

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Locally Led Development
ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT (APS)**

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

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Section 1: APS Program Description

Pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, the United States government as represented by the U.S Agency for International Development (USAID), Bureau for Democracy and Innovation, Local, Faith-based and Transformative Partnerships (LFT) Hub, Locally Led Development Initiatives (USAID/DDI/LFT/LLDI) invites concepts from a wide variety of local actors for assistance awards that advance locally led development. **Locally led development** refers to the extent to which local actors are empowered to lead priority-setting, decision-making, management, measurement, and other processes through which development assistance contributes toward improving systems and outcomes for development. This is a key aspect of USAID's emerging localization agenda.

This Annual Program Statement (APS) offers USAID Operating Units (OUs: Missions, Bureaus, and Independent Offices) a mechanism to support locally led development approaches while upholding U.S. foreign policy objectives of promoting national security, advancing American values, and supporting global prosperity. It advances localization, which calls for intentional changes to USAID's policies, processes, staffing and funding decisions to support partnerships and programs that equitably empower local actors, strengthen local systems, and facilitate local leadership so that development and humanitarian assistance is more effective and sustainable. It also aligns with [USAID's Acquisition and Assistance Strategy](#), which prioritizes diversifying the Agency's partner base by engaging greater numbers of new, underutilized, and local partners. Furthermore, this APS seeks to build upon Agency policy, guidance, and emerging practice in the areas of systems thinking, collaboration, learning, and adaptive, contextually informed design and management. It aims to advance USAID's capability to work with local partners, to learn from these engagements, and to share this learning broadly.

This APS is global and open to local actors working in all sectors. Awards resulting from this APS will empower local actors to take the lead in identifying and addressing development challenges in their own communities, countries, and regions. Under this APS, USAID intends to fund a wide range of flexible, innovative, and experimental approaches to locally led development.

Section 2: Applicant Eligibility

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

1. Must be local entities. When determining if an entity is eligible for the purposes of this APS, USAID will consider (see the definition of "local entity" in [USAID ADS 303.6](#)):
 - a. Whether the entity is legally organized under the laws of the host country;
 - b. Whether the entity has its principal place of business or operations in the host country;
 - c. Whether the entity is majority owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the host country; and

- d. Whether the entity is managed by a governing body, the majority of whom are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the host country.
2. Cannot have received more than \$5 million in direct funding from USAID in the past five years.
3. Cannot be a U.S.-based organization. U.S.-based organizations are not eligible as prime awardees under this APS.

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

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

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

Section 3: Local Resources

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

Section 4: Locally Led Development Approaches

This APS is designed to catalyze a process through which local actors can work with USAID to achieve development impact by testing and learning from locally led development approaches. Concepts **must incorporate one or more** of the following approaches, **or** propose a different approach(es) that reflects the Applicant's own locally led development learning goals.

1. **Feedback mechanisms** that improve the flow of information among local constituents, partners, and USAID to improve program effectiveness and to strengthen accountability to local constituents for achieving and sustaining results.
2. **Systems-based analytical approaches**, which may allow us to better understand the complex environments in which we operate.
3. **Participatory decision-making**, which includes locally led priority-setting, collaborative design, and other means of shifting decision-making power and control to local actors and ensuring inclusive local leadership.

4. **Mobilizing local resources**, which includes community philanthropy; partnerships that leverage resources from the local private sector, faith-based organizations, government, civil society, and academia; and other sources of local skills and finances to replace those of international donors.
5. **Strengthening local networks**, which may include understanding and supporting existing and emerging networks of local actors, supporting the work of local organizations, market facilitation, collective action, collective impact, and other demand-driven approaches to connecting local needs with local resources.
6. **Locally led approaches to design, monitoring, evaluation, and learning** that prioritize local definitions of success and enhance local actors' role in managing and using data and learning related to development solutions, the development process, and the sustainability of results achieved.
7. **Supporting strategic transitions**, which includes strengthening the role of local institutions and actors to sustain development outcomes with an eye toward ending the need for foreign assistance.
8. **Locally led development in non-permissive environments**, which allows us to better understand how local actors adaptively manage and find creative ways of advancing local development objectives in complex environments where uncertainty, instability, inaccessibility, or insecurity constrain USAID's ability to operate safely and effectively. This may include environments such as those affected by natural disasters, inaccessible physical geographies, active conflict, corruption, closing political spaces, criminality, and pandemics, where local approaches are essential for long-term resilience and sustainability.

For further information on USAID's Locally Led Development Initiatives and locally led development approaches, please visit [our website](#).

