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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

USAID/Eastern and Southern Caribbean (USAID/ESC)

Subject: Request for Information No. AID-RFI-538-19-0001

Project Name: Improved Governance in Guyana's Extractives Sector

Date of Issuance: November 16, 2018

Response due: Friday December 14, 2018 at 4:00 PM Eastern Standard Time

Note: This is a Request for Information notice. This is NOT a Notice of Funding Opportunity, Request for Applications nor Request for Quotations. It is a survey to identify potential sources.

This RFI will be open from the date of release through December 14, 2018 at 4:00 PM EST. Please send all responses to this RFI via email to Ana Diaz, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist at andiaz@usaid.gov. You will receive an electronic confirmation acknowledging receipt of your response. After USAID reviews and considers any responses, a decision will be made regarding on how to proceed with a new activity. Responses should not exceed six (6) pages, and shall be written in English using an 11-point font size minimum. Further submission guidelines can be found on Section D of this RFI.

USAID posts its competitive business opportunities on www.fbo.gov or www.grants.gov. It is the potential offeror's/applicant's responsibility to monitor these sites for announcements of new opportunities. Please note that responding to this Request for Information (RFI) will not give any advantage to any organization or individual in any subsequent competition.

Sincerely,

Andrea Plucknett
Contracting Officer
Eastern and Southern Caribbean

Improved Governance in Guyana's Extractives Sector

Introduction and Background

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission to Eastern and Southern Caribbean (ESC) is performing this market survey to determine if there are companies or organizations with experience, interested in, and capable of implementing and managing a multi-faceted activity aimed at building the systems and capacity to support a culture of transparency in the extractive industry in Guyana.

Guyana's extractive industries have long been a cornerstone of the country's economy and a major foreign currency earner. The country has a variety of natural and mineral resources (e.g., forests, gold, diamonds, and bauxite) and most recently, significant off-shore oil resources were discovered.

Guyana's economy grew steadily in the last decade, largely based on exports of natural resources, both agricultural and mineral. In 2016, gold production made up almost 60% of total exports. The country will become an oil producer by 2020 and is on the cusp of a transformation. Recent major discoveries off the country's coast promise an oil revenue boom by 2020. The discovery is thought to be one of the largest globally in the last five years, with an estimated gross oil resource in excess of 3.2 billion barrels. The size of the discovery in relation to the population puts Guyana among a small number of countries whose oil revenues could have a transformative impact.

Guyana's candidature to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) was approved in October 2017. This began its 18-month journey to full membership and a quest to attain the global standard for good governance of oil, gas, mineral and forestry resources, which will be assessed through the EITI's validation process. The Guyana EITI Secretariat performs technical and administrative functions and supports a group of stakeholders from government, industry, and civil society- the Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG). The MSG ensures oversight of decisions and assignments issued by the Government of Guyana for the successful implementation of EITI. Guyana needs to achieve and maintain the EITI standard that requires legislative, institutional, and other changes to sustain a culture of transparency in the management of its extractives sector. In many respects it will require changing a culture that has shown unease with open sharing and availability of information.

Since becoming a candidate country, an Independent Administrator was contracted to complete the first country reconciliation report, a work plan was developed by the MSG and various actions to begin EITI implementation have started. Support is now required for implementation of priorities included in the work plan and other objectives that are central to full EITI implementation and having a successful validation.

A. Purpose/Objective

The purpose of the “Improved Governance in Guyana’s Extractives Sector” Initiative is to:

- 1) Strengthen capacity of the EITI secretariat to perform its coordinating and administrative functions.
- 2) Improve capacity of the MSG to perform its oversight role and uphold the EITI standard and processes.
- 3) Identify and minimize obstacles to regulatory reporting and facilitate mainstreamed disclosures by government and non-government agencies.
- 4) Improve the capability of select local partners and civil society actors to achieve transparency goals.

- Proposed Activities¹

1) Strengthen capacity of the EITI secretariat to perform its coordinating and administrative functions.

