



# **USAID** | **IRAQ**

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Issue Date:** December 5, 2024  
**Deadline for Questions:** December 16, 2024  
**Closing Date and Time:** January 31, 2025 4:00 PM Baghdad time  
**Subject:** Notice of Funding Opportunity  
72026725RFA00001/Initial Announcement  
**Program Title:** Iraq Civic Engagement Activity  
**Federal Assistance Listing Number:** 98.001

Greetings,

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications for a cooperative agreement from qualified entities to implement the Iraq Civic Engagement Activity. Eligibility for this award is not restricted.

USAID intends to make an award to the applicant who best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this NOFO subject to a risk assessment. Eligible parties interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and selection process. The selection process, as described in detail in the NOFO, will be in two phases. Only Applicants specifically asked by the Agreement Officer to submit Phase Two documentation will need to provide it. Unless otherwise informed, only Phase One information is required to be submitted for evaluation by the closing date and time above.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet eligibility standards in Section B of this NOFO. This funding opportunity is posted on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and may be amended. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this NOFO and to ensure that it has been downloaded from the internet in its entirety. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or accessing the NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Support Center at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) for technical assistance or if you need assistive technology and are unable to access any material on this site.

Unless an exception in 2 CFR 25.110 applies, applicants must comply with 2 CFR 25 requirements

to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and register in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov), as applicable. See Section E, Submission Requirements and Deadlines, for more information. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section A.4. 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](http://www.grants.gov).

Issuance of this NOFO 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,

Eric Strong  
Agreement Officer

## **NOFO TABLE OF CONTENTS**

[Section A – Basic Information](#)

[Section B – Eligibility](#)

[Section C – Program Description](#)

[Section D – Application Content and Format](#)

[Section E – Submission Requirements and Deadlines](#)

[Section F – Application Review Information](#)

[Section G – Award Notices](#)

[Section H – Post-Award Requirements and Administration](#)

[Section I – Other Information](#)

[Annex 1 - Attachments](#)

[Annex 2 - Standard Provisions](#)

## **SECTION A: BASIC INFORMATION**

### **1. Executive Summary**

The Civic Engagement Activity is an initiative aimed at fostering a more politically engaged citizenry in Iraq and enhancing trust and participation in the country's democratic processes. This activity seeks to elevate civic literacy, empower citizens to actively engage and contribute to discussions on issues of concern. Equipping citizens with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively in the democratic processes. This includes fostering awareness of governmental processes, promoting access to accurate media content, facilitating increased engagement with government entities at various levels, and empowering citizens to participate in public life. Overall, this activity represents a concerted effort to build a more resilient and participatory democracy in Iraq, with a particular emphasis on empowering marginalized groups. Localization will be central to this activity, with local leadership involved in activity design and priority setting. The implementing partner will integrate local capacity strengthening in line with USAID's policy throughout all activities.

### **2. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated**

USAID intends to award Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide \$30,000,000 in total USAID funding over a 5-year period.

### **3. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards**

The anticipated period of performance is five years. The estimated start date will be May 30, 2025.

### **4. Agency Point of Contact**

Ms. Olga Ekkert  
Acquisition & Assistance Specialist  
USAID/Iraq  
Email: [baghdadoaa@usaid.gov](mailto:baghdadoaa@usaid.gov)

### **5. Acquisition and Assistance Ombudsman**

The A&A Ombudsman helps ensure equitable treatment of all parties who participate in USAID's acquisition and assistance process. The A&A Ombudsman serves as a resource for all organizations who are doing or wish to do business with USAID. Please visit this page for additional information: <https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/acquisition-assistance-ombudsman>.

The A&A Ombudsman may be contacted via: [Ombudsman@usaid.gov](mailto:Ombudsman@usaid.gov)

## **6. Authorized Geographic Code**

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this program is 937 (the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source). Except as may be specifically approved in advance by the Agreement Officer, all commodities and services that will be reimbursed by USAID under this award must be from the authorized geographic code specified in this NOFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

## **7. Selection of Instrument**

The results of market research conducted during the planning phase support the recommendation of an assistance instrument over an acquisition instrument.

USAID conducted a series of consultations with Iraq's non-state actors - CSOs, formal and informal groups, as well as other donors and international implementing organizations operating in the sector. The outcome of the consultations and corresponding analysis of both consultations, research documents, data and other information was the development of the concept for this new civic engagement activity. The Agency's programmatic needs are best met by providing funds and/or in-kind support to an implementing organization, where the primary beneficiary is the recipient organization, who then acts as a pass-through entity to provide a benefit to third-party democracy promotion organizations throughout Iraq.

The overall objective is to stimulate trust and participation in the country's democratic processes. This activity seeks to elevate civic literacy, empower citizens to actively engage and contribute to discussions on issues of concern, and it will require a flexible approach that prioritizes experimentation, particularly when supporting any newly emerging civic groups or movements, exploring new ways of supporting existing groups and networks, as well as seeking sustainable funding models that are specific to the Iraq context. Moreover, given the nature of activity and sensitivity of working with informal entities and groups of citizens seeking to organize around common goals, this context lends itself to a relationship based on assisting a recipient to provide support to third parties to foster a more democratic, engaged, and empowered citizenry.

## **SECTION B: ELIGIBILITY**

### **1. Eligible Applicants**

Eligibility for this NOFO is not restricted.

Faith-based organizations are eligible to apply for federal financial assistance on the same basis as any other organization and are subject to the protections and requirements of Federal law.

Additionally, USAID welcomes applications from organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID.

The Applicant 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 positive risk assessment by the Agreement Officer (AO).

A positive risk assessment means that the applicant possesses or has the ability to obtain the necessary management competence to plan and carry out the assistance program to be funded, and that the applicant will practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided by USAID.

Each applicant is limited to one Application submission under this NOFO as the prime Applicant. There is no limitation on being included as a potential sub-awardee across multiple applications. The use of exclusive teaming arrangements is discouraged.

USAID has determined that any award resulting from this NOFO is subject to vetting. An applicant that does not pass vetting is ineligible for award. More information regarding vetting requirements is in the Section I - Other Information of this NOFO.

### **2. Cost Sharing**

Cost Sharing is not required for this activity.

## SECTION C: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION<sup>1</sup>

This funding opportunity is authorized under the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. The resulting award will be subject to 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and USAID’s supplement, 2 CFR 700, as well as the additional requirements found in Section H.

### **Goal:**

The USAID funded Iraq Civic Engagement Activity is a five-year activity whose goal is to increase Iraqi citizens’ confidence in democracy, by promoting an environment where they are more informed, engaged, and active participants in Iraq’s democratic processes. USAID will promote the inclusion of those individuals and groups that are most underrepresented in Iraqi civic and political life.

The activity has two main objectives:

**Objective 1:** Citizens’ civic literacy increased.

**Objective 2:** Citizens proactively engage in political life on issues of their choice online and in person.

### **Background:**

Iraq’s political system is heavily influenced by entrenched political interests that limit citizen participation through corruption, the promotion of insecurity fears, and the use of the Muhasasa system. Muhasasa is a system of governance adopted in Iraq in 2003. It was implemented in part to help ensure inclusion and diversity in governance, but it has been manipulated to award government positions at all levels to specific political movements based on sectarian and political identification, thus perpetuating the political status quo. Political elites also use this system to co-opt other constituencies.

Similarly, the two main political parties in Kurdistan manage a political system that allows them to exert control over the Iraqi Kurdish Region. Recent tensions between the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), as well as tensions between Erbil and Baghdad, have challenged these two parties’ continued control of this region. Although new political movements have tried to enter this political space, the KDP and PUK’s domination of the Kurdish political space has blocked new participants from achieving success in Kurdish politics. Iraq’s political landscape has been threatened by political instability driven by public protests, the most significant of which occurred in 2019. This fear of political instability drives political elites to thwart widespread participation in political processes. Although the 2021 elections were deemed

---

<sup>1</sup> Note: The term “program” as used in 2 CFR 200 and this NOFO is typically considered by USAID to be an Activity supporting one or more Project(s) pursuant to specific Development Objectives. Please see 2 CFR 700 for the USAID specific definitions of the terms “Activity” and “Project” as used in the USAID context for purposes of planning, design, and implementation of USAID development assistance.

technically sound, the resulting government did not align with electoral results as the Muhasasa system was used to block the election's winners from forming a government. Political elites used the courts, legislative maneuvering, and internal deals among Iran-aligned political parties, known as the Coordination Framework<sup>2</sup>, to forge the current Iraqi government. This, coupled with the exclusion of independent voices from the political space and the failure of these voices to coalesce into a potent political force, continues to erode the confidence of citizens in exacting change, further solidifying the influence of political elites. Recent Provincial Council elections have furthered these elites' control, and the significant victory of parties aligned with Iran Aligned Militia Groups (IAMG) bodes poorly for future democratic freedoms. Their views of political participation, human rights, and freedom of speech and association are viewed by the U.S. government and like-minded partners as regressive.

While the political system is occasionally responsive to public pressure, many citizens feel that their participation in the political process is ineffective. Citizens also lack the knowledge, skills, and abilities to engage in the civic and political space in an informed manner and with confidence. This bodes poorly for broad-based political participation and the long-term political stability of the country.

**Activity Problem Statement:**

Confidence in the democratic system is being undermined as Iraqi citizens lack information about their roles, rights, and obligations in their democratic state. Iraq's current institutions and political processes ostracize large segments of the population, leading to an apathetic and disenfranchised citizenry with a weak commitment to democracy.

**Theory of Change and Activity Objectives:**



---

<sup>2</sup> The Coordination Framework is a coalition of Iran-aligned Shia political movements forged to elect Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Sudani to office.

USAID Administrator Power has emphasized “localization” as a priority for USAID programming across sectors. USAID has defined “localization” along four principal lines of effort that include channeling a larger portion of funding directly to local civil society, business, and other institutions that are supported by and accountable to local communities. The Agency has a mandate to shift not only funding but also to put local partners in the lead to co-design projects, set priorities, drive implementation, and evaluate impact of aid programs. Grounded in these principles, the Iraq Civic Engagement Activity has two (2) defined objectives:

**Objective 1: Citizens’ civic literacy increased.**

Under Objective 1, the Expected Results of the Activity are:

- Citizens exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens in the Iraqi democratic system.
- Citizens understand how their government is meant to work.

Under this objective, the Activity will focus on increasing citizens' civic literacy through interactive, creative, innovative approaches, designed to empower individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to actively participate in Iraq's democratic system. Participants in the Activity under this Objective will not only have a deeper understanding of how their government is meant to operate but also feel empowered to actively engage in shaping the future of their communities and nation. Through informed and conscientious citizenship, Activity participants will contribute to the realization of a more vibrant and inclusive democratic society in Iraq.

**Objective 2: Citizens proactively engage in political life on issues of their choice, online and in person.**

Under Objective 2, the Expected Results of the Activity are:

- Citizens have more opportunities to engage with government at all levels (Provincial Councils/Council of Representatives/ Local and district government officials).
- Citizens effectively advocate for public policy on issues they prioritize.
- Citizens increasingly participate in democratic processes.
- Citizens successfully identify and resist mis/disinformation and actively promote reliance on accurate information.

Under this Objective, participants will not only be increasingly informed, they will become increasingly engaged in civic life. This objective is focused on action and participation. Approaches should be customized to geographies and political realities within those Iraqi geographies, setting citizens up for success with their engagement efforts. This Objective also includes a focus on in-person and virtual participation in civic life which necessitates a resilience to mis- and disinformation. Accordingly, approaches to building citizens’ digital literacy are critical under this Objective.

Combining the expected results of Objectives 1 and 2 should lead to increasingly informed and conscientious citizenship amongst Activity participants who will contribute to the realization of a

more vibrant and inclusive democratic society in Iraq. USAID/Iraq is very focused on and committed to empowering and increasing the capacity of Iraqis to lead their own development. Therefore, any support under both of these Activity Objectives must align with USAID's [Local Capacity Strengthening Policy](#) and USAID's [Localization](#) Vision and Approach.

### **Programming Approach - Small Grants Component**

The Activity will create and implement a demand-driven small, sub-grants component valued up to \$500,000 annually to enable local sustainability, and encourage leadership, ownership, decision-making, and implementation by local groups. Small grants must contribute to the accomplishment of Objective 1, Objective 2, or a combination of both. In line with USAID's emphasis on localization, the Activity will support the organic and locally led priorities of Iraq's local entities through these small sub-grants while also presenting opportunities to address specific issues and priorities important to USAID, including but not limited to climate change, transparency, accountability, deepening our investments in locally led development and localization, and inclusion of underrepresented groups. The sub-grants component will not include funds for renovation, rehabilitation, or construction related activities.

### **Programming Approach - Inception Phase**

As the situation on the ground in Iraq continues to be dynamic, new challenges or new opportunities arise regularly, and may arise between the design and launch of this activity. The nature of the Iraqi environment requires shorter planning cycles, active monitoring and robust feedback systems that allow managers to adapt implementation at every stage. To identify challenges and allow flexibility and adaptation at an early stage of implementation, the Activity should apply a Refine and Implement (R&I) approach for an initial ***four-month inception phase***. As such the implementing partner will carry out a four-month inception phase to ground-truth and refine specific implementation activities and sequencing, along with its monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans. The phase must include a landscape analysis, political economy analyses and/or other sectors or issue specific research and assessment components as determined by the applicant to inform the implementation and monitoring of the project generally and the annual implementation plan submission(s). The inception phase will also be extremely important to support the required localization approach through thoughtful and comprehensive engagement with communities to identify community leaders (women-led, youth-led or youth-focused, and marginalized/underrepresented community leaders), groups, and/or issue-focused organizations with whom to partner. As USAID requires more localization in all its awards, we recognize that, particularly in non-permissive environments, the necessary relationships to truly localize and co-design activities in partnership with local communities, groups, leaders, and CSOs, takes time. All of the inception phase work will contribute to the finalization of the year one implementation plan that is based on the Inception Phase analyses and outreach.

