include how the Applicant will continually reflect and evaluate project progress on at least a quarterly basis and allow for capturing these lessons learned and adjustments during the life of the program. This approach should be in line with USAID's framework on continuous learning and adaptation (CLA). As part of the CLA, a Political Economy Analysis (PEA) should be conducted at the onset of the award for each country to establish the contextual underpinnings of the environments in which these activities will be implemented and opportunities to affect change as it relates to the project. The results of those findings should be periodically tested and evaluated to ensure that the assumptions and context in which the project is operating is still accurate thereby confirming the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed technical approach and methodology or identifying a need for changed approach. This process and results should be captured and shared with USAID/SA accordingly.

Management Plan – 4 pages max

The Management Plan should consist of a clear and concise description of how internal management plans, organizational structures, lines of communications, and partnerships, would have the combined effect of a timely and integrated project implementation. The proposal shall include a staffing plan with specific position titles and level of effort. The management structure and staffing plan should relate directly to the approaches, strategies, and activities proposed for achieving the objectives and results, and include anticipated short-term technical assistance needs, organizational structures, and project management mechanisms deemed important by the applicant. It should also outline how the Applicant intends to manage the implementation of this project across at least three countries. Given the political sensitivity of this project, USAID/SA recognizes, the importance of real-time communication and access for beneficiaries to technical expertise, therefore, it will be necessary that the Applicant plans for country representatives in each initial country.

Key Personnel – 3 pages max per candidate (includes CV)

This section should include a brief justification for the proposed candidates for the four identified key positions: Chief of Party, Country Project Directors (1 per country). Given the political sensitivity of this project, it is essential that this project has identified the right individuals to work and serve as technical experts and mentors to political parties and its leadership. Candidates must meet the minimum requirements outlined within the project description framework. The Applicant will identify candidates for the following four key personnel positions:

- Chief of Party
- Country Program Directors (1 per country: Botswana, Lesotho and Malawi)

The proposed candidates must meet the minimum requirements outlined for each position below:

Chief of Party

- At least 10 years of experience managing or implementing projects in the area of political party strengthening, parliamentary strengthening, institutional capacity development, organizational change management or similar funded by USAID or other donor organizations
- At least 7 years of work experience in Southern Africa or in political contexts similar to Botswana, Lesotho or Malawi preferred
- Proven ability to effectively and remotely manage staff
- Master's in Public Policy, Public Administration, International Development, Political Science or similar preferred
- English language professional proficiency required

Country Program Directors (1 for each Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi)

- At least 7 years of experience managing or implementing projects in the area of political party strengthening, parliamentary strengthening, institutional capacity development, organizational change management or similar funded by USAID or other donor organizations
- At least 7 years of work experience in the country to which the candidate will be assigned, either Botswana, Lesotho or Malawi preferred
- Masters in Public Policy, Public Administration, International Development, Political Science or similar preferred
- English language professional proficiency required
- Demonstrated understanding of the cultural and political context in the country to which the candidate will be assigned, either Botswana, Lesotho or Malawi preferred

Mobilization Plan – 3 pages max

The Applicant will outline how it plans to mobilize within the first 60 days after signing the cooperative agreement. This includes efforts to create a physical presence in each country, outreach efforts to political parties, bringing on staff, and rolling out of initial activities.

Organizational Capability and Experience – 5 pages max

The Applicant should concisely outline relevant past performance over the past seven years that demonstrates technical and managerial expertise in similar or related projects either funded by USAID or other organizations.

4. Cost Application Format

The Applicant must sign and submit the cost application standard form number SF-424 and SF-424A. Standard Forms can be accessed electronically at www.grants.gov.

The Cost or Business application is to be submitted under a separate cover from the Technical

Application in MS Excel format. The Applicant is requested to submit a budget broken down by program years with an accompanying detailed budget which provides in detail the total costs for implementation of the program as further detailed below.

Certain documents are required to be submitted by an Applicant in order for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility. However, it is USAID policy not to burden Applicants with undue reporting requirements if that information is readily available through other sources. There is no page limit on the Cost Application. However, unnecessarily elaborate brochures or other presentations beyond those sufficient to present a complete and effective application in response to this NFO is not desired. Elaborate art work, expensive paper and bindings, and expensive visual and other presentation aids are neither necessary nor wanted.