The EITI secretariat requires support to be fully established as a secretariat in Guyana. This support includes:

- Definition of roles and responsibilities of EITI staff,
- Training (on-the-job and through other methods) to build the capability of the secretariat’s staff to execute their multiple roles and technical functions.
- Equipment, material, and other needs of the secretariat to improve the unit’s functioning.

2) Improve the capacity of the MSG to perform its oversight role and uphold the EITI standard and processes.

The MSG performs key functions of oversight in meeting the EITI standard. The MSG Board comprises 12 members and a corresponding number of alternates. Guyana became a candidate country in October 2017. Given that this is a newly constituted oversight body, with little exposure to the implementation of EITI, MSG members require support to better understand and perform their functions. The project will support capacity building for the MSG, providing exposure to the successful practices of countries which are EITI members and the best practices and lessons learned that can advise and guide decisions about Guyana’s implementation of EITI. Capacity building will also include strategic planning, monitoring, developing scopes of work, and reporting to build the MSG’s capacity in overseeing EITI implementation.

The MSG’s oversight role is one element on which Guyana will be validated. The activity will support improved governance and functioning of this oversight group that will be leading the implementation of EITI in Guyana.

¹ The word “activities” is used throughout this document in the generic sense, and connotes specific tasks or components under any USAID-funded mechanism, including mechanisms known as projects, activities, programs, or grants.

One-third of the 24 individuals making up members and alternates on the MSG are women. This may be reflective of participation in the extractive sector given that the MSG comprises industry, government, and civil society representatives.

The implementing partner will also complete an analysis to determine how gender issues may be affecting management of the extractives sector and what actions may improve management and transparency, in order to identify appropriate gender sensitive approaches.

3) Identify and minimize obstacles to regulatory reporting and facilitate mainstreamed disclosures by government and non-government entities.

To achieve and maintain the EITI standard, Guyana must identify and address those hurdles that prevent transparent reporting in relation to the extractive sector. The EITI standard requires that information on extractive industries include how licenses and contracts are allocated and registered; who are the beneficial owners of those operations; what are the fiscal and legal arrangements; how much is produced and paid; where are revenues allocated; and what are the contributions to the economy, including employment.

The project will support a review of the regulatory framework guiding the standards for reporting and will support the achievement of mainstreamed reporting from government and non-government entities to promote greater transparency within the sector. This will involve institutional and procedural reviews and will work with stakeholders to address the barriers to regular and sufficient reporting that meets the EITI standard. The intent is to achieve regular declarations and submissions to the relevant government agencies, resulting in high quality reports.

Within the extractives sector, the Guyana Women's Miners Association, has been advocating on women's equal opportunities, access to exploration and mining licenses, the exploitation of females working in the sector, including fair and equitable payment. The activity will focus on reporting that can highlight the status of women in the industry and can provide evidence of gender gaps, to support advocacy efforts, and can force improvements and/or removal of such barriers.

This objective addresses issues which are important if Guyana is to be rated successfully when validated and as such will be a primary focus of the activity.

4) Improve the capability of select local partners and civil society actors to achieve transparency goals.

The public and civil society have key roles to play in promoting transparency and accountability. This project will work with two local groups to strengthen their ability to support Guyana's thrust to maintain the EITI standard.

The activity will work with auditors and other related personnel to build an understanding of the role of the Independent Administrator and to build the capability of local partners to complete continuous reporting, at the standard expected by EITI. As Guyana works to maintain the EITI standard, the development of this capability among local partners will be important to that process.

The activity also seeks to build the capability of the media and transparency organizations, which are to be identified, to investigate and report on aspects of governance within the industry, to increase and

improve public content on the operation of the extractive sector and to perform an external monitoring and reporting function, increasing transparency within the industry.

The activity will also support the Guyana Women Miners Association to engage government and industry representatives on issues that disadvantage women in the extractive industries and will support advocacy for appropriate remedies to these issues.