### **Flexible Activity Modifier Component**

This component is focused on identifying and seizing opportunities that support the accomplishment of the Activity's two Objectives or otherwise advance the civic literacy and engagement space in Iraq. This is meant to serve as an adaptive, collaborative program

management tool. The eventual awardee will reserve **\$2.5 million** (\$500,000/year) of the total estimated amount of the activity for actions under this component that will be targeted to opportunities that emerge or may fill a gap in technical expertise or information required to achieve the objectives of the program. Use of the funding under the Flexible Activity Modifier component requires co-development and collaboration with USAID and will be initiated by the awardee only after specific agreement is reached with USAID. Specifically, the purpose of this component is to address the variabilities of the operational context in Iraq which requires programmatic flexibility particularly given the volatility of the political environment. With approval of the Agreement Officer, it is envisioned this mechanism will provide USAID/Iraq the ability to support emerging opportunities and evolving needs within the objectives of the program. It could also be used to scale and expand efforts. As needed and as directed by the Agreement Officer, in consultation with the USAID AOR, the awardee will present unique opportunities for assistance programming related to the program objectives. The cost line item will allow the release of rapid response funds to the Applicant and its partners for immediate activities to seize identified opportunities once approved by USAID. Subject to the availability of additional funding, USAID may also choose to invoke the activity modifier to implement additional interventions within the scope of overall activity objectives at any point in the life of the activity. Any use of the Flexible Modifier will include a process of co-development of concepts for the modifier alongside USAID and partners. The expenditure of funds for the activation of the modifier component, will be dependent on review and approval by the AOR and AO.

### **Other Requirements**

#### **Collaborate, Coordinate, and Share Data with USAID's third-party monitoring (TPM) contractor:**

The Recipient must collaborate, coordinate and share monitoring, evaluation, research, analysis, and reporting data and products with USAID/Iraq's TPM contractor for verification, feedback, reporting and Collaboration, Learning and Adaptation (CLA) purposes.

### **Guiding Operational Principles**

#### *Inclusive Development/ Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) principles:*

The Recipient must incorporate the following principles into the design and measurement of activities:

**Inclusive Development:** Inclusion is one of USAID's core values. USAID promotes a nondiscriminatory and inclusive approach to development that ensures that all people – including those who face discrimination and thus may have limited access to a country's benefits, legal protections, or social participation (including, but not limited to persons with disabilities, religious/ethnic minorities, women and girls, and youth in underprivileged/underrepresented communities) – are fully included and can participate in and benefit from development processes and activities.

**Youth Engagement Policy:** USAID's Youth Policy outlines a conceptual approach to youth in development and provides guiding principles and operational practices in support of USAID's efforts to mainstream youth in development, carry out more effective programs, and elevate youth participation. If youth and women continue to feel disassociated from the democratic

government and are unable to secure gainful employment and/or receive a living wage, then they will continue to lose confidence in Iraq's democratic development.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI): The 2023 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy affirms USAID's vision of a prosperous and peaceful world in which women, girls, men, and boys enjoy equal economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights and are equally empowered to secure better lives for themselves, their families, their communities, and their countries. Promoting equality between men and women is central to USAID's mission to foster greater stability and prosperity while encouraging a more transparent and inclusive democratic process in Iraq. The Recipient must systematically consider social inclusion aspects and implications of specific interventions and seek opportunities to promote vulnerable groups' participation in targeted interventions. Data collected for monitoring and evaluation purposes must be disaggregated between men and women and other monitoring and evaluation tools, including surveys, must include questions to elicit information enabling differentiation of impact between men and women.

#### *Sustainability, Legacy, and Localization*

The Applicant's approach to sustainability of the goals and objectives is a key consideration for USAID. To the extent possible, reasonable, and within the bounds of Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity - recognizing the diversity and societal divisions in Iraq - the Recipient must engage Iraqi actors with existing capacity and competitive advantage to implement the activity and to maximize skills transfer and direct relationship building across entities. The Recipient must build the institutional capacity of CSOs that it works with while also increasing the resilience of Iraq's civil society. The aim is to foster partnerships and to introduce tools and mechanisms in a manner that will continue to develop beyond the timeframe and life of the activity. The Activity's interventions may build on existing opportunities and support target entities that are committed to investing in and receiving tailored assistance to improve their technical, organizational, as well as partnership and alliance-building skills to engage in inclusive development. To further sustain the outcomes of this Activity and foster local ownership, interventions should not only focus on building and strengthening the capacity of local partner CSOs, but also fostering the motivation to utilize the new knowledge, skills, and the benefits of broader collaboration and coordination. Additionally, the Recipient is required to work with local partners to understand their legal parameters and maximize the resources available to them through networking to continue and build on the interventions beyond the life of the Activity. Other donors and the private sector could play a role in this space. The Recipient should also prioritize local hiring, local staff development, and that levels of effort to be primarily in Iraq to further build the capacity of their Iraqi staff and Iraqi talent pool.

Link to USAID's Local Capacity Strengthening Policy:

<https://www.usaid.gov/policy/local-capacity-strengthening>

#### *Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA)*

USAID has put time and effort into building a culture of CLA into its operations. The Recipient must model a CLA culture and integrate that culture into internal processes and in the implementation of activities. Where applicable and appropriate, the Recipient should collaborate with the Mission's other implementing partners, interagency colleagues, and/or other donors. In addition,

all products, briefings, and facilitated events should focus on providing recommendations for how the Mission can use that data to make evidence-based decisions and adapt programming as necessary.

USAID defines CLA as a set of practices that help improve development effectiveness throughout activity implementation. Key aspects for ongoing investigation include:

- **Collaborating:** Are we collaborating with the right partners and promoting synergy across USAID activities and activities implemented by others?
- **Learning:** Are we asking questions relevant to improving activity implementation and/or sharing information regarding implementation across audiences who can increase understanding of the effectiveness of implementation?
- **Adapting:** Are we using information gathered through CLA activities to pause, reflect and inform decisions regarding adaptation of the program if necessary?

*Flexibility and Adaptability of Activities and Managing Risk:*

As Iraq's operational environment shifts frequently, the Activity must be able to operate in a wide range of possible security, economic, and political environments. USAID desires to fund an activity which is adaptive to contextual changes in order to achieve the stated objectives. During implementation of the Activity, plans and methods for assessing, mitigating, and adapting to risk factors should be vetted with USAID and regularly reviewed.

USAID recognizes that risks abound in the Iraq context and as such we expect the grantee to have an approach to implementation that accounts for and mitigates risk to the greatest possible degree. This means risk that program description objectives are not met as well as risk to implementing partners operating in the field. USAID has made the following critical assumptions with respect to the activity's theory of change, and these may serve as a basis for considering risk mitigation efforts.

Activity Level Assumptions:

- Political culture is flexible enough to allow for some shifts in citizen participation.
- The security situation remains permissive enough for USAID's partners to operate.
- Citizens are willing to participate in the activity's interventions.
- Political elites will not completely block the activity, and some may support it.
- The digital environment/cyberspace remains open.
- The political environment remains stable (absent of violence), and citizens are able to participate in it.
- Legal frameworks, and implementation of them, allow civil society, implementing partners, and citizens to engage with USAID's activity.
- The private sector is willing to engage in and support democracy promotion.
- USAID is able to identify and engage local partners who have the ability to operate throughout both Federal Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.

**SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT**

USAID/Iraq will be substantially involved during performance of this Award as set forth below pursuant to ADS 303.3.11. The intended purpose of USAID involvement, primarily through the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR), during the award is to assist the Recipient in achieving the objectives of the agreement. The AOR is not authorized to provide any approvals which would constitute: (1) a change to the scope or objectives of the activity described in Attachment B of this Award, which may only be approved by the Agreement Officer; or (2) a change to the Award Budget, unless the Agreement Officer's approval is not required for said budget changes pursuant to 2 CFR 200.308.

**a. Approval of the Recipient's Implementation Plans**

Annual Implementation plans shall be reviewed every year, revised and re-submitted for approval if necessary. The Agreement Officer has delegated authority to approve the Implementation Plan to the AOR.

**b. Approval of Specified Key Personnel**

Approval of specified key personnel assigned to the positions listed below. The following positions have been designated as Key to the successful completion of the objective of this award.

All changes thereto must be submitted for approval by the Agreement Officer (AO):

**Position/Title:**

- 1) Chief of Party (COP)
- 2) Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP)

**c. Approval of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MELP)**

Approval of the Monitoring & Evaluation and Learning Plan (MELP) for the project to ensure that it responds to USAID requirements. The Agreement Officer has delegated authority to approve the AMELP to the AOR.

**d. Agency and Recipient Collaboration**

1. USAID monitoring to permit direction and redirection because of interrelationships with other projects.
2. USAID may facilitate, when appropriate, the Recipient's collaboration with other Recipients, Contractors and Government of Iraq to ensure the best utilization of program resources and greatest program impact.

**e. Activities under Flexible Activity Modifier Component**

USAID will collaborate and codevelop activities under Flexible Activity Modifier Component. The Agreement Officer's Representative and the Agreement Officer will approve all new activities.



## SECTION D: APPLICATION CONTENT AND FORMAT

### 1. General Content and Form of Application

Applicants must review the full requirements in this Section before submitting a concept paper under this NOFO to ensure that you can meet all of the requirements listed therein. Reviewing these requirements will help you prepare for what must be done to increase the likelihood that your concept paper is successful. Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of the NOFO.

There are two (2) phases to this NOFO:

- Phase 1 - Concept Paper,
- Phase 2 - Full Technical and Cost Application

Only eligible and successful applicant(s) from Phase 1 will be invited to participate in Phase 2. USAID intends to award one (1) Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this NOFO, however, USAID reserves the right to negotiate more than one award, or no awards. **Do not submit a full application under Phase 2 unless requested to do so by USAID.**

#### **PHASE ONE (1) CONCEPT PAPER FORMAT**

The concept paper should be specific, complete and presented concisely. The concept paper should demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this activity, keeping in mind the Implementation Principles identified in Section D. The Applicant should take into account the requirements of the activity and evaluation criteria found in this NOFO. During the merit review process, USAID is likely to reject those concept papers that are vague or merely restate the NOFO language. The concept paper must not exceed 13 pages. The cover page is not included in the 13-page limit. **USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits.**

Concept Paper must comply with the following:

- Use standard 8 ½ x 11, single sided, single-spaced, 12-point Calibri font, 1-inch margins, left justification and headers and/ or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and Applicant's name.
- Submitted via Microsoft Word or PDF formats (or equivalent).
- The total size of each e-mail transmission should not exceed 10 MB per email.
- Applicants are reminded that email is NOT instantaneous, and in some cases delays of several hours occur from transmission to receipt. Therefore, applicants are requested to send the application in sufficient time ahead of the deadline. After submitting the concept paper, the applicants should immediately check their own email to confirm that the attachment was indeed sent. If an applicant discovers an error in 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.

- A concept paper submitted in any other format will not be accepted or reviewed; this includes exceeding the maximum number of pages. Applicants cannot submit any alternative document or narrative as a substitute for a concept paper.
- A. **Cover Page** (1 page). A cover page is not included in the 13-page limit and must include the following information:
- Name of the organization(s) submitting the application;
  - Identification and signature of the primary contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address) and the identification of the alternate contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address);
  - Program name
  - Notice of Funding Opportunity number
  - Name of any proposed sub-recipients or partnerships (identify if any of the organizations are local organizations, per USAID’s definition of ‘local entity’ under ADS 303.

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

**B. Technical Approach (5 pages)**

The Technical Approach section must include:

a) A discussion of the development context, including a brief background on the specific development challenge/opportunity and the needs that will be addressed by the Activity (include a description of the target population and any women and men integration specific challenges);

b) A statement of how the goals and objectives relate to specific challenges and opportunities in Iraq and in the elections and political process sub-sector, overlapping with the civil society sector. Applicants should indicate how proposed activities will contribute to supporting specific U.S. government objectives included in the Integrated Country Strategy and stated USAID priorities described throughout the Activity Description, such as localization, conflict sensitivity/do no harm, women and men integration, inclusive development, and climate change integration/consideration, as emphasized by Administrator Power in numerous public statements including the [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2023 President’s Budget Request](#) .

c) The technical approach to be used, including the specific program activities to be

conducted and implemented, including the following specifics;

- **Under Objective 1 and Objective 2**, the Applicant must present creative, innovative, interactive approaches and methodologies that are customized to the Iraqi context and the unique Iraq geographies in which the Applicant proposes to work. There should be clear linkages between the two objectives and the application should point out where activities under one objective complement or mutually reinforce the other objective and/or where activities meet USAID's expectations in the Guiding Operational Principles section of the Activity Description.
- Under the **Small Grants Component**: the Applicant must articulate its approach to creating, managing, and maximizing the effectiveness of a small grants component, connect the small grants clearly to the Activity Objectives, and directly to Local Capacity Strengthening and locally led development principles.
- With respect to the necessary **Local Capacity Strengthening** elements present in the activity description, the Applicant will incorporate relevant organizational capacity and resilience related findings in their support to local partners (if known), and articulate this in their technical approach.

d) A clear description of how the applicant will ensure the **sustainability** of the approaches that are developed and the results that are achieved via the activity and any proposed partnerships within the activity. For example, what specific steps and actions will the applicant take to ensure sustainable results and impacts beyond the term of USAID's financial support?