If the Applicant has established a consortium or another legal relationship among its partners, the Cost/Business application must include a copy of the legal relationship between the parties. The agreement should include a full discussion of the relationship between the Applicant and Sub-Applicant(s) including identification of the Applicant with whom USAID will work with for purposes of Agreement administration, identity of the Applicant which will have accounting responsibility, how Agreement effort will be allocated and the express agreement of the principals thereto to be held jointly and severally liable for the acts or omissions of the other.

The budget narrative should provide information regarding the basis of estimate for each line item, including reference to sources used to substantiate the cost estimate (e.g. organization's policy, payroll document, and vendor quotes, etc.).

The business section of the cost/business application should include:

1. Required assurances, certifications and representations
2. Evidence of responsible the Agreement Officer can use to determine the Applicant
 - a. Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as require during the performance of the award;
 - b. Has the ability to comply with the award conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the Applicant;
 - c. Has a satisfactory record of performance. Past relevant unsatisfactory performance is ordinarily sufficient to justify a finding of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance;
 - d. Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics; and
 - e. Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a Cooperative Agreement under applicable laws and regulations (e.g., EEO).

3. Statutory and Regulation Certifications

The Applicant shall complete the certifications in Section IV, B. Required Certifications and sign and date in the signature space provided. The signed and dated printout must then be submitted with the application as an annex to the cost application. Original signed hardcopy of the

certifications will be requested from the successful applicant prior to the agreement award.

Potential Request for Additional Documentation

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

The information submitted should substantiate:

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

Required Certifications

Prior to award, the selected applicant is required to provide all certifications and statements found in ADS 303mav, Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of the Recipient and Solicitation Standard Provisions, including, but not limited to:

1. Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs (This assurance applies to Non-U.S. organizations, if any part of the program will be undertaken in the U.S.);
2. Certification on Lobbying;
3. Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals (ADS 206, Prohibition of Assistance to Drug Traffickers);
4. Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing Implementing Executive Order 13224;
5. Certification of Recipient;
6. A signed copy of the Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants;
7. Representation by Organization regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or Felony Criminal Conviction (August 2014); and
8. Other Statements of Recipients.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management

Dun and Bradstreet and SAM.gov Requirements

USAID may not award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. Each applicant is required to:

- (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. SAM is streamlining processes, eliminating the need to enter the same data multiple times, and consolidating hosting to make the process of doing business with the government more efficient.;
- (ii) Provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and
- (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

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

1. Funding Restrictions

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

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

The selection criteria below will be used to make an award decision.

Summary:

The following criteria will be evaluated. The Selection Committee (SC) will evaluate the various components of the application set forth below in descending order of importance:

- (1) Technical Approach and Methodology
- (2) Key Personnel
- (3) Management Plan
- (4) Organizational Capability and Experience
- (5) Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

2. Review and Selection Process

A. Technical Evaluation

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

Technical Approach and Methodology

- The extent to which the application effectively describes a technical approach and methodology that will likely lead to the successful achievement of the goal, objectives, and end results.
- The extent to which the application clearly identifies ways in which to leverage similar projects within the region to strengthen its overall ability to achieve its goals.
- The extent to which the application's exit strategy and approach ensure that the program results can be independently sustained after completion of the program.
- The extent to which the application the application successfully incorporates flexibility and adaptability to take into consideration CLA efforts.

Key Personnel

- The extent to which the proposed key personnel meet or exceed the minimum requirements outlined in the solicitation.
- The extent to which the application effectively describes the unique characteristics of each individual candidate, which would have the combined effect to the successful implementation of this project.

Management Plan • The extent to which the proposed management structure and approach will ensure program effectiveness and efficiency in achieving maximum benefits and results across target countries.
Organizational Capability and Experience • Demonstrated successful track record of implementing similar complex programs supported by measurable or verifiable evidence. If the past performance is outside of Botswana, Lesotho, and Malawi, Applicants must explain why and how that past performance is indicative for success in those three countries.
Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP) • Extent to which the illustrative five-year AMEP accurately reflects the Applicant's technical approach, and includes specific, appropriate, comprehensive, and meaningful indicators and targets, (including sex disaggregated targets) by fiscal year, and evaluation approaches.