Section 5: Award Amount Considerations

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

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

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

Section 6: Addendum and Co-Creation Instructions for USAID OUs

OUs request concepts for locally led development approaches that respond to specific OU objectives by issuing OU-specific addenda to this APS. Addenda are developed in collaboration with and cleared by DDI/LFT/LLDI.

OUs interested in issuing addenda are encouraged to contact the Locally Led Development APS Activity Manager at LLD-APS@usaid.gov as early as possible. The Activity Manager will provide an addendum template that identifies the information that an OU must include in the addendum. DDI/LFT/LLDI will review and clear each proposed addendum to ensure it is in the spirit of the Locally Led Development APS.

In its addendum, an OU must specify in which format concepts must be submitted. OUs are encouraged to think creatively about formats that best serve local actors (i.e. oral presentations, online forms, slide decks). See a menu of possible concept format options in Attachment A, Concept Instructions for Applicants. DDI/LFT/LLDI requires a submission window of no less than four weeks to ensure that local organizations have sufficient time to respond to opportunities. Six weeks or more is recommended.

OUs are strongly encouraged to translate addenda into relevant local language(s) and to accept concepts in the local language(s). In accordance with [2 CFR 200.111](#), all addenda must first be posted in English with the disclaimer that the English language version will control, and all Federal award information must be in English.

The Locally Led Development APS requires co-creation. Based on concept submissions, the OU will determine whether to co-create an activity or set of activities with any Applicant and provide instructions for the co-creation period and requirements for award. This may include a formal full application, but that is not required. Prior to award, the OU and Applicant must have significant interaction in-person, via phone, and/or electronically to co-create the activity.

An OU may also review all concepts and decide to invite selected Applicants to enter a period of multi-stakeholder co-creation, in which they will collaborate on and refine approach(es) with one another and USAID for award consideration.

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

Section 7: Concept Submission Instructions and Next Steps for Applicants

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

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

Step 1: Interested Applicants must reflect on their own experience working in the local context and do any additional research to understand the objectives set forth in the OU-issued addendum to the Locally Led Development APS. Applicants must research and understand locally led development approaches, including those in Section 4, Locally Led Development Approaches and any other approaches related to their own learning goals. Local actors are not required to propose a fully designed activity for this APS -- an approach that suggests a process to identify and then act on solutions from the local context is fully within the intent of this APS. Applicants are encouraged to identify and collaborate with other stakeholders to the development challenge(s) in their community; cross-sector partnerships/consortia are especially encouraged.

Step 2: Applicants submit a concept to the OU POC, following the guidance in Attachment A, Concept Instructions for Applicants. OUs will determine the appropriate concept format to meet the needs of local applicants. Concepts may be submitted in English and/or in a language acceptable to the OU as stated in the addendum. The OU responds with a confirmation receipt within one week of submission.

Step 3: The OU convenes a selection committee to review concepts and select any for further co-creation with the OU. All concepts are reviewed based upon the criteria outlined in Section 8, Review Criteria.

Step 4: If selected to co-create an activity, the Applicant is contacted by an Agreement Officer (AO) from the relevant OU and given instructions for the co-creation period and pre-award requirements. Applicants not selected to advance will also be notified.

An OU may also review all concepts and decide to invite selected Applicants to enter a period of multi-stakeholder co-creation, in which they will collaborate on and refine approach(es) with one another and USAID for award consideration.

Step 5: The Applicant collaborates with the OU and prepares the necessary documentation for award consideration. Before award, the OU and the Applicant must have significant interaction in-person, via phone, and/or electronically to co-create the activity. Applicants are encouraged to ensure that any technical assistance and support for capacity development proposed as part of the activity is sourced from other local entities. If in-country support is not available, Applicants are encouraged to look at possibilities in their region.

Step 6: The OU reviews the co-created documents using the review criteria in Section 8, Review Criteria and makes an award determination. This may include an “apparently successful” designation.

Step 7: The Applicant is informed by the AO of the OU’s determination. The AO will also convey all other pre-award requirements. Additional negotiations regarding any technical and cost details may be necessary.

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

Step 8: The AO signs and sends the assistance award to the Applicant.

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

- The proposed addendum (for approval)
- All awards (for information)
- Key reporting and knowledge products from awardees (for information)

Section 8: Review Criteria

Minimum Requirements

Concepts that do not meet these requirements will not be considered:

1. The Applicant meets the eligibility criteria in Section 2, Applicant Eligibility.
2. The concept incorporates at least one of the approaches in Section 4, Locally Led Development Approaches, or suggests an alternative approach(es) that reflect the Applicant’s own locally led development learning goals.
3. The level of funding requested by the Applicant does not exceed the Applicant’s capacity to grow sustainably in the local context.