### C. **Project Management Approach (3 pages)**

The approach must include:

#### a) Inception Period

The Applicant must submit a brief narrative description of the Inception Plan specific to the four-month Inception period. This will include a matrix that illustrates proposed interventions and when they will take place. The following must be included:

- A summary of the main tasks that Offeror plans to complete during the Inception period.
- The methodology and timeline for development of a Social Inclusion Action Plan, Civil Society Landscape Analysis or Mapping Exercise, Political Economy Analysis, and Conflict Sensitivity Analysis.
- A description of any other planned studies or surveys to be undertaken in year 1 with clear justification for their use in terms of learning, baseline understanding or adaptive management benchmarks.

- A description of any innovative approaches or technologies to be tested in the first 18 months of implementation and a methodology to demonstrate the efficacy of these approaches prior to scaling or further deployment.
- A timeline and processes for regular consultation with USAID during the Inception period and through the first year of implementation, to include discussion of adaptive management needs identified (also can be referred to as “pause and reflect” sessions).

b) A clearly articulated approach to incorporate lessons learned from previous USAID efforts. This activity will build on previous investments in the elections and civil society sector(s) (USAID and non-USAID) and expand into new activities supporting civic engagement and participation as well as the promotion of democratic values. Applicants must ensure that lessons-learned from previous elections and political process AND civil society capacity strengthening efforts are integrated into this design, with a view towards the overall advancement of democratic culture in Iraq and not capacity strengthening simply for administrative and financial purposes. Applications should briefly describe what other USAID, USG, and other donor entities are operating in this space and how they will relate to, coordinate with, mutually support, and/or avoid duplication.

c) An efficient and logical structure for overall program implementation, including how the applicant will divide labor, responsibilities and funding with partners or any potential Sub-grantees.

d) An organizational chart of the Applicant organization.

#### **D. Staffing - not to exceed 2 pages**

This section must include:

a) A staffing plan that corresponds to the skills and experience called for by the applicant’s approach and project management / implementation plan, catering to the technical approach, necessity for flexibility and adaptability, and the other specific elements of the program description.

b) Technical and managerial experience and skills.

c) Subject matter expertise related to the activity objectives, program description, and proposed approaches.

d) Focused, practical experience in managing and implementing similar programs in developing countries.

A balance of technical experience, management qualifications and compliance experience is encouraged in the proposed team. Expatriate staff will be considered for this program

but skilled regional experts and/or Iraqi nationals are encouraged. Proposed staff from the region should have demonstrated ability to work in a diverse environment with flexibility and adaptive approaches to learning and sharing experience.

#### **E. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Approach (2 pages)**

The Applicant must submit a brief proposed activity level Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Approach - a matrix format is acceptable - aligned with the stated technical and implementation approaches and that would rigorously and credibly document the activity's effectiveness as well as the Applicant's commitment to sharing and learning. This entails identifying indicators that correspond to and measure the activity's interventions at different levels of results (goal, objectives, expected outcomes, outputs). Applicants should also consider that collaborating, learning and adapting (CLA) approaches must be applied throughout the course of implementation for all interventions.

The Applicant should use a mix of custom and standard indicators from the Standard Foreign Assistance Master Indicator List, with people-level indicators disaggregated by sex and age. USAID values quality indicators over quantity of indicators. The Applicant will provide their suggested indicators and proposed learning questions, that align with outcomes flowing from their particularly stated technical approach.

#### **F. Institutional Capabilities (1 page)**

The Applicant must describe any experience implementing activities of similar size and scope, including demonstrated ability to address gender gaps and sustainably build local capacity.

### **PHASE TWO (2) - FULL TECHNICAL AND BUSINESS APPLICATION:**

After the concept papers are evaluated, successful Applicants may be invited to submit a Full Technical and Business Application. A Full Technical and Business Application will not develop new concepts from the ground up, rather it will build on the Concept Paper, incorporating any feedback provided by USAID to Applicants. The full application will detail and expand upon the concept(s) in the Concept Note. Applicant(s) may also be asked to provide additional information on its technical approach, capacity, management and organization, and proposed costs and budget. USAID intends to identify one (1) Applicant as the most likely successful Applicant to submit a Full Technical and Business Application after evaluation of the Phase 1 submissions, but USAID reserves the right to invite more than one Applicant to submit a Full Technical and Business Application. If USAID is unable to reach agreement on activity design, award terms, conditions, or cost/price within a reasonable time, or USAID believes it is otherwise in its best interest, it may remove any Applicant from consideration for award.

**Do not submit a full application unless requested to do so by USAID. Applicant(s) will be notified in writing and will be requested to submit a full technical and cost application.**

If requested to submit a full application, please follow the instructions below:

Successful applicant(s) for Phase Two (2) will be notified in writing and will be requested to submit a full technical and cost application.

I. Preparation of Applications:

Each applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO. Applications must be submitted in two separate parts: the Technical Application and the Business Application. This subsection addresses general content requirements applying to the full application. Please see subsections 2 and 3, below, for information on the content specific to the Technical and Business Applications. The Technical Application must address technical (e.g., programmatic) aspects only while the Business Application must present the budget and budget narrative, address risk, and include required standard forms and certifications.

Both the Technical and Business Applications must include a cover page containing the following information:

- Name of the organization(s) submitting the application;
- Identification and signature of the primary contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address) and the identification of the alternate contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address);
- Program name;
- Notice of Funding Opportunity number;
- Name of any proposed sub-recipients or partnerships (identify if any of the organizations are local organizations, per USAID's definition of 'local entity' under ADS 303).

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

Applicants may choose to submit a cover letter in addition to the cover pages, but it will serve only as a transmittal letter to the Agreement Officer. The cover letter will not be reviewed as part of the merit review criteria. Applications must comply with the following:

- USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections. Please ensure that applications comply with the page limitations.
- Unless otherwise noted, the Technical and Business Applications and all supporting documents must be submitted in English.

- Use standard 8 ½" x 11", single sided, single-spaced, 12-point Calibri font, 1" margins, left justification and headers and/or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and applicant's name.
- 10-point font can be used for graphs and charts. Tables, however, must comply with the 12-point Calibri requirement.
- Submitted via Microsoft Word or PDF formats, except budget files which must be submitted in Microsoft Excel.
- The estimated start date identified in Section A of this NOFO must be used in the Business Application.
- The Technical Application must be a searchable and editable Word or PDF format as appropriate.
- The Budget (submitted as part of the Business Application) must include an Excel spreadsheet with all cells unlocked and no hidden formulas or sheets. A PDF version of the Excel spreadsheet may be submitted in addition to the Excel version at the applicant's discretion, however, the official Budget submission is the unlocked Excel version.

Applicants should retain a copy of the Technical and Budget Applications and all enclosures for their records.

## II. Technical Application Format

The Technical Application should be specific, complete, and presented concisely. The application must demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this program. The application should take into account the requirements of the program and merit review criteria found in this NOFO.

The page length of the entire Technical Application **must not exceed 30 pages**. All pages of the Technical Application must be sequentially numbered. Failure to include all information or to organize the application in the manner prescribed immediately below may result in rejection of the application.

Technical application must be organized as follows:

- a. **Cover Page** (See Section I above for requirements)
- b. **Table of Contents** (Include major sections and page numbering to easily cross-reference and identify merit review criteria)
- c. **Executive Summary (One page - not included in 30-page limitation)** (The Executive Summary must provide a high-level overview of key elements of the Technical Application.)
- d. **Technical Approach, Management Approach, Personnel Qualifications, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Institutional Capabilities – 30 pages** (see below)

## A. Technical Approach (10 pages maximum)

a) A discussion of the development context, including a brief background on the specific development challenge/opportunity and the needs that will be addressed by the Activity (include a description of the target population and any women and men integration specific challenges);

b) A statement of how the goals and objectives relate to specific challenges and opportunities in Iraq and in the elections and political process sub-sector, overlapping with the civil society sector. Applicants should indicate how proposed activities will contribute to supporting specific U.S. government objectives included in the Integrated Country Strategy and stated USAID priorities described throughout the Activity Description, such as localization, conflict sensitivity/do no harm, women and men integration, inclusive development, and climate change integration/consideration, as emphasized by Administrator Power in numerous public statements including the [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2023 President's Budget Request](#) .

c) The technical approach to be used, including the specific program activities to be conducted and implemented, including the following specifics;

- **Under Objective 1 and Objective 2**, the Applicant must present creative, innovative, interactive approaches and methodologies that are customized to the Iraqi context and the unique Iraq geographies in which the Applicant proposes to work. There should be clear linkages between the two Objectives and the application should point out where activities under one objective complement or mutually reinforce the other objective and/or where activities meet USAID's expectations in the Guiding Operational Principles section of the Activity Description.
- Under the **Small Grants Component**: the Applicant must articulate its approach to creating, managing, and maximizing the effectiveness of a small grants component, connect the small grants clearly to the Activity Objectives, and directly to Local Capacity Strengthening and locally led development principles.
- With respect to the necessary **Local Capacity Strengthening** elements present in the activity description, the Applicant will incorporate relevant organizational capacity and resilience related findings in their support to local partners (if known) and articulate this in their technical approach.
- **Under the Activity Modifier Component**: the Applicant must lay out clear criteria for activating this component, what conditions should be present, and what the sequence of programming interventions would potentially be, should those conditions be present.
- In order to meet USAID's expectations with respect to **social inclusion**, the Applicant will clearly express their approach to integrating equality, empowerment, and protection of women and girls in the technical

approach and describe how it will prepare a nuanced, and flexible social inclusion action plan for this award, which will be submitted in accordance with the reporting requirements for the award.

- The Applicant will specifically describe how it will ensure participation and leadership of USAID/Iraq's key targeted demographics - **women, youth, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities** - in the activities under this award through genuine partnership with individuals and groups led by, consisting of, and representing these demographics in the spirit of the phrase, "Nothing About Us, Without Us."
- The Applicant should describe how it will use the **conflict sensitivity analysis** and implementation strategy throughout the life of the award and how it will inform activity design and implementation.
- The Applicant should describe how the activity will **respond to dynamic changes in the operating environment** and should incorporate regular risk assessment and flexibility to revise program activities that quickly respond to the needs of citizens, civil society, and other partners, the United States Government (USG), key stakeholders, and the changing political environment.

d) A clear description of how the applicant will ensure the **sustainability** of the approaches that are developed and the results that are achieved via the activity and any proposed partnerships within the activity. For example, what specific steps and actions will the applicant take to ensure sustainable results and impacts beyond the term of USAID's financial support?

## **B. Project Management Approach (no more than 9 pages)**

The project management/implementation approach must include:

### a) Inception Period

The Applicant must submit a brief narrative description of the Inception Plan specific to the four-month Inception period. This will include a matrix that illustrates proposed interventions and when they will take place. The following must be included:

- A summary of the main tasks that Offeror plans to complete during the Inception period.
- The methodology and timeline for development of a Social Inclusion Action Plan, Civil Society Landscape Analysis or Mapping Exercise, Political Economy Analysis, and Conflict Sensitivity Analysis.

- A description of any other planned studies or surveys to be undertaken in year 1 with clear justification for their use in terms of learning, baseline understanding or adaptive management benchmarks.
- A description of any innovative approaches or technologies to be tested in the first 18 months of implementation and a methodology to demonstrate the efficacy of these approaches prior to scaling or further deployment.
- A timeline and processes for regular consultation with USAID during the Inception period and through the first year of implementation, to include discussion of adaptive management needs identified (also can be referred to as “pause and reflect” sessions).
- Consultation with USAID on the refinement and planning for co-creation and approval processes related to sub-grant awards.

b) A well-defined partnership framework that specifies the roles and responsibilities of any proposed partners, including the particular expertise, resources and other assets they will bring to an alliance/partnership, and what will result as a consequence of such participation and engagement;

c) A clearly articulated approach to incorporate lessons learned from previous efforts. This activity will build on previous investments in the elections and civil society sector(s) (USAID and non-USAID) and expand into new activities supporting the elections management body, other key stakeholders and institutions of government, citizens, and community-led activities. Applicants must ensure that lessons-learned from previous elections and political process AND civil society capacity strengthening efforts are integrated into this design, with a view towards the overall advancement of democratic culture in Iraq and not capacity strengthening simply for administrative and financial purposes. Applications should describe what other USAID, USG, and other donor entities are operating in this space and how they will relate to, coordinate with, mutually support, and/or avoid duplication.

e) An efficient and logical structure for overall program implementation, including how the applicant will divide labor, responsibilities and funding with partners or any potential Sub-grantees.

f) An organizational chart of the Applicant organization.

**C. Personnel Qualifications and Experience (no more than 4 pages with CVs of proposed key personnel not to exceed 2 pages each included in an annex) –**

This section must include:

a) A staffing plan that corresponds to the skills and experience called for by the applicant’s approach and project management / implementation plan, catering to

the technical approach, necessity for flexibility and adaptability, and the other specific elements of the program description.

b) Technical and managerial experience and skills.

c) Subject matter expertise related to the activity objectives, program description, and proposed approaches.

d) Focused, practical experience in managing and implementing similar programs in developing countries.