B. Cost Evaluation

While Cost is less important than technical and is not weighted, however, the cost applications of the apparently successful technical applications will be evaluated for cost effectiveness including the level of proposed cost share. Other considerations are the completeness of the application, adequacy of budget detail and consistency with elements of the technical application. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability, to be measured for a responsibility determination.

The application with the lowest estimated cost may not be selected if award to a higher priced technical application offers a greater overall benefit for the program. All evaluation factors other than cost or price, when combined, are significantly more important than cost. However, estimated cost is an important factor and the estimated cost to the Government increases in importance as competing applications approach equivalence and may become the deciding factor when technical applications are approximately equivalent in merit.

Cost estimates will be analyzed as part of the application evaluation process. Proposed costs may be adjusted, for purposes of evaluation, based on results of the cost analysis and its assessment of reasonableness, completeness, and credibility.

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

Award of the agreement contemplated by this NFO cannot be made until funds have been appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed Agreement or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

For awardees which are Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations, the Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. NGO Recipients will be included in any final agreement. They can be found at the following link:

<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>

3. Reporting Requirements.

Financial Reporting:

(1) The Recipient is required to prepare and reconcile financial statements on a quarterly basis, in accordance with USAID's quarterly reporting schedule, for the duration of this program in order to establish the internal controls adequate to support financial reporting required under this Agreement. The Recipient shall submit the Federal Financial Standard Form SF-425 or SF-425A Federal Financial Report on a quarterly basis to the Agreement Officer's Representative, and one copy each to the Agreement Officer and the Payment Office within 30 days of the end of each calendar quarter, regardless the effective date of the Agreement. The form and instructions for using it are available on the Grants Management Forms page of the Office of Management and Budget website, at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms.

(2) The Recipient shall submit a Standard Form 1034 and SF 270 'Request for Advance or Reimbursement' on monthly bases for each upcoming month (30 day period) with the statement "Request for Advance" printed at the top of the form. Or respectively, the Recipient shall submit a Request for Reimbursement if for any reason it incurred expenditures but did not request or receive any advances yet, or if the Recipient received advances, but the expenditures exceeded the aggregate amount of advances previously received. In case of the latter, the Request for Reimbursement shall not exceed the amount of expenditures in excess of the aggregate amount of advances received.

(3) The Recipient is requested to liquidate the advance on monthly bases. Regardless of the effective date of the agreement, the recipient shall submit an SF-1034 (marked "Liquidation of Advances") and SF-425 or SF-425a Federal Financial Report to liquidate the advances of the previous month. The Recipient shall submit the Liquidation of Advances Reports to the Paying Office and to the Agreement Officer's Representative.

(4) Each financial form shall be identified by the appropriate award number.

(5) The original and two copies of all final financial reports shall be submitted to the Paying Office, the Agreement Officer and the Agreement Officer's Representative not later than 60 calendar days after the estimated completion date of this award.

Program Reporting

The Recipient will provide the following reports to the USAID Agreement Officer Representative (AOR) and the Agreement Officer (AO), as specified below, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.327 and 200.328 8

a. Annual Implementation Plans and

Within 60 days of the signing of Cooperative Agreement, the Recipient will present an initial implementation plan to the USAID/Southern Africa AOR for review and approval (an electronic copy). The AOR must provide written comments on the draft plan within 30 days of receipt and the AOR will provide written approval when the plan is satisfactorily finalized. All subsequent years' implementation plans must be submitted 45 days before the start of the next fiscal year.

The implementation plan for year 1 will be for the period that extends from the project start date through to September 30, 2018. Subsequent annual implementation plan periods will align with the US fiscal calendar, which runs October 1 – September 30. In the final year, the implementation plan shall be for a partial year that reflects the end date of the project.