B. Services Sought

USAID is seeking information and expressions of interest from sources interested in applying to become USAID's Implementing Partner (IP) or Contractor for this Activity. The IP may be a local or international institution or company. It may be a for-profit or not-for-profit entity. It may also be a consortium of organizations or a joint venture of businesses or companies capable of operating regionally.

For the Activity, the IP/Contractor will provide the full gamut of support, management and technical assistance services outlined in Sections B above. In addition, the IP will fulfill monitoring and evaluation requirements, perform technical and administrative assessments, ensure coordination with the Mission activities and provide technical, financial, procurement, and administrative oversight training. Implementation of the Activity will require that the IP perform management services for USAID.

Under this Activity, USAID/ESC seeks partners/contractors that are committed to shared responsibility, shared risk, and shared resourcing, or co-investment. Shared resourcing requires that partners/contractors provide both financing and other resources (e.g., technical expertise, in-kind provisions, etc.) that are directed towards solutions. Co-investing does not require equal shared resources (such as 1:1 leverage), rather it requires contributions that are appropriate to the specific project's objectives, considering the comparative advantages brought by the participation of each party.

C. Anticipated Period and Place of Performance

The anticipated period of performance is for one (1) year with the option to extend for more years subject to funds availability. The place of performance for this activity is Guyana. Guyana is one of the ten (10) countries served by USAID/ESC which has its main office in Bridgetown, Barbados.

D. Submission Guidelines

Interested organizations should submit a statement describing the capabilities of the organization as they relate to the purpose and requirements outlined above and respond to all of the following questions based on the information provided in this document:

- Each potential IP should prepare a summary background statement that summarizes its understanding of the capacity building and good governance required to support a culture of transparency in the extractive industry in Guyana.

- Potential IPs should evaluate the illustrative tasks indicated and address how its organization might seek to accomplish them. In addition, each IP is encouraged to add additional tasks or provide alternative strategies.
- Each potential IP should propose an organizational structure, complete with skill sets and locational information that will achieve the tasks indicated or suggested.
- Finally, potential IPs should outline any additional or other approaches they feel would be important to the achievement of the results outlined for this project.

USAID/ESC is looking for well-grounded, knowledgeable responses to the issues raised and tasks outlined in this Request for Information notice. IP responses to this Request for Information may be incorporated into subsequent procurement documents should the Mission decide to go forward with the Activity. Responses may also be used to help create a short list of potential IPs that will receive subsequent procurement documents.

Statements sent in response to this notice should not exceed six (6) pages (including attachments and charts) using an 11-point font size minimum. The statement must include the following information:

- 1) Organization name, address, email address, Web site address, telephone number, and size and type of ownership for the organization; and
- 2) Tailored capability statements addressing the particulars of this effort, with appropriate documentation supporting claims of organizational and staff capability. If significant subcontracting or teaming is anticipated in order to strengthen technical capability, organizations should address the administrative and management structure of such arrangements.

The statements shall be sent electronically in Microsoft Word or Adobe Portable Document Format (pdf) to Ana Diaz, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist, at andiaz@usaid.gov, **before 4:00 p.m. EST on December 14, 2018.**

All responses must be received by the specified due date and time.

Disclaimer and Important Notices

This notice does ***not*** obligate USAID to make an award or otherwise pay for the information provided in the response. USAID reserves the right to use information provided by respondents for any purpose deemed necessary and legally appropriate. Respondents are advised that USAID is under no obligation to acknowledge receipt of the information received or provide feedback to respondents with respect to any information submitted. After a review of the responses received, a pre-solicitation synopsis and solicitation may be published on the Federal Business Opportunities website, www.fedbizopps.gov or Federal Grants Opportunities, www.grants.gov. Responses to this notice will not be considered responses to a solicitation.

Confidentiality

No proprietary, confidential or sensitive information should be included in your response. USAID reserves the right to use any non-proprietary information in any resulting solicitation(s).