**Required Key Personnel:**

The proposed staffing plan must include the following key personnel positions:

→ **Chief of Party (COP)** is responsible for overall program management and will be expected to interact regularly with program staff, USAID Mission staff, civil society organizations, government officials particularly at the HNEC, other donors, and all program stakeholders. Preferred qualifications for the position include:

- Master's degree in social sciences, community development, communications, business, international development, and/or other related fields.
- Ten (10) years work experience implementing democracy promotion, civic engagement, and/or political process activities, including those touching on civil society strengthening to advance democratic culture, including engagement with legal frameworks imposed on civil society, grants to local organizations, and citizen engagement.
- Five (5) years experience in managing staff with proven skills in managing diverse teams across a wide implementation area.
- Strong coordination and communication skills to include a variety of stakeholders (national, international, government, non-government, international organization, donor).
- Fluent written and spoken English and Arabic.
- Preference for an Iraqi national with local context experience

→ **Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP)** will work closely with the COP in overseeing program operations and will have strong written and oral communication skills as well as operational, implementation experience. The incumbent will assume technical direction and oversight of the civic participation grants component of the program. S/he will be expected to interact regularly with project and Mission staff, as well as with government and civil society partners and all other stakeholders to the program. Desired qualifications include:

- A master's degree in social sciences, community development, communications, business, international development, and/or other related fields.
- At least eight (8) years of experience working in the engagement of civil society, civic engagement and education, and/or citizen engagement in political processes.
- Demonstrated experience developing systems to identify potential partners, evaluation of capacity of partners, and managing grants (in-kind and cash) with local partners, training development and other technical areas related to the objectives of this activity.
- Demonstrated professional capacity in written English and experience presenting to a variety of audiences (national and international).
- Fluent written and spoken English and Arabic.
- Preference for an Iraqi national with local context experience

A balance of technical experience, management qualifications and compliance experience is encouraged in the proposed team. Expatriate staff will be considered for this program but skilled regional experts and/or Iraqi nationals are encouraged. Proposed staff from the region should have demonstrated ability to work in a diverse environment with flexibility and adaptive approaches to learning and sharing experience. References for the last five years of work experience are required and will be verified for Key Personnel.

**D. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (no more than 5 pages)**

The Applicant must submit a proposed activity level Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL Plan) to rigorously and credibly document the activity's effectiveness and to commit to sharing and learning from ongoing work and accomplished results. USAID acknowledges that there could be multiple approaches to achieving the objectives outlined in this project description, and the specific indicators may vary somewhat depending upon the technical approaches proposed. It is also acknowledged that output indicators may be necessary for overall day-to-day management of the program, however, the Applicant should vest more time in developing quality outcome level indicators that have the ability to track overall achievements toward the goal and objectives and engage in effective discussions about innovations introduced and any adaptations that may be required. This entails identifying indicators and realistic (yet ambitious) targets that correspond to and measure the activity's interventions at different levels of results (goal, objectives, expected outcomes, outputs) and are linked to established baselines to assess the performance of proposed interventions. It may be necessary to also consider proxy indicators with the caveat that there may be challenges to attribution. Indicators, focused on both men and women, should be included and disaggregation of output indicators by sex and age is required where appropriate. The Applicant must rely on

context monitoring to understand the influences, conditions, and external factors that impact implementation of interventions. Collaborating, learning and adapting (CLA) approaches must be applied throughout the course of implementation for all interventions.

The MEL Plan must elaborate on methods and assessment tools the Applicant will use for collecting, monitoring, analyzing, reporting, and maintaining the data. The Applicant should use a mix of custom and standard indicators from the Standard Foreign Assistance Master Indicator List. All people-level indicators must be disaggregated by sex and age. The Applicant shall consider quality indicators over quantity when developing its list of performance indicators. The following are some illustrative indicators and learning questions. The Applicant will provide their suggested indicators and proposed learning questions, that align with outcomes flowing from their stated technical approach.

USAID requires the use of complexity-aware monitoring and evaluation methodologies in the Iraq context. For more on Complexity Aware Monitoring: <https://usaidlearninglab.org/complexity-aware-monitoring/approaches>

USAID also requires the inclusion of pause and reflect sessions that include USAID Mission staff, at key points in the activity's annual performance implementation, identified by the Recipient, to review progress, identify pivot points, and address challenges adaptively. This creates opportunities to reconfirm the assumptions from which the design is built and review that the theory of change is still valid or if adjustments to the approach are required, what those adjustments may need to be. The periodic pause and reflect sessions are particularly critical in this space due to the often fluid political and security environment. They do not need to be long in duration. The awardee is encouraged to use a political economic analysis lens to inform these sessions. Political economic analysis does not need to take the form of formal reporting or engage a lengthy process but should be used to refine understanding of the context and check that assumptions are valid on a periodic basis.

In addition to data collection, performance indicators, and pause and reflect sessions, the MEL Plan should identify other assessments, evaluations, or learning products and events that may be used to assess the effectiveness of activities and progress towards results as well as determine the necessary strategy shifts.

#### **E. Institutional Capabilities (no more than 2 pages)**

This section must include:

A concise description of the Applicant's, as well as subpartners', previous work and experience related to the activities being proposed.

- i. A list of up to three awards involving similar or related awards in which the Applicant was a prime or sub-partner, whether or not

involving USAID, during the past three years. If the Applicant submits an award on which they were a sub, please specify to the degree possible the role played as a sub.

- b. For each award, include a brief statement about:
- i. The relevance and brief description of work performed;
  - ii. Results achieved;
  - iii. Duration, size, value; and
  - iv. Award numbers and contact information with current email addresses and telephone numbers.

### **III. Business (Cost) Application Format**

The Business Application must be submitted separately from the Technical Application. While no page limit exists for the full Business application, applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible while still providing the necessary details. The Business Application must reflect the entire period of performance, all costs associated with activities included in the technical application (including those to be financed by cost share, or any other non-Federal funding source), and include the required and completed SF-424 Standard Forms. Applicants should ensure that any required supporting documentation identified in the Budget and Budget Narrative instructions below is included in an annex.

Prior to award, applicants may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to assess the applicant's risk in accordance with 2 CFR 200.206. Applicants should not submit any additional information with their initial application.

The Business Application must contain the following sections:

- Cover Page (See Section I above for requirements)
- SF 424 Application and Budget Form

The applicant must sign and submit the following forms from the Standard Form (SF) 424 series. Standard Forms and their accompanying instructions can be accessed electronically at <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family> (use the "Grants.gov" forms). This includes the submission of the:

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)

Applicants should carefully review the official Grants.gov instructions for completing each Standard Form. Failure to accurately complete these forms could result in the rejection of the application.

#### **a) Required Certifications and Assurances**

The applicant must complete the following documents and submit a signed copy with their application:

- (1) "Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient" ADS 303mav document found at <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mav>
- (2) Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B) found at <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family> (use the "Grants.gov" form)
- (3) Certificate of Compliance: If applicable, U.S. NGOs may submit a copy of the Certificate of Compliance if the organization's systems have been certified by USAID/Washington's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA).

#### **b) Budget and Budget Narrative**

The Budget must be submitted in US dollars as one unprotected Excel file (MS Office 2000 or later versions) **using the template provided** with visible formulas and references and must be broken out by program year, including itemization of the federal and non-federal (e.g., cost share, matching, or leverage) amounts. Files must not contain any hidden or otherwise inaccessible cells. Budgets with hidden cells lengthen the cost analysis time required to make an award and may result in a rejection of the Business Application.

The Budget Narrative must be submitted as a separate Word or PDF file and must contain sufficient detail to allow USAID to understand the proposed costs. The applicant must ensure the budgeted costs address all programmatic and administrative activities described in the Technical Application and specifically address any additional requirements identified in the solicitation (e.g., Branding and Marking, PSEA compliance, etc.). The Budget Narrative must be thorough, including sources, descriptions, and rationales for costs to support USAID's determination that the proposed costs are reasonable, allocable, and allowable in accordance with the Cost Principles in 2 CFR 200, Subpart E. Applicants should ensure the Budget and Budget Narrative are consistent with and reflect all activities included in the Technical Application.

The Budget must include the following worksheets or tabs, and contents, at a minimum:

- Summary Budget, inclusive of all program costs (federal and non-federal), broken out by major budget category and by year for the entire period of the program. The Summary Budget should reflect all proposed activities to be implemented by the applicant and any potential subrecipients and should facilitate completion of the SF-424A (i.e., the Summary Budget and SF 424A major budget categories must match). See Annex 1 for Summary Budget Template.

- Detailed Budget, including a breakdown of each major budget category by year for the entire period of the program, sufficient to allow the Agency to determine that the costs accurately reflect the proposed program activities and represent a realistic and efficient use of funding.
- Detailed Budgets for each subrecipient, inclusive of all program costs (federal and non-federal), broken out by major budget category and by year for the entire period of the program,

The Detailed Budget must contain the following major budget categories and information, at a minimum:

- 1) Personnel – Costs of employee salaries and wages must be proposed consistent with 2 CFR 200.430 Compensation - Personal Services and the applicant’s established policies and practices for similar work. The applicant’s Budget must include position title, base salary rate, level of effort, and salary escalation factors for each position. The AO may request an apparently successful applicant’s established written policies on personnel compensation. Applicants must explain all assumptions in the Budget Narrative. If the applicant’s written policies do not address a specific element of compensation that is being proposed, the Budget Narrative must describe the rationale used and supporting market research. Applicants should not include the personnel costs of consultants, contractors, or subrecipients under this category.
- 2) Fringe Benefits – Costs of employee fringe benefits must be proposed consistent with 2 CFR 200.431 Compensation - Fringe Benefits, as required by applicable law, and in accordance with the applicant’s established policies and practices. Fringe benefits include allowances and services provided by employers to their employees in addition to regular salaries and wages (e.g., paid leave, health insurance, retirement, etc.). The applicant’s Budget and Budget Narrative must include a detailed breakdown of all proposed fringe benefits along with a description of how costs are calculated (e.g., as a percentage of salary, as a per-person expense, etc.). Only fringe benefits that will be recovered as direct costs should be included in this category; applicants with a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) that includes a fringe benefit rate must include indirect fringe costs under the “Indirect Charges” category.
- 3) Travel – Travel and transportation costs must be proposed consistent with 2 CFR 200.475 Travel Costs and in accordance with the applicant’s established policies and practices. Travel costs may include program-related transportation, lodging, or subsistence for applicant employees (e.g., flights, hotels, per diem, etc.). The applicant’s Budget must break down individual travel costs and the Budget Narrative must provide details to explain the travel costs (e.g., purpose and number of trips, mode of transportation, the origin and destination, the number of individuals traveling, the duration of the trips, estimated unit costs, etc. The AO may request an apparently successful applicant to provide supporting documentation (e.g., company travel policy, quotation, etc.).

- 4) Equipment - Costs must be proposed consistent with the definitions of equipment, capital assets, and personal property (tangible) in 2 CFR 200.1, with 2 CFR 200.313 Equipment and 200.439 Equipment and Other Capital Expenditures, and with the applicant's established accounting practices (e.g., capitalization level for financial statement purposes). The applicant's Budget must provide a breakdown of individual equipment costs, including type, quantity, and unit cost. The Budget Narrative must include information on models/specifications, the purpose of the equipment, and the basis for the quantity and cost estimates. The Budget Narrative must support the necessity of any equipment purchase in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable equipment, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the equipment.
- 5) Supplies - Costs must be proposed consistent with the definitions of supplies and personal property (tangible) in 2 CFR 200.1 and the applicant's established accounting practices. Supplies are defined as all tangible personal property other than those described in the definition of equipment. The applicant's Budget must provide a breakdown of individual supplies, including type, quantity, and unit cost. The Budget Narrative must include information on specifications, the purpose of the supplies, and the basis for the quantity and cost estimates. The Budget Narrative must support the necessity and reasonableness of any supply purchases.
- 6) Contractual – Costs in this category must include all contracts (except those for individual consultants and those already included under "Equipment," "Supplies," or "Construction") and all subawards. This includes rental and lease agreements for equipment or real property. See 2 CFR 200.331 for assistance regarding subrecipient and contractor determinations. Contractor and subrecipient budgets should reflect the same major budget categories and include budget narratives with the same required information as detailed in this Budget and Budget Narrative section of the Business Application Format instructions. Applicants should not include the costs for individual consultants in this category; consultant costs should be included under "Other".
- 7) Other – Applicants should include any other direct costs associated with the proposed program that are not already captured under another cost category (e.g., costs related to individual consultants, report publication/printing costs, training/event/activity costs, staff development, or administrative expenses not recovered via "Indirect Charges"). The applicant's Budget must provide a breakdown of all other expenses in this category, including type, quantity, and unit cost. The Budget Narrative must provide supporting information on the rationale and reasonableness for each proposed expense and the basis for the proposed quantity and unit cost estimates. For applicants electing to recover all administrative costs directly (i.e., to follow "Method 1" described below to allocate a portion of shared "overhead" or "indirect" costs

directly to the program), these cost elements must be itemized under this category and the applicant must explain the allocation basis for each.

8) Indirect Charges – Applicants must include all indirect costs under this category. Applicants may recover indirect costs via one of the Methods listed below, depending on applicant preference, eligibility, and the approval of the AO. The applicant must identify the selected Method and reflect this in the Budget and Budget Narrative, providing the applicable supporting information, as required. For more information on indirect costs and cost recovery, see [2 CFR 200 Subpart E](#) and refer to [USAID’s Indirect Cost Rate Guide for Non Profit Organizations](#) for further guidance. Options for indirect cost recovery include:

- **Method 1 - Direct Charge Only (i.e., direct cost allocation)**

*Eligibility:* Any applicant that does not have or intend to propose a NICRA (see Method 2) or use a de minimis rate on U.S. Federal awards (Method 3).

*Application Requirements:* **All costs must be reflected under the “Other” cost category.** See the instructions above on how to reflect allocated “administrative/indirect” costs in the Budget and what supporting information must be provided as part of the Budget Narrative.

- **Method 2 - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)**

*Eligibility:* Any applicant with a NICRA issued by a USG Agency or any applicant intending to propose NICRA rate(s) for use under this (and all other) Federal awards.