The implementation plan will describe activities to be conducted at a greater level of detail than the project description and application in response to the project description, but shall be clearly cross-referenced with the applicable sections in the project description. All implementation plan activities must be within the scope. Implementation plan activities shall not change the project description or any other terms and conditions outlined in the cooperative agreement in any way. Such changes must receive AOR concurrence and AO approval, in advance and in writing.

The implementation plan should include a list of activities to be completed during the year, grouped under the respective objective that they seek to support. For each activity, the Recipient should 1) explain in brief its link to the objective and expected results; 2) define the necessary steps to complete the tasks; 3) assign responsibilities for completing those steps, if using a consortium, sub-grantees or consultants; 4) provide any quantitative or qualitative targets; and 5) a timeline for the completion of the task.

b. Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plans

The annual implementation plan must include the Recipient's proposed annual Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP), as an annex. The annual AMEP establishes specific output and outcome indicators, annual targets, progress benchmarks for the life of the award, and the date by which all baseline data will be established. All people-level indicators must be disaggregated by gender.

The Recipient is encouraged to use both the U.S. State Department's Standard F indicators and propose other custom indicators that will assist in gauging project performance. The AMEP shall contain project objectives and results, performance indicators, data sources and collection methods, baseline information or a timeline for collecting it, annual targets. Performance indicators should comply with the following criteria: direct, objective, practical, adequate, and useful in managing for results.

The annual AMEP shall have the following aspects:

- List of output and outcome indicators disaggregated by project objective. Include a brief description of its relevance to the objectives and expected results.
- Targets for each indicator for each fiscal year of planned implementation.
- Recorded actuals against the indicators, updated quarterly.
- Brief explanation if the project is on track to achieve targets or not.
- Performance Indicator Reference Sheet per Indicator: Definition and detailed description of the performance indicators to be tracked including: unit of measure and disaggregation by gender, as appropriate and feasible; justification/management utility; annual baselines/targets; schedule for data collection; individual responsibility for data collection and availability of data at USAID; and, detailed plans for data analysis, review and reporting. A template for the Performance Indicator Reference Sheet is included as part of the solicitation package.

The Recipient should include how the Recipient will continually reflect and evaluate project progress on at least a quarterly basis and allow for capturing these lessons learned and adjustments during the life of the program. This approach should be in line with USAID's framework on continuous learning and adaptation (CLA). As part of the CLA, a Political Economy Analysis (PEA) should be conducted at the onset of the award for each country to establish the contextual underpinnings of the environments in which these activities will be implemented and opportunities to affect change as it relates to the project. The results of those findings should be periodically tested and evaluated to ensure that the assumptions and context in which the project is operating is still accurate thereby confirming the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed technical approach and methodology or identifying a need for changed approach. This process and results should be captured and shared with USAID/SA accordingly.

Questions to frame the ongoing CLA analysis include:

- Who are the key actors with the ability to affect the greatest change?
- What are the incentives to support the desired outcomes?
- What are the top three ways one might improve the efficacy of this project?

- What are the most important challenges to which the project should adapt to address, and how?
- What are the most important unforeseen opportunities the project should adapt to seize?
- How can this program capitalize on or contribute to the success of other projects in DRG and other technical sectors?
- Are there more efficient means of accomplishing the same results?
- Can this project be replicated or scaled up given locally available resources.
- Is there evidence that project interventions will be sustainable beyond the project lifetime?

Each year, the Recipient and USAID will agree upon the final choice of performance indicators useful for timely management decisions that credibly reflects the actual performance of the project. The Recipient should explain how the AMEP will be implemented. AMEP data should meet reasonable quality criteria of validity, reliability, timeliness, precision and integrity, and disaggregated by sex whenever possible, or otherwise instructed. In designing the AMEP, the Recipient should also weigh human and financial resources necessary to implement it. The AMEP is subject to final approval by the AOR and is separate from the regular financial and other reports required by the standard contract provisions.

c. Progress Performance reporting

Quarterly and Annual Reports

The Recipient shall submit one copy of a concise and brief quarterly project performance report to the AOR, and one copy to the Agreement Officer. The report should be no more than 20 pages, excluding annexes. It should be accompanied with a quarterly submission of the AMEP. Electronic submissions are preferred over hard-copy. The due-date for these program performance reports is not later than 30 days after the end of each reporting period. However, if the reporting period ends before 45 days from the effective date of this Award, or less than 30 days from the estimated completion date of the Award, and this Award is not being extended, no submission shall be required. All other reporting requirements shall, however, apply.