Merit Review Criteria

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

- Outstanding

- Very Good
- Good
- Marginal
- Deficient

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

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

The Applicant demonstrates a strong understanding of the local context and is transparent, accountable, and responsive to the people they serve. The proposed strategy substantively responds to local priorities or demonstrates a way to determine local priorities before beginning implementation. The proposed strategy and any teaming arrangements effectively shift the locus of development priority setting and response to local actors. The Applicant demonstrates a strong commitment to learning that advances the practice of locally led development for themselves, their constituents, and the wider development community.

B. Locally Led Development Approach and Impact

The proposed strategy lays out a logical path for utilizing a locally led development approach(es) to achieve anticipated results. The Applicant demonstrates a commitment to adaptive management in response to shifting local realities as they carry out the proposed strategy. The proposed strategy integrates issues of gender equality and female empowerment through program design, implementation, and staffing in accordance with [USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy](#).

C. Strengthening Local Capacity

The Applicant presents a clear explanation for how their strategy will lead to sustainability of results. USAID's investment in this work is expected to strengthen capacity of local organizations, networks, and/or communities to deliver results beyond the end of the funded activities.

In addenda, OUs may add up to two additional review criteria that reflect OU-specific priorities. These will be weighted equally as part of the overall criteria.

Section 9: Sharing of Concepts

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

Section 10: Federal Award Information

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

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the concepts submitted under this APS. Please note that the determination of potential substantive and resource support DOES NOT constitute a commitment to make an award.

This APS supports all types of assistance awards allowed by USAID's [Automated Directives System \(ADS\)](#) and the [Federal Acquisition Regulations](#), including grants and cooperative agreements. For further information on the components and requirements of various types of assistance awards see [ADS Chapter 303](#).

In order to be eligible to receive U.S. Government funding, organizations must meet certain requirements. **While these requirements do not have to be met in order to submit a concept under the APS, they will need to be met if the applicant is requested to co-create an activity and receive an award from USAID.** The requirements are:

- Registration Matters:
 - All first-time applicants for USAID funding are subject to a pre-award survey to verify that the applicant has proper procedures in place to receive USAID funding ([ADS 303.3.9.1](#)).
 - Each applicant (unless the applicant has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under [2 CFR 25.110\(d\)](#)) is required to:
 - Be registered in the System for Award Management ([SAM](#)) and provide a valid unique entity identifier; and
 - 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.
- Pre-Award Applications:
 - [SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance](#)
 - [SF-424A, Cost application Information – Non-Construction Programs](#)
 - [SF-424B, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs](#)
 - [SF-425, Federal Financial Form](#)
- Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient and Pre-Award Terms:
 - [Certifications, Assurances, Other Statements of the Recipient](#)
 - [Pre-Award Terms](#)

In addition, the requirements for reporting on OU-funded activities under this APS will be determined in a collaborative manner among selected awardees and the supporting OUs. These should be outlined in award documents.

For general questions about this APS, please contact the Locally Led Development APS Activity Manager in DDI/LFT/LLDI at LLD-APS@usaid.gov.

Attachment A: Concept Instructions for Applicants

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

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

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

A. SUMMARY INFORMATION

A. Name and contact information of Applicant

B. Organization type and country of legal registration

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

D. Title of proposed activity

E. Location of proposed activity

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

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

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

I. Brief description of the locally led development approach(es) included in the proposed activity (1-2 sentences)

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

K. Amount of funding requested from USAID \$ _____

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

B. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Successful narrative descriptions will include a discussion of the components below. Please note that each component aligns with a specific merit review criterion in Section 8, Review Criteria.

Local Ownership, Leadership, and Relevance to Local Priorities:

- How do local people experience the challenge(s) that the concept addresses, and what is important to them? How do you know?
- How will local actors, including any partners, lead priority setting and response?
- How will your strategy enable and share learning to advance the practice of locally led development? With whom?

Locally Led Development Approach and Impact:

- What is your strategy for addressing the challenge(s)?
- How will your locally led development approach(es) and activities lead to expected results?
- How will you adapt your strategy based on what you are learning during implementation, especially when realities shift in the local context?
- How does your strategy integrate gender equality and female empowerment?

Strengthening Local Capacity

- How do you define sustainability of results of your strategy? What will this look like in local communities?
- How does your strategy strengthen capacity of local organizations, networks, and/or communities to deliver results beyond the end of the funded activities?

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