- Applicants with a current NICRA must apply those rate(s) or provide a formal letter explaining the use of lower rates (see Appendix V of [USAID’s Indirect Cost Rate Guide for Non Profit Organizations](#) for a sample letter).
- Applicants intending to negotiate a NICRA must be able to demonstrate adequate financial and administrative systems, policies, and practices (see Sections 2-3 of [USAID’s Indirect Cost Rate Guide for Non Profit Organizations](#) for more information on requirements, process, and timelines).

*Application Requirements:* Applicants with a current NICRA must include a copy as an annex to the Budget Narrative. If the NICRA was issued by an Agency other than USAID, provide the contact information for the approving Agency. Applicants intending to negotiate a NICRA must include proposed provisional rate(s) in the Budget and must submit an initial indirect cost rate proposal to support proposed rates. Note: Applicants should carefully review [USAID’s Indirect Cost Rate Guide for Non Profit Organizations](#) to ensure they meet eligibility requirements, can provide all required supporting documentation for a NICRA, and understand the timeline and steps in the process.

- Method 3 - De minimis rate of up to 15 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC)

*Eligibility:* Any applicant, except applicants with a NICRA

*Application Requirements:* Applicants may determine the appropriate rate up to the 15 percent limit. The de minimis rate does not require documentation to justify its use and may be used indefinitely. Organizations electing to use the de minimis rate must ensure the same rate (up to 15 percent) is used for all Federal awards until and unless the organization chooses to apply for a NICRA. The applicant must describe in the Budget Narrative which cost elements it will charge directly vs. indirectly and reflect this in the budget. Costs must be consistently charged as either direct or indirect costs and may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. See 2 CFR 200 for further information.

**c) Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407**

Cost principles specifically require Agency written prior approval for certain items of cost. For these items, simply including the item in the detailed budget does not satisfy the requirement for Agency prior approval. To request that such an item be approved in an award, the applicant must include an explicit request for its approval in the Budget Narrative. Note that any such approval is at the Agreement Officer's discretion and such approval may not be granted at the time of award. See 2 CFR 200.407 for information regarding which cost elements require prior written approval.

**d) Approval of Subaward Activities**

The applicant must submit the following information for each subaward that it wishes to have approved at the time of award:

- Name of prospective subrecipient organization
- Subrecipient organization's UEI, unless exempted under 2 CFR 25.110 (see Section E – Submission Requirements and Deadline for more information).
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not have active exclusions in the System for Award Management ([www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov))
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not appear on the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) and Blocked Persons list (<https://sanctionslist.ofac.treas.gov/Home/SdnList>)
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not listed in the United Nations Security Council Consolidated list (<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/un-sc-consolidated-list>)
- Confirmation that the applicant has completed a risk assessment of the subrecipient, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.332(c); including any negative findings as a result of the risk assessment and the applicant's plan for mitigation.

**e) History of Performance**

The applicant must provide information regarding its recent history of performance for all its cost-reimbursement or fixed price contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements, including any fixed amount awards involving similar or related programs, not to exceed 3 awards for the last 3 years, as follows:

- Name of the awarding organization (e.g., funder);
- Award number, if any;
- Activity title;
- A brief description of the activity;
- Period of performance (e.g., start and end dates);
- Award amount;
- Reports and findings from any audits performed in the last 5 years; and
- Names and contact information (including current telephone number and e-mail address) of at least two (2) professional contacts who most directly observed the work performed.

If the applicant encountered problems when implementing any of the awards listed, it may provide a short explanation and the corrective action taken. The applicant should not provide general information on its performance. USAID reserves the right to obtain relevant information concerning an applicant's history of performance from any sources and may consider such information in its review of the applicant's risk. The Agency may request additional information and conduct a pre-award survey if it determines that it is necessary to inform the risk assessment.

**f) Branding Strategy & Marking Plan Pre-Award Terms**

The apparently successful applicant will be asked to provide a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan to be approved by the Agreement Officer. This plan may be submitted after a resulting award is issued but must be included in an amendment to the award no later than 120 days after the award is made. The Agreement Officer will include a special award condition in the resulting award to this effect.

**Branding Strategy – Assistance (October 2024)**

- a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Branding Strategy," describing how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, and how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and host country citizens.
- b. The request for a Branding Strategy, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.

c. If the Notice of Funding Opportunity indicates that the apparently successful applicant may submit a Branding Strategy after the award is made, the resultant award will include a special award condition indicating the required submission date. If the Notice of Funding Opportunity requires submission before award, failure to submit and negotiate a Branding Strategy within the specified time frame will make the applicant ineligible for the award.

d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.

e. The Branding Strategy must include, at a minimum, all the following:

(1) All estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth.

(2) The intended name of the program, project, or activity.

(i) USAID requires the applicant to use the “USAID Identity,” comprised of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline “from the American people” as found on the USAID Web site at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>, unless the Notice of Funding Opportunity states that the USAID Administrator (or delegate) has approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

(ii) USAID prefers local language translations of the phrase “made possible by (or with) the generous support of the American People” next to the USAID Identity when acknowledging contributions.

(iii) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.

(iv) If branding in the above manner is inappropriate or not possible, the applicant must explain how USAID's involvement will be showcased during publicity for the program or project.

(v) USAID prefers to fund projects that do not have a separate logo or identity that competes with the USAID Identity. If there is a plan to develop a separate logo to consistently identify this program, the applicant must attach a copy of the proposed logos. The Notice of Funding Opportunity will state if an Administrator (or delegate) approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

(3) The intended primary and secondary audiences for this project or program, including direct beneficiaries and any special target segments.

(4) Planned communication or program materials used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries that:

(i) Describe the main program message.

(ii) Provide plans for training materials, posters, pamphlets, public service announcements, billboards, Web sites, and so forth, as appropriate.

(iii) Provide any plans to announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens, such as media releases, press conferences, public events, and so forth. Applicants must incorporate the USAID Identity and the message, "USAID is from the American People."

(iv) Provide any additional ideas to increase awareness that the American people support this project or program.

(5) Information on any direct involvement from the host-country government or ministry, including any planned acknowledgement of the host-country government.

(6) Any other groups whose logo or identity the applicant will use on program materials and related materials. Indicate if they are a donor or why they will be visibly acknowledged, and if they will receive the same prominence as USAID.

f. The Agreement Officer will review the Branding Strategy to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.

g. The Branding Strategy will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement.

#### **Marking Plan – Assistance (October 2024)**

a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Marking Plan," detailing the public communications, commodities, and program materials, and other items that will visibly bear the "USAID Identity," which comprises of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline "from the American people." The USAID Identity is the official marking for the Agency and is found on the USAID Web site at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>. The Notice of Funding Opportunity will state if an Administrator (or delegate) approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

b. The request for a Marking Plan, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.

c. If the Notice of Funding Opportunity indicates that the apparently successful applicant may submit a Marking Plan after the award is made, the resultant award will include a special award condition indicating the required submission date. If the Notice of Funding Opportunity requires submission before award, failure to submit and negotiate a Marking Plan within the specified timeframe will make the applicant ineligible for the award.

d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.

e. The Marking Plan must include all the following:

(1) A description of the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the applicant plans to produce, and which will bear the USAID Identity as part of the award, including:

(i) Program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other sites physical in nature;

(ii) Technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audiovisual productions, public service announcements, Web sites/Internet activities, promotional, informational, media, or communications products funded by USAID;

(iii) Commodities, equipment, supplies, and other materials funded by USAID, including commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs; and

(iv) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.

(v) Events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences and other public activities. If the USAID Identity cannot be displayed, the recipient is encouraged to otherwise acknowledge USAID and the support of the American people.

(2) A table on the program deliverables with the following details:

(i) The program deliverables that the applicant plans to mark with the USAID Identity;

(ii) The type of marking and what materials the applicant will use to mark the program deliverables;

(iii) When in the performance period the applicant will mark the program deliverables, and where the applicant will place the marking;

(iv) What program deliverables the applicant does not plan to mark with the USAID Identity, and

(v) The rationale for not marking program deliverables.

(3) Any requests for an exemption from USAID marking requirements, and an explanation of why the exemption would apply. The applicant may request an exemption if USAID marking requirements would:

(i) Compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials. The applicant must identify the USAID Development Objective, Interim Result, or program goal furthered by an appearance of neutrality, or state why an aspect of the award is presumptively neutral. Identify by category or deliverable item, examples of material for which an exemption is sought.

(ii) Diminish the credibility of audits, reports, analyses, studies, or policy recommendations whose data or findings must be seen as independent. The applicant must explain why each particular deliverable must be seen as credible.

(iii) Undercut host-country government "ownership" of constitutions, laws, regulations, policies, studies, assessments, reports, publications, surveys or audits, public service announcements, or other communications. The applicant must explain why each particular item or product is better positioned as a host-country government item or product.

(iv) Impair the functionality of an item. The applicant must explain how marking the item or commodity would impair its functionality.

(v) Incur substantial costs or be impractical. The applicant must explain why marking would not be cost beneficial or practical.

(vi) Offend local cultural or social norms, or be considered inappropriate. The applicant must identify the relevant norm, and explain why marking would violate that norm or otherwise be inappropriate.

(vii) Conflict with international law. The applicant must identify the applicable international law violated by the marking.

f. The Agreement Officer will consider the Marking Plan's adequacy and reasonableness and will approve or disapprove any exemption requests. The Marking Plan will be

reviewed to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.

g. The Marking Plan, including any approved exemptions, will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement, and will apply for the term of the award unless provided otherwise.

**g) Funding Restrictions**

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award.

Construction is not authorized under this award.

USAID will not allow the reimbursement of pre-award costs under this award without the explicit written approval of the Agreement Officer.

**h) CONFLICT OF INTEREST PRE-AWARD TERM (October 2024)**

**a. Personal Conflict of Interest**

1. An actual or appearance of a conflict of interest exists when an applicant organization or an employee, officer, agent, board member of the organization has a relationship with an Agency official involved in the competitive award decision-making process that could affect that Agency official's impartiality. The term "conflict of interest" includes situations in which financial or other personal considerations or interest may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, the obligations and duties of a USAID employee or applicant or recipient employee.

2. The applicant must provide conflict of interest disclosures when it submits an SF-424. Should the applicant discover a previously undisclosed conflict of interest after submitting the application, the applicant must disclose the conflict of interest to the AO no later than ten (10) calendar days following discovery.

**b. Organizational Conflict of Interest**

The applicant must notify USAID of any actual or potential conflict of interest that they are aware of that may provide the applicant with an unfair competitive advantage in competing for this financial assistance award. Examples of an unfair competitive advantage include but are not limited to situations in which an applicant or the applicant's employee gained access to non-public information regarding a federal assistance funding opportunity, or an applicant or applicant's employee was substantially involved in the preparation of a federal assistance funding opportunity. USAID will promptly take appropriate action upon receiving any such notification from the applicant.

**i) Applications with Proprietary Data**

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, should mark the cover page with the following:

“This application includes data that must not be disclosed, duplicated or used – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, an award is made as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government will have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting award. 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}.”

Additionally, the applicant must mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following:

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

## SECTION E: SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

### 1. Questions and Answers

In accordance with 5 CFR 1320, which implements the Paperwork Reduction Act, USAID requires an electronic submission of the application.

Applicants must submit questions regarding this NOFO, if any, to [baghdadoaa@usaid.gov](mailto:baghdadoaa@usaid.gov) no later than the date and time indicated on the NOFO cover letter, as amended. The subject line must read ***"72026725RFA00001 Iraq Civic Engagement Activity"***.

Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment to this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicant.

### 2. Submission Requirements

It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary documentation is complete and received on time. Only electronic (email) submission will be accepted. 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 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: "[NOFO number], organization name], Cost Application, Part 1 of 2".

USAID's preference is that the technical application be submitted as a single email attachment, 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.

After you have sent your applications electronically, immediately check your own email to confirm that the attachments you intended to send were sent. If you discover an error in your transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email 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.

Applicants are reminded that email is NOT instantaneous, and in some cases delays of several hours occur from transmission to receipt. Therefore, applicants are requested to send the application in sufficient time ahead of the deadline. For this NOFO, the initial point of entry to the government infrastructure is the USAID mail server.

Applications in response to this NOFO must be submitted no later than the closing date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. *(As described in D.1, Applicants are only required to submit Phase One (1) Concept Papers by the date and time indicated in the cover letter.)* Late applications will not be reviewed nor considered **OR** may be considered at the discretion of the Agreement Officer. Applicants must retain proof of timely delivery in the form of system generated documentation of delivery receipt date and time **OR** confirmation from the receiving office/certified mail receipt. Additionally, applicants should retain a copy of the application and all enclosures for their records.

### **3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM.gov Registration**

Each applicant, that does not have an exemption under [2 CFR 25.110](#), is required to:

- (1) Be registered in SAM.gov before submitting an application.
- (2) Maintain a current and active registration in SAM.gov at all times during which it has an active Federal award as a recipient or an application under consideration by USAID. The applicant or recipient must review and update its information in SAM.gov annually from the date of initial registration or subsequent updates to ensure it is current, accurate, and complete. If applicable, this includes identifying the applicant's or recipient's immediate and highest-level owner and subsidiaries, as well as providing information on all predecessors that have received a Federal award or contract within the last three years; and
- (3) Include its UEI in each application it submits to USAID. A UEI is a unique, alpha-numeric 12-character identifier issued and maintained by SAM.gov that verifies the existence of an entity globally. The UEI is the official government-wide identifier used for Federal awards.

The SAM registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin the process early. If an applicant is unable to obtain a UEI and complete SAM registration before submitting an application, the applicant may request an exemption in accordance with the instructions below. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements above by the time USAID is ready to make an award, USAID may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant. Applicants can find additional resources for obtaining a UEI and registering in SAM on a blog post on [WorkwithUSAID.gov](#).