At a minimum, the report shall include:

- A discussion of actual accomplishments/results, both for the reporting period and cumulatively, towards the identified goal, objectives, and expected results.
- Reasons for deviation from the implementation plan and if expected results were not met (if applicable), the impact on the project objective(s), and how the impact has been/will be addressed;
- Challenges in implementation, if USAID assistance is required to seek resolution or how the Recipient will directly resolve it.
- Discussion on lessons learned or proposed adjustments based on the CLA process outlined in the annual AMEP submission.
- AMEP quarterly submission reflects progress to-date on indicators with brief commentary explaining any deviations +/- 10% of the target. No discussion of the CLA efforts are required as part of the quarterly AMEP submission.
- A brief outline of next quarter's planned activities; and
- Quarterly activity schedule to include:

- date/time/location of activity;
- brief activity purpose and link to objectives;
- targeted audience and expected participants; and
- state whether U.S. government participation is possible.

The Recipient shall submit annual reports in lieu of the 4th quarterly report each year no longer than 25 pages, excluding annexes. The annual reports will include the same aforementioned information and will include consolidated lessons learned.

Final Report

The Recipient shall submit the original copy to the AOR, one copy to the AO, and one copy to USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse. The final report shall be submitted no later than 90 calendar days after the expiration or termination of the award. Reference 2 CFR 200.328. The final report shall also consolidate activities and analyses of all partners into one document and their activities and progress towards results. The final performance report shall contain the following information:

- An executive summary of the accomplishments and results achieved;
- An in-depth analysis of progress and results that synthesizes achievements of all organizations that contributed towards project objectives. This section should clearly describe activities, major accomplishments and results achieved, including results for all of the activities under the award;
- Final data, compared to baseline data, for all indicators included in the AMEP. This section should include disaggregated data by gender, historically disenfranchised groups and other relevant groups identified.
- Reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate.
- A summary of problems/obstacles encountered during the implementation, and how those obstacles were addressed and overcome if appropriate;
- Significance of these activities for overall elections and political processes development worldwide;
- Lessons learned, best practices, and other findings along with recommendations for future programming under each of the program result;
- A comparison of actual expenditures with budget estimates, including analysis an explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, and any other pertinent information.

Development Experience Clearinghouse Requirements

Copies of program reports must be submitted to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC). For guidelines on this process, please see ADS 540.

Program Income

If it is expected that program income might be generated under this program, then program income earned under the resulting award shall be added to the program and used to further eligible program objectives as agreed upon by USAID. Applicants should describe how program

income might be generated under the proposed activities and how it envisions program income being utilized to successfully accomplish program objectives. Program Income, if any, will be accounted for in accordance with 2 CFR 200.307 for U.S. organizations or the Standard Provision entitled Program Income for non-U.S. organizations.

Branding & Marking:

Pursuant to ADS 303.3.6.3.f and ADS 320.3.1.2, the apparently successful applicant will be requested to submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan that will have to be successfully negotiated before a cooperative agreement will be awarded. These plans shall be prepared in accordance with the guidance in ADS 320.3.1.2, 2 CFR 700.16 and the references therein.

Please note that the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan shall not be included with the original application but shall be provided only after a written request of the Agreement Officer. Cost of Branding and Marking should be included in cost application.

Environmental Compliance

a) The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201.5.10g 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. Applicants' environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this RFA.

b) In addition, the recipient must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter shall govern.

c) No activity funded under the resulting 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 38 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.")

d) 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.

e) 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.

f) 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.

Please note: No construction activities may be part of this program.

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

See Section D for Points of Contact (POC) within USAID while this RFA is open. For technical assistance related to Grants.gov, applicants may contact Helpdesk at 1-800-518- 4726 or via email at support@grants.gov .