Note: First-tier subrecipients (i.e., direct subrecipients) must obtain a UEI in order to receive a subaward, but are not required to complete full SAM registration.

Requests for UEI/SAM exemptions: An applicant may include in its application (or separately in writing to the Agreement Officer) a request to be exempted from the above UEI and/or SAM registration requirements, if the criteria for one of the exceptions in [2 CFR 25.110](#) apply. The applicant may be required to submit additional justification or information in support of the request for an exemption. In certain cases where an exemption is approved, the selected

applicant may still be required to obtain a UEI and/or register in SAM.gov within thirty (30) days after receiving the award.

## **SECTION F: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **1. Responsiveness Review**

Applicants must review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to comply with the NOFO may be considered as being non-responsive and may be evaluated accordingly.

### **2. Merit Review Criteria**

USAID will establish a Merit Review Committee (MRC), see below for more information. The MRC will conduct a merit review of all concept papers/applications received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO, as per the Responsiveness Review. Concept Notes and Full Application submissions will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the following criteria shown in descending order of importance. No Business (Cost) Application will be accepted during Phase 1.

#### **A. Technical Approach**

USAID will evaluate the extent to which the technical approach demonstrates (1) analytical depth, clarity, and responsiveness to the NOFO, (2) technical knowledge, innovation, and creativity, and (3) feasibility of strategies, expected results, and long-term impact.

#### **B. Project Management Approach**

USAID will evaluate the extent to which the Project Management Approach contributes towards achieving the objectives and results described in the program description and justifies the composition and organizational structure of the program's team.

#### **C. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Approach**

USAID will evaluate the extent to which the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Approach is aligned with the implementation approaches, is conducive to rigorously and credibly documenting the activity's effectiveness, as well as the Applicant's commitment to sharing and learning from ongoing work and accomplished results.

#### **D. Institutional Capability**

USAID will evaluate the extent to which the applicant's organizational capability demonstrates its ability to manage technical and administrative aspects of similarly complex programs, achieve measurable results, and work effectively and efficiently with key stakeholders leveraging expertise to enhance impact.

### **3. Review and Selection Process**

The Merit Review Criteria prescribed above are tailored to the requirements of this NOFO. Applicants should note that these criteria serve to identify the significant matters which the applicants should address in their applications, and set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated. Only the most likely successful applicant(s) from the Phase 1 Merit Review will be invited to submit a Full Application in Phase 2. Full Applications will be evaluated against the

same Merit Review criteria as in Phase 1.

Technical and other factors will be evaluated relative to each other, as described here and prescribed in Section D, Application Content and Format. A USAID Merit Review Committee (MRC) made up of USAID staff will conduct a merit review of all applications received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO and make the recommendation on which should be considered for award. The Business Application will be reviewed by the Agreement Officer.

As a result of this process, USAID intends to select the apparently successful applicant based upon the application submission. Once the selection is made, USAID may address any concerns to the selected applicant for resolution. However, USAID reserves the right to negotiate with all applicants prior to selection of the successful applicant if in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

If USAID and the apparently successful applicant cannot come to a mutual understanding during the course of discussions, or if the apparently successful applicant is unable to provide satisfactory Technical and Business Applications, or does not meet deadlines for submissions, or presents an unacceptable risk as a result of the risk assessment, then the Agreement Officer may designate the next highest-evaluated applicant as the apparently successful applicant. This decision is at the sole discretion of the Agreement Officer. The Agreement Officer's decision regarding funding of an award is final and not subject to review.

The Agreement Officer will make the final determination whether the award will be made to the applicant. Award may be made with or without a request for clarifications/additional detail on an application.

#### **a) Business Application Review**

The Agency will evaluate the Business Application of the applicant(s) under consideration for an award as a result of the merit criteria review. As part of the review of the Business Application, the Agency will review the budget and budget narrative to determine whether the costs are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E and accurately reflect the proposed activities in the Technical Application.

The Agency will also consider (1) the extent of the applicant's understanding of the financial aspects of the program and the applicant's ability to perform the activities within the amount requested; (2) whether the applicant's plans will achieve the program objectives with reasonable economy and efficiency; and (3) whether any special conditions relating to costs should be included in the award.

#### **4. Risk Review**

The Agreement Officer will perform a risk assessment ([2 CFR 200.206](#)) of the apparently successful applicant. The Agreement Officer may determine that a pre-award survey is required

to inform the risk assessment in determining whether the applicant has the necessary organizational, experience, accounting and operational controls, financial resources, 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. Depending on the result of the risk assessment, the AO will decide to execute the award, not execute the award, or award with “specific conditions” ([2 CFR 200.208](#)).

Before making an award with a total amount of USAID share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, USAID must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov. USAID will consider any comments by the applicant in determining whether the applicant is qualified for an award.

## **SECTION G: AWARD NOTICES**

Award of the agreement contemplated by this NOFO 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, applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award. Notice of Federal award signed by the Agreement Officer is the official document that obligates funds and will be provided to the authorized official of the selected applicant by electronic means as identified in the application. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by electronic means within 90 days of the Agreement Officer's selection.

Pre-award costs are only allowed when specifically included in the award terms, or otherwise approved in writing by the Agreement Officer. Without such written authorization, any costs incurred for application development or program performance prior to an award period of performance start date are at the applicant's own risk; do not assume that the AO will approve them as pre-award costs in the award.

## SECTION H: POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

### 1. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The resulting award from this NOFO will be administered in accordance with the following:

For U.S. organizations: [2 CFR 700](#), [2 CFR 200](#), and [Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental Organizations](#).

For Non-U.S. organizations: 2 CFR 200 Subpart E and [Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations](#).

See Annex 2 for a list of the Standard Provisions that will be applicable to awards resulting from this NOFO.

### 2. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient

The principal purpose of the relationship between USAID and the recipient is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the program, as 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.

### 3. Reporting Requirements

Program Reports shall be in accordance with applicable USAID Standard Provisions. All written documentation must be submitted in professional-level English. The reports listed below are the initial reports that USAID anticipates requiring from the successful recipient. Based on the evolving nature of the agreement, USAID may provide modified reporting requirements.

**Note:** USAID's fiscal year starts on October 1 and ends on September 30. Four fiscal quarterly periods begin on October 1, January 1, April 1, and July 1.

#### a. Financial Reporting:

Financial Reports shall be in accordance with applicable USAID Standard Provisions.

**Quarterly Financial Report:** Quarterly Financial Reports shall be due within 30 days following the end of each quarter corresponding to USAID's fiscal year from October 1 through September 30.

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.327, Standard Form 425 (SF-425) and SF-425A are used to report accrued expenditures. Reporting periods are calendar quarters. Quarterly financial reports are due no later than 30 days after the end of each calendar quarter (January 30, April 30, July 30, and October 30).

**Final Financial Report:** The Final Financial Report shall be due within 90 days following the expiration of the award. Financial Reports shall be in accordance with 2 CFR 700. USAID requires recipients to use the Standard Form 425 or Standard Form 425a, Federal Financial Report, or such other forms authorized for obtaining financial information as may be approved by OMB.

Financial reports shall be submitted as follows: Financial Analyst, Office of Financial Management ([Baghdadfmo@usaid.gov](mailto:Baghdadfmo@usaid.gov)) and AOR.

**Foreign Tax Reports:** Reporting of foreign taxes under this agreement shall follow the standard provision entitled “Reporting Host Government Taxes (December 2014)” of this award document.

Host government taxes are not allowable where the Agreement Officer provides the necessary means to the recipient to obtain an exemption or refund of such taxes, and the recipient fails to take reasonable steps to obtain such exemption or refund. Otherwise, taxes are allowable in accordance with the Standard Provision, “Applicability of 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 (December 2014),” and must be reported as required in this provision.

The Recipient must include this reporting requirement in all applicable sub-agreements, including subawards and contracts.

**b. Performance Reporting and Plan Requirements:**

The Recipient shall be responsible to USAID/Iraq for all matters related to the execution of the agreement. Specifically, the Recipient shall report to the Agreement Officer (AO) and to the Agreement Officer’s Representative (AOR), who will be designated by the AO prior to award. All approved performance reports and technical reports shall be posted to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), as appropriate.

All reports listed below shall be submitted by the specified due dates, electronically via email for approval by the USAID AOR unless otherwise agreed upon with the AOR. The Recipient will consult the AOR on the format and expected content of reports prior to submission. The Recipient should always be ready for revision in program indicators and reporting requirements.

TYPE OF REPORT	DUE DATE (Counted from Effective Award Date)	DISTRIBUTION
<b>Quarterly and Annual Performance Reports</b>	<p>Within <b>30 calendar days</b> after the end of each quarter; fourth quarter report will comprise the annual performance report.</p> <p><b>[English and a summary in Arabic, soft copy]</b></p>	<p>AOR or A/AOR.</p> <p>Acceptance will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.</p>
<b>Annual Implementation Plan</b>	<p>Within <b>120 calendar days</b> of the date of award. By September 15 of each subsequent year.</p> <p><b>[English and Arabic, soft copy]</b></p>	<p>AOR or A/AOR.</p> <p>Approval will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.</p>
<b>Grants Manual</b>	<p>Within <b>120 calendar days</b> of the date of the award</p> <p><b>[English, soft copy]</b></p>	<p>AOR or A/AOR and AO</p>
<b>Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL)</b>	<p>A full MEL is expected to be submitted within <b>120 calendar days</b> of the date of award. Updates to the MEL will be submitted by October 30 for subsequent years.</p> <p><b>[English, soft copy]</b></p>	<p>AOR and A/AOR.</p> <p>Approval will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.</p>
<b>Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Reporting</b>	<p>Twice annually as part of the 2nd Quarterly Performance Report and the Annual Report.</p> <p>Geospatial (geo-referenced) data will be submitted or updated for each project site.</p> <p><b>[English, soft copy]</b></p>	<p>AOR and A/AOR</p> <p>Approval will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.</p>

<b>Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP)</b>	With submission of the first Annual Implementation Plan, <b>within 120 calendar days</b> of the date of the award. Updated and submitted at least once per year using USAID/Iraq’s template. <b>[English, soft copy]</b>	AOR and MEO (Mission Environment Officer). Approval will be provided in writing after AOR and MEO review and revisions made by Recipient.
<b>Conflict Sensitivity &amp; Do No Harm Analysis Implementation Strategy</b>	Within <b>120 calendar days</b> of the date of award.	AOR or A/AOR. Acceptance will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.
<b>GESI Analysis and Action Plan</b>	Within <b>120 calendar days</b> of the date of award. <b>[English, soft copy]</b>	AOR or A/AOR. Acceptance will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.
<b>Final Report</b>	<b>90 calendar days after completion</b> of the award. <b>[English and Arabic, soft copy]</b> No page limit.	AOR, AO and DEC (Reference to M.21) AO approval after AOR review and approval after revisions made by Recipient.
<b>Closeout/Demobilization Plan</b>	<b>120 calendar days prior to award completion date.</b>	Approved, in writing, by the AO.
<b>Reporting reference in Standard Provisions</b>		
<b>Reporting of Foreign Taxes – Reference to RAA13. Reporting Host Government Taxes</b>	The recipient must annually submit a report <b>by April 16 of the next year.</b>	FMO/AOR/AO

Participant Training (TEAMS)	Within 30 days after the end of each Federal Fiscal year quarter. Recipient is responsible for submitting data into TEAMS directly. [English]	AOR, A/AOR and Mission R-2 Verifier
------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------

The Recipient will allow at least 10 business days for review and comments from the AOR on any draft report submission. All reports and plans are subject to written approval by the AOR, except for the Closeout Plan and the Property Disposition Plan, which are subject to Agreement Officer’s approval.

- **Quarterly Performance Reports:**

The Recipient will report performance progress for the program under the award and monitor and track indicators as reviewed and agreed to with USAID on a quarterly basis, by submitting a quarterly report. Quarterly performance reports will be submitted **30 calendar days** after the end of each quarter and contain the following information:

- (1) A comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives established for the period, including up-to-date figures for indicators identified in the Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Plan (MELP). Whenever appropriate, and the output of programs or projects can be readily quantified, such quantitative data should be related to cost data for computation of unit costs.
- (2) Reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate.
- (3) Other pertinent information including, when appropriate, analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs.

A general quarterly performance report template, in addition to the indicator reporting, will be provided by the AOR. The Recipient must submit via email a copy of quarterly, annual, and final performance reports to the AOR in accordance with 2 CFR 200.328.

The timing, format and other instructions will be agreed by the AOR and the Recipient’s Key Personnel at the outset of implementation.

- **Annual Implementation Plan:**

Submitted annually to the AOR for approval, the first Implementation Plan, including activity planning and timeframe, **is due 120 calendar days of the date of the award**. For the subsequent years, the implementation plan will be submitted for approval by **September 15 of every year**. The plan shall include subcontract and sub-grants planning.

Additionally, the plan will include weekly submissions of key activity highlights to the AOR in bullet form.

Annual Implementation Plans are to be submitted in English to the AOR and Alternate AOR via email.

- **Grants Manual:**

The Recipient shall submit a Grants Manual to the AOR and the Agreement Officer **within 120 days of the date of the award.**

- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL):**

The applicant will be responsible for developing and tracking activity targets, outputs and impact, and overall activity indicators in the application which gauge individual program activities and program effectiveness. Within 120 days of signing the award, the Recipient must submit the activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL) to the AOR for approval. It is the AOR responsibility to review, collaborate on any necessary changes and finally approve the MELP. The MEL must adhere to USAID's **ADS 201.3.4.10, which requires that, "Activities must have an approved Activity MEL Plan in place before major implementation actions begin."**

The Recipient must ensure that the MEL Plan is adjusted to USAID's fiscal calendar of October 1 to September 30. Revisions to the MEL Plan must be approved by the AOR. The activity MEL Plan must be updated on an annual basis (by fiscal year) and should be revised as needed in response to changes in the activity or context that occur during the life of the activity.

**The MEL plan must contain the following:**

**1. Introduction:** This section introduces the activity MEL Plan, describes the structure of the plan, sets the time/period covered by the plan, and describes how it will be updated.

**1.1 Activity Theory of Change:** Include a summary description of the activity theory of change.

**1.2 Logic model:** Add a logic model that graphically depicts the activity theory of change. Add performance indicators and learning questions to the logic model where relevant to indicate the connection between elements of the theory of change and MEL tasks.

**2. Monitoring Plan: The Monitoring Plan, at a minimum, must include the following:**

**2.1 Description:** Describe the activity’s monitoring approach, including monitoring processes, systems, data collection methodologies and internal control procedures.

**2.2 Performance Monitoring:** Describe the efforts to monitor activity performance. Include a list of the relevant high quality performance indicators of the activity’s outputs and outcomes. The indicators must measure progress and achievement of the intended results, their baseline values (or plan for collecting baseline), and quarterly, annual and life of activity targets. The targets should be listed in an annex (see Indicators summary tracking table), in the form of an Indicators Tracking Table. For each indicator, the MEL Plan must include a Performance Indicator Reference Sheet, also as an annex (see PIRS template).

**2.3 Context Monitoring:** Describe any efforts for monitoring the activity’s context and emerging risks that could impact achievement of the activity’s results, this includes setting up at least 1-2 context indicators.

**3. Beneficiary Feedback Plan: The MEL Plan must include a Beneficiary Feedback plan that includes:**

- Determination on whether collecting beneficiary feedback is appropriate for the activity. If not, then a written explanation for why not.
- Describe procedures for collecting feedback from beneficiaries.
- Describe procedures for responding to feedback from beneficiaries.
- Describe procedures for reporting beneficiary feedback to USAID.

**4. Evaluation Plan:** The MEL Plan must include plans for collaborating with external evaluators: If USAID is planning to conduct an external evaluation of this activity, the MEL Plan must describe how the Recipient will collaborate with the external evaluation team.

**5. Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Approach (CLA):** The MEL Plan must include learning questions related to the theory of change or knowledge gaps and plans to address them. It must describe plans for strategic collaboration with other activities or stakeholders, reflection opportunities, how the implementing partner will use new knowledge and learning for adaptations, and plans for knowledge capture at closeout.

**6. GESI considerations:** Describe how GESI analysis and other disaggregated data will be incorporated into the M&E methodology

**7. Resources:** Specify the budget allocated to monitoring, evaluation, and learning by listing the tasks, estimated costs, and proportion of the budget.

**8. Roles and Responsibilities:** Describe the general and individual roles and responsibilities for activity monitoring, evaluation and CLA tasks and approaches.

**9. Schedule of the Activity MEL Plan Tasks:** Provide a schedule of recurring tasks related to monitoring, evaluation, CLA or other planned learning efforts during the activity and the individuals who are responsible for them.

**10. Schedule of the Activity MEL Plan Deliverables to USAID:** List the various monitoring, evaluation, and CLA or other learning deliverables (including ad hoc and recurring reports) that will be provided to USAID.

- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Reporting:**

The Implementation Plan will also apply geospatial methods using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to support USAID's effort to incorporate geographic data and analysis into USAID's overall development planning, design, and monitoring & evaluation. The Recipient is not expected to purchase or utilize GIS software unless it is relevant for implementation of their activities. The Recipient can utilize any of the GIS tools publicly available. When geographic data is acquired through data use or ownership agreements with the host-country government or other entity, the Recipient must ensure that the agreement makes it permissible for the geographic data to be submitted to, and used by, USAID and other U.S. Embassy agencies. Please refer to the USAID [link](#) for more details.

The Recipient shall provide geographic location or coordinate data twice annually as part of the 2nd Quarterly Performance Report and the Annual Report for all USAID-supported sites as follows:

**A. Activity Location Data**

The Recipient must collect and submit Activity Location Data (ALD) and Location of Intended Beneficiaries according to the following four requirements:

**1. Level of Geographic Detail**

At a minimum, the location(s) where the activity is implemented must be collected at the Exact Site Level, unless otherwise specified by USAID. The Location of the Intended Beneficiaries shall be collected at least at the Administrative Unit 1 Level (i.e., Region), and where possible/appropriate at the Administrative Unit 3 Level (i.e., Commune) or at the Administrative Unit 2 Level (i.e., Province).

## **2. Activity Location Data Collection Standards**

Activity Location Data must be collected according to the standards provided by USAID, such as the use of standard names, boundaries, and locations in Latin script. Activity location data collection standards are detailed in [579saa](#):

## **3. Activity Location Data Submission Method and Frequency**

Activity Location Data must be submitted quarterly and the Annual Report to an Agency approved reporting tool or in a digital format according to the standards and procedures provided by USAID. If the Activity Location Data has not changed since the previous data submission, it must be indicated when the data is submitted.

## **4. Activity Location Data Risk**

Activity Location Data must exclude personally identifiable information. If the Activity Location Data collected by the Recipient requires protection from unauthorized access to mitigate data risk, the Recipient must notify USAID before submitting the Activity Location Data to USAID and implement mitigation techniques to protect the data from unauthorized access in consultation with USAID.

## **B. Geographic Data Assets**

Geographic data assets are primary or derived data assets that are developed or utilized during a project. All geographic data assets must be submitted in accordance with the special clause or provision “Submission of Datasets to the Development Data Library (DDL)” per ADS 302.3.5.21.

**NOTE:** Activity Location Data (ALD) and geographically disaggregated indicators are not considered geographic assets. ALD should be submitted as reported in accordance with section “A. Activity Location Data” sub-section “3. Activity Location Data Submission Method and Frequency” above.

### **1. Geographic Data Files**

- a. Both primary and derived Geographic Data Files must be submitted.
- b. Geographic Data Files must be submitted in Shapefile (.shp), GeoTIFF (.tif), CSV (.csv), or GeoJSON (.geojson) file formats.
- c. In addition to fulfilling the submission requirements noted above, Geographic Data Files that are stored in other file formats that may be useful to end users can be voluntarily submitted in those file formats. For example, Geographic Data Files stored in a File Geodatabase (.gdb) or as a Web Map Service (WMS) can also be submitted.
- d. Geographic Data Files that are stored in Shapefile (.shp) or GeoTIFF (.tif) formats will include metadata that follows ISO 19115 using the ISO 19139 XML implementation schema.

e. Geographic Data Files that are stored in a CSV or GeoJSON format and contain latitude/longitude coordinates will include supplementary information regarding the:

1. Method used to create the latitude/longitude coordinates;
2. Spatial reference used to generate the latitude/longitude coordinates; and
3. Geographical precision of the latitude/longitude coordinates using the International Aid Transparency Initiative standards. For example, a latitude/longitude coordinate may represent an exact location, the center of a populated place, or the center of a subnational administrative unit. This information must be included in addition to the actual CSV dataset.

f. Geographic Data Files that are stored in Shapefile (.shp), GeoTIFF (.tif), or GeoJSON (.geojson), JSON (.json) file formats will use the Geographic Coordinate System World Geodetic System 1984 (GCS WGS 1984) spatial reference. If the use of a different spatial reference was required for an analysis, the spatial reference that was used must be indicated elsewhere in the metadata.

## **2. Geographic Data Processing and Analysis Files**

a. Geographic Data Processing and Analysis Files that are written in programming languages will include a description of the language they are written in (e.g., a Python file would be .py, a Javascript file would be .js, etc.), the intended purpose of the file, use limitations, and execution instructions.

b. Geographic Data Processing and Analysis Files will include descriptive comments and relative pathnames to enable efficient and effective use by an end user.

c. Geographic Data Processing and Analysis Files are stored in an online repository, such as GitHub, these files can also be submitted as a clone of the repository.

## **3. Geographic Data Visualization Files**

a. Geographic Data Visualization Files created using desktop GIS software will be submitted in Esri Map Document (.mxd) or QGIS Project (.qgs) file formats.

b. Geographic data visualization products that are finalized in separate desktop software or stored in a different file format can also be submitted if they may be of use to an end user. For example, when a data visualization product is stored as a Map Package or is finalized in Adobe Illustrator, the Map Package (.mpk), or Adobe Illustrator (.ai) file can be additionally submitted.

c. Geographic Data Visualization Files written in a programming language and used to generate web-based data visualization products will include an indication of the programming language (for example, a Python file would be .py, a Javascript file would be .js, etc.)

d. Geographic Data Visualization Files will reference relative pathnames to the source of all Geographic Data Files that are displayed in the data visualization product.

e. When products created with the Geographic Data Visualization Files are included in documents that are submitted to the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), such as a report that includes a map created with a Geographic Data Visualization File, the URL that links to the location of the document in the DEC must be provided.

- **Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP):**

Submitted annually to the AOR and MEO for approval, the first Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) is **due 120 calendar days of the date of the award**, with submission of the first Annual Implementation Plan. For the following subsequent years, the Recipient shall update and submit at a minimum once per year using USAID/Iraq's template.

Refer to Section Environmental Compliance Requirement for complete details.

- **Conflict Sensitivity Analysis Implementation Strategy**

The Recipient will submit a Conflict Sensitivity Analysis and Implementation Strategy during the Refine and Implement period within the inception phase (**within 120 calendar days of the date of the award**). The Conflict Sensitivity Analysis and Implementation Strategy must include a conflict-sensitivity analysis to inform design and ensure that conflict sensitive approaches are incorporated throughout implementation. From this analysis, the Applicant will develop an annual implementation strategy as a component of the Annual Work Plan. The Conflict Sensitivity Implementation Strategy must ensure a 'do no harm' approach is integrated into activities to minimize potential negative impacts (including gender and ethnic tensions) and maximize positive impacts (community stability, etc.). The Applicant must analyze the two-way relationship between conflict and a more empowered, effective, and prominent civil society in Iraq. The Applicant will update the Conflict Sensitivity Implementation Strategy annually and submit as a part of the Annual Work Plan.

- **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Analysis and Action Plan):**

The Recipient shall submit a GESI Analysis and Action Plan **within 120 calendar days of the date of the award** to the AOR for approval.

To meet USAID's expectations for GESI integration, the applicant must articulate a clear approach to GESI by addressing gender equality, women's empowerment, and the protection of women, girls, men, boys, and marginalized and vulnerable

groups such as religious and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, youth, and internally displaced persons (IDPs). This approach should be encapsulated in a nuanced and adaptable GESI Action Plan, to be submitted by the end of the refine and implement phase of the award (within four months of the award). As part of this process, the applicant must review USAID/Iraq's draft activity-level gender analysis for primary data. (available at this [link](#)).

- **Final Report**

The Recipient must prepare and submit the final report required by this Agreement to the Agreement Officer's Representative in English **within 90 calendar days** after completion of the award and to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) at <http://dec.usaid.gov>.

Refer to Standard Provisions Section M.21 Submissions to the Development Experience Clearinghouse and Publications (June 2012).

The final performance report should contain, but not be limited to the following information:

- ❖ Executive summary
- ❖ Describe the methods of assistance used and the pros and cons of these methods
- ❖ Brief description and mapping of the results of the program
- ❖ How this program assisted USAID in meeting targets
- ❖ Success stories
- ❖ Problems and how they were overcome
- ❖ Cost-effectiveness
- ❖ Final-year (and/or final fiscal year) as well as cumulative life-of-activity indicator reporting
- ❖ Lessons learned, and
- ❖ Recommendations for USAID's future interventions

- **Close out/Demobilization Plan**

To efficiently close-out this activity and reduce time and costs for both parties, USAID/Iraq requests that, **120 calendar days prior to award completion**, the Recipient shall submit a closeout/demobilization plan for AOR approval. The closeout/demobilization plan shall include:

- a) a draft property disposition plan,
- b) plan for the phase-out of operations,
- c) delivery schedule for all reports or other deliverables required under the agreement, and

d) timetable for completing all required actions in the demobilization plan, including the submission date of the final property disposition plan to the Agreement Officer.

#### **4. Environmental Compliance**

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 (<https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agency-policy/series-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.

Environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this NOFO. 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.

No activity funded under this NOFO 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 Examination (IEE), or Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO). Determination of Categorical Exclusion ME 24-52 received concurrence from the Middle East BEO on May 20, 2024, for activities under this NOFO.

Specifically, the activities envisioned in this NOFO fall into the following classes of action:

- Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)
- Analyses, studies, academic or research workshops and meetings
- Document and information transfers

In case of a sub-grants component, the recipient will be required to use an Environmental Review Form (ERF) or Environmental Review (ER) checklist using impact assessment tools to screen grant applications to ensure the funded applications will result in no adverse environmental impact, to develop mitigation measures, as necessary, and to specify monitoring and reporting. Use of the ERF or ER checklist is called for when the nature of the grant applications to be funded is not well enough known to make an informed decision about their potential environmental impacts, yet due to the type and extent of activities to be funded, any adverse impacts are expected to be easily mitigated. Implementation of sub-grant activities cannot go forward until the ERF or ER checklist is completed and approved by USAID. The recipient is responsible for ensuring that mitigation measures specified by the ERF or ER checklist process are implemented.

The recipient will be responsible for periodic reporting to the USAID Agreement Officer Representative, as specified in this NOFO.

USAID anticipates that environmental compliance and achieving optimal development outcomes for the proposed activities will require environmental management expertise. Respondents to the NOFO should therefore include as part of their application their approach to achieving environmental compliance and management, to include:

- The respondent's approach to developing and implementing an environmental review process for a grant fund and/or an EMMP.
- The respondent's approach to providing necessary environmental management expertise, including examples of past experience of environmental management of similar activities.
- The respondent's illustrative budget for implementing the environmental compliance activities. For the purposes of this NOFO, applicants should reflect illustrative costs for environmental compliance implementation and monitoring in their cost application.

As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the recipient, in collaboration with the USAID Agreement Officer Representative and Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this NOFO to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.

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.

Any 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.

## **5. Other Requirements**

### **SPECIAL PROVISION FOR PERFORMANCE IN IRAQ (APR 2009)**

All Recipient personnel deploying to Iraq under grants over \$100,000 or performance over 14 days must be registered in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Recipients shall register each individual in SPOT before deploying any employees or consultants to Iraq. If individuals are already in Iraq at the time the recipient employs them, the recipient must enter each individual upon his or her becoming an employee or consultant under this award. The recipient must maintain current data on all employees and consultants in SPOT. Information with regard to Iraqi entities and nationals will be entered once a classified system is in place. Information on how to register in SPOT is available from the Agreement Officer (AO) or Agreement Officer's Technical Representative (AOTR).

Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, recipients are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs.

Under this award, the term “PSC” includes any personnel providing protection of the personnel, facilities, or property of a recipient or subrecipient at any level, or performing any other activity for which personnel are required to carry weapons in the performance of their duties.

As specific COM policies and procedures may differ in scope and applicability, recipient is advised to review post policies and procedures carefully in this regard and direct any questions to the Embassy Regional Security Office (RSO) via the Agreement Officer’s Technical Representative. Any exception to these policies must be granted by the COM via the RSO. COM policies and procedures may be obtained from the RSO via the Agreement Officer’s Technical Representative. Recipient is also advised that these policies and procedures may be amended from time to time at the post in response to changing circumstances.

Recipient is advised that adherence to these policies and procedures is considered to be a material requirement of this grant/cooperative agreement. The recipient must include this provision in all sub-awards at any tier or contracts under their grant/cooperative agreement.

Recipient is reminded that only the Agreement Officer has the authority to modify the Notice of Award. Recipients shall proceed with any security guidance provided by the RSO but shall advise the Agreement Officer and the Agreement Officer’s Technical Representative of the guidance received and any potential cost or schedule impact.

[END OF PROVISION]

## **1. Partner Vetting Pre-Award Requirements**

- a. USAID has determined that any award resulting from this assistance request for applications is subject to vetting. An applicant that has not passed vetting is ineligible for award.
- b. The following are the vetting procedures for this request for applications:
  - i. Prospective applicants review the attached USAID Partner Information Form, USAID Form 500-13, and submit any questions about the USAID Partner Information Form or these procedures to the Agreement Officer by the Question and Answer deadline in the RFA.
  - ii. The Agreement Officer notifies the Applicant when to submit the USAID Partner Information Form. Due to the time frame for making this award and the length of the vetting process, these forms must be submitted as soon as feasible once the individuals are identified. USAID reserves the right to award to the next best applicant if the higher rated applicant’s vetting is not completed with enough time to finalize an award.

The designated vetting official is:

Vetting official: Jonathan Hartrey

Email: [iraqidvsu@usaid.gov](mailto:iraqidvsu@usaid.gov)

(for inquiries only).

- iii. The applicants must notify proposed subrecipients and contractors of this requirement when the subrecipients or contractors are subject to vetting.

Note: Applicants who submit using non-secure methods of transmission do so at their own risk.

- c. Selection proceeds separately from vetting. Vetting is conducted independently from any discussions the agreement officer may have with an applicant. The applicant and any proposed subrecipient or contractor subject to vetting must not provide vetting information to anyone other than the vetting official. The applicant and any proposed subrecipient or contractor subject to vetting will communicate only with the vetting official regarding their vetting submission(s) and not with any other USAID or USG personnel, including the agreement officer or the agreement officer's representatives. The agreement officer designates the vetting official as the only individual authorized to clarify the applicant's and proposed subrecipient's and contractor's vetting information.
- d.
  - i. The vetting official notifies the applicant that it: Is eligible based on the vetting results, is ineligible based on the vetting results, or must provide additional information, and resubmit the USAID Partner Information Form with the additional information within the number of days the vetting official specified in the notification.
  - ii. The vetting official will coordinate with the agency that provided the data being used for vetting prior to notifying the applicant or releasing any information. In any determination for release of information, the classification and sensitivity of the information, the need to protect sources and methods, and the status of ongoing law enforcement and intelligence community investigations or operations will be taken into consideration.
- e. Reconsideration:
  - i. Within 7 calendar days after the date of the vetting official's notification, an applicant that vetting has determined to be ineligible may request in writing to the vetting official that the Agency reconsider the vetting determination. The request will include any written explanation, legal documentation and any other relevant written material for reconsideration.
  - ii. Within 7 calendar days after the vetting official receives the request for reconsideration, the Agency will determine whether the applicant's additional information merits a revised decision.
  - iii. The Agency's determination of whether reconsideration is warranted is final.

- f. Revisions to vetting information:
  - i. Applicants who change key individuals, whether the applicant has previously been determined eligible or not, must submit a revised USAID Partner Information Form to the vetting official. This includes changes to key personnel resulting from revisions to the technical portion of the application.
  - ii. The vetting official will follow the vetting process of this provision for any revision of the applicant's Form.
- g. Award. At the time of award, the agreement officer will confirm with the vetting official that the apparently successful applicant is eligible after vetting. The agreement officer may award only to an apparently successful applicant that is eligible after vetting.

**Alternate II (JUN 2015)**

(j) Prospective contractors at any tier providing the following classes of services must pass vetting:

(i) Money or value transfer services are subject to partner vetting when the amount of the transfer plus service fee exceeds \$25,000, unless an exception in paragraph (ii) of this section applies.

(ii) Exceptions:

(A) the prospective service provider is registered in the U.S. and regulated by the United States Government.

(B) the prospective non-U.S. service provider is a bank, savings bank, or credit union regulated by a competent authority, except when the service provider is regulated by an authority in Afghanistan, Syria or North Yemen. For inter-country transfers, this requirement applies to both the sending and receiving country.

(C) The prospective service provider is below the [AO to fill in]\_\_\_\_\_ tier.

(Exception (C) applies only when the fill-in information is completed and included in the award.)

(iii) For the purpose of this paragraph (j) the following definitions apply:

Bank means a financial institution which in the normal course of its business operations accepts deposits; pays, processes, or transacts checks or other deposit accounts; and performs related financial services for the public. Also, a bank generally makes loans or advances credit.

Competent authority means a regulatory or governmental body responsible for the supervision, registration, and regulation of the relevant financial service provider.

Credit union means a customer- or member-owned financial cooperative, democratically controlled by its members, and operated for the purpose of maximizing the economic benefit of its members by providing financial services at competitive and fair rates.

Money or value transfer services mean financial services that involve the acceptance of cash, checks, other monetary instruments, or other stores of value, and the payment of a corresponding sum in cash or other form to a customer by means of a communication, message, transfer, or through a clearing network to which the MVTs provider belongs. Transactions performed by such services can involve one or more intermediaries and a final payment to a third party and may include any new payment methods. Sometimes these services have ties to particular geographic regions and are described using a variety of specific terms, including hawala, hundi, and fei-chen.

Savings bank means a financial institution organized to accept savings deposits and pay interest on those savings deposits. Recipients must not procure these services until they receive confirmation from the vetting official that the prospective contractor has passed vetting.

[END OF PROVISION]

## **2. Additional Vetting Requirements**

In addition to the vetting requirements found in [to be updated at the time of award], the terms and requirements of the USAID/Iraq Vetting Mission Order is incorporated by reference. The Recipient is responsible for seeking vetting in accordance with the requirements of the USAID/Iraq Vetting Mission Order and Section [to be updated at the time of award] of this award.

The term “subaward” may include both contracts and sub-assistance awards. All subawards, which require vetting and were proposed in the pre-award application(s) and associated budget(s), are not approved at the time of award unless a Notice of Eligibility was sent prior to award for that organization or individual being vetted. Any such subaward that requires vetting must also be approved by the AO in accordance with Section [to be updated at the time of award] after it is successfully vetted.

The Recipient may not incur costs for any subawards, which require vetting under the vetting provision or USAID/Iraq Vetting Mission Order, under this award until vetting has been successfully completed. Any costs incurred in relation to a subaward that requires vetting but has not been successfully vetted are unreasonable as they are outside the terms of the agreement and unallowable.



## **ANNEX 1 - ATTACHMENTS**

1. **Summary Budget Template** - the template is provided as an attachment to the NOFO.
2. **Determination of Categorical Exclusion** - the document is provided as an attachment to the NOFO

## ANNEX 2 - STANDARD PROVISIONS

The selected applicant will be required to comply with USAID’s standard provisions. The standard provisions included in the resultant award will be dependent on the organization that is selected or, in the case of a fixed amount award, the type of award.

The full text of these provisions may be found on USAID’s website here:

- Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations:  
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa>,
- Standard Provisions for non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations:  
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>, and
- Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards:  
<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mat>.

The resultant award will include the full text of current Mandatory Standard Provisions and the Required As Applicable Standard Provisions. **The required as applicable standard provisions will be required if checked below.**

### Required as Applicable Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations

Required	Not Required	REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS U.S. NGOs
Determined at award		RAA1. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rates – Predetermined (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA2. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rates – Nonprofit Provisional & Final (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA3. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate – For-Profit Provisional & Final (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA4. Indirect Costs – De Minimis Rate (August 2024)
		RAA5. Reserved
		RAA6. Voluntary Population Planning Activities – Supplemental Requirements (January 2009)
		RAA7. Protection of the Individual As A Research Subject (April 1998)
		RAA8. Care of Laboratory Animals (March 2004)
		RAA9. Title to and Care of Property (Cooperating Country Title) (August 2024)
		RAA10. Cost Sharing (August 2024)
		RAA11. Prohibition of Assistance to Drug Traffickers (June 1999)
		RAA12. Investment Promotion (December 2022)
		RAA13. Reporting Host Government Taxes (December 2022)
		RAA14. Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences (June 2012)
		RAA15. Conscience Clause Implementation (Assistance) (February 2012)

<b>Required</b>	<b>Not Required</b>	<b>REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS U.S. NGOs</b>
		RAA16. Condoms (Assistance) (September 2014)
		RAA17. Prohibition on the Promotion or Advocacy of the Legalization or Practice of Prostitution or Sex Trafficking (Assistance) (September 2014)
		RAA18. Reserved
		RAA19. Standards for Accessibility for the Disabled in USAID Assistance Awards Involving Construction (September 2004)
		RAA20. Statement for Implementers of Anti-Trafficking Activities on Lack of Support for Prostitution (June 2012)
		RAA21. Eligibility of Subrecipients of Anti-Trafficking Funds (June 2012)
		RAA22. Prohibition on the Use of Anti-Trafficking Funds to Promote, Support, or Advocate for the Legalization or Practice of Prostitution (June 2012)
		RAA23. Reserved
		RAA24. Reporting Subawards and Executive Compensation (August 2024)
		RAA25. Patent Reporting Procedures (December 2022)
		RAA26. Access to USAID Facilities and USAID's Information Systems (August 2013)
		RAA27. Contract Provision for DBA Insurance under Recipient Procurements (December 2022)
		RAA28. Reserved
		RAA29. Reserved
		RAA30. Program Income (August 2024)
		RAA31. Never Contract with the Enemy (August 2024)

**Required as Applicable Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations**

<b>Required</b>	<b>Not Required</b>	<b>REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS Non-U.S. NGOs</b>
Determined at award		RAA1. Advance Payment and Refunds (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA2. Reimbursement Payment and Refunds (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA3. Indirect Costs – Negotiated Indirect Cost Rates Provisional & Final (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA4. Indirect Costs – Charged As A Fixed Amount (Nonprofit) (August 2024)
Determined at award		RAA5. Indirect Costs – De Minimis Rate (August 2024)
		RAA6. Reserved
		RAA7. Reporting Subawards and Executive Compensation (August 2024)
		RAA8. Subawards (August 2024)
		RAA9. Travel and International Air Transportation (December 2014)

<b>Required</b>	<b>Not Required</b>	<b>REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS Non-U.S. NGOs</b>
		RAA10. Ocean Shipment of Goods (June 2012)
		RAA11. Reporting Host Government Taxes (December 2022)
		RAA12. Patent Rights (December 2022)
		RAA13. Reserved
		RAA14. Investment Promotion (December 2022)
		RAA15. Cost Sharing (August 2024)
		RAA16. Program Income (August 2024)
		RAA17. Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences (June 2012)
		RAA18. Standards for Accessibility for the Disabled In USAID Assistance Awards Involving Construction (September 2004)
		RAA19. Protection of Human Research Subjects (June 2012)
		RAA20. Statement for Implementers of Anti-Trafficking Activities on Lack of Support for Prostitution (June 2012)
		RAA21. Eligibility of Subrecipients of Anti-Trafficking Funds (June 2012)
		RAA22. Prohibition on the Use of Anti-Trafficking Funds to Promote, Support, or Advocate for the Legalization or Practice of Prostitution (June 2012)
		RAA23. Voluntary Population Planning Activities – Supplemental Requirements (January 2009)
		RAA24. Conscience Clause Implementation (Assistance) (February 2012)
		RAA25. Condoms (Assistance) (September 2014)
		RAA26. Prohibition on the Promotion or Advocacy of the Legalization or Practice of Prostitution or Sex Trafficking (Assistance) (September 2014)
		RAA27. Limitation on Subawards to Non-Local Entities (July 2014)
		RAA28. Contract Provision for DBA Insurance Under Recipient Procurements (December 2022)
		RAA29. Reserved
		RAA30. Reserved
		RAA31. Never Contract with the Enemy (August 2024)