



USAID | KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Issue Date: March 14, 2019
Deadline for Questions: April 3, 2019 09:00 a.m. Almaty time
Application Due Date: May 13, 2019 09:00 a.m. Almaty time
Subject: Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: 72011519RFA00004
Program Title: USAID/Kyrgyz Republic Deepening Linkages in Civic Participation Activity

Dear Prospective Applicants:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications from qualified US and Non-U.S. organizations to fund a new Cooperative Agreement for the Deepening Linkages in Civic Participation Activity in the Kyrgyz Republic. Eligibility standards for this award are provided in Section C of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO).

USAID hereby requests applications, submitted in compliance with the instructions in Section D of this NFO. USAID will review applications, and, subject to the availability of funds, an award will be made to the responsible Applicant(s) whose application(s) best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity and the selection criteria contained herein. While one award is anticipated as a result of this NFO, USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

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

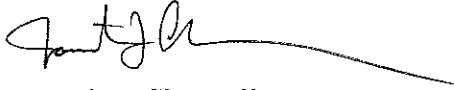
This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. Potential Applicants should regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity. Applicants will need to have available or download Adobe program to their computers in order to view and save the Adobe forms properly. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the entire NFO has been received from the internet in its entirety and USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the NFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

The successful Applicant will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives. Please read each section of the NFO thoroughly. Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section D. The deadline for questions is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential Applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to www.grants.gov.

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

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Chappell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jonathan Chappell
Agreement Officer

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SECTION A: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

Deepening Linkages in Civic Participation

Background and Context:

In comparison to its neighbors, the Kyrgyz Republic has an engaged and diverse civil society, including nearly 6,000 operational civil society organizations (CSO). The country is ranked as “partly free” in Freedom House’s *Freedom in the World* rankings, while its neighbors, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan are considered “not free”.¹ Indeed, the Kyrgyz Republic is still viewed as the most democratic country in Central Asia, in no small part due to the active role civil society plays.

According to the National Statistics Committee, as of May 1, 2018 there are 17,391 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the country, of which approximately 5,700 are operational.² In recent years there has been concern about the shrinking political space for CSOs in part because of the rhetoric of some in key leadership positions.³ Notably, in 2014, the draft *Law on Foreign Agents* was introduced, seeking to limit the influence of NGOs. Thanks to the strong advocacy efforts by civic organizations, the draft law was rejected in 2016. Perhaps in a vote of confidence in NGOs, the *Law on Social Procurement* was signed into law in 2017⁴ with technical assistance from the legal and non-governmental communities in the country. The law creates a stronger basis for collaboration between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (GoKR) and NGOs, and provides opportunities for NGOs to generate revenues and enhance their sustainability, which will ultimately improve the quality of social services provided to citizens. Building on these developments, President Jeenbekov’s *National Development Strategy 2018-2040* emphasizes the key role of civil society and highlights improving the “legislative framework and organizational mechanisms for the participation of civil society in decision-making processes”.⁵

Rule of law reform has been a government priority since 2012;⁶ however significant problems remain with the courts’ independence, corruption, and lack of access to justice.⁷ Recognizing these problems, President Jeenbekov has made judicial reform a priority, promising to

¹ Freedom House. (2018). *Freedom in the World 2018: Kyrgyzstan Profile*. Retrieved from: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/kyrgyzstan>

² The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law. (2018). *Civic Freedom Monitor: Kyrgyz Republic*. Retrieved from: <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/kyrgyz.html>

³ Freedom House. (2018). *Nations in Transit: Kyrgyzstan Country Profile*. Retrieved from: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/kyrgyzstan>

⁴ *Law of the Kyrgyz Republic: On State Social Order*. April 28, 2017. Retrieved from: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/111577>

⁵ Office of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. (2018). *National Development Strategy 2018-2040*. Page 55. Retrieved from: http://president.kg/ru/sobytiya/12774_utverghdena_nacionalnaya_strategiya_razvitiya_kirgizskoy_respubliki_na_2018_2040_godi

⁶ Office of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. (2012). *Presidential Order: Measures to Strengthen the Administration of Justice in the Kyrgyz Republic*. (August 8, 2012).

⁷ Human Rights Watch. (2018). *World Report Country Chapters: Kyrgyzstan*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/kyrgyzstan>.

investigate those who “sabotage” its progress.⁸ The GoKR amended the *Law on Guaranteed Legal Aid* in December 2016, the law governing free legal assistance provided through Free Legal Aid Centers throughout the country. However, questions remain about funding, the quality of the legal services they provide, and whether, in fact, the most vulnerable people are able to obtain the legal aid they need.

The GoKR has taken several steps to ensure equality and the protection of the rights of men and women. The *National Strategy on Gender Equality*, which was adopted in 2012,⁹ focuses on economic empowerment of women, eliminating gender discrimination, improving access to justice, and increasing women’s political participation. It also prioritizes countering several forms of gender based violence (GBV): forced marriage, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and trafficking in persons. As a follow up to the national strategy, in April 2017 the *Law to Prevent and Protect against Domestic Violence* was adopted.¹⁰ However, despite the legal framework promoting gender equality, there are many challenges that women face in Kyrgyz society. Underage marriage (under 18 years of age) makes up 24 percent of all marriages, according to UNDP.¹¹ Women’s participation in the highest levels of government has eroded: in 2015 women held 26 percent of seats in Parliament yet by 2017 it had fallen to 19 percent. For its part, civil society in the Kyrgyz Republic is actively promoting gender equality in the country by providing technical expertise, lobbying for national level policy change, and supporting and sustaining local grass roots activities to fight stigma and discrimination against women.

Problem Statement

Civic actors have seen some tangible results from their decades of engagement, including the recently passed legislation criminalizing domestic violence and the GoKR’s decision to join the Open Government Initiative. Despite these national-level achievements, USAID’s opinion data shows that average citizens distrust traditional civil society actors or at a minimum do not see them as a means to address their concerns. Between the periods 2006 to 2016, positive opinion of NGOs dropped from 48 percent to 35 percent.¹² The reliance of many CSOs on donors lends itself to a perception by local communities that organizations are more notable for their grant-writing capabilities than for their commitment to core values. The main national public interest

⁸ Kudryavtseva, Tatyana. (2018). ‘President of Kyrgyzstan Threatens with Dismissal for Sabotaging Judicial Reform’ *24.Kg*, October 18, 2018. Available at: https://24.kg/english/99196_President_of_Kyrgyzstan_threatens_with_dismissal_for_sabotaging_judicial_reform/ (January 24, 2019.)

⁹ *Resolution: About the National Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic on Achieving Gender Equality up to 2020 and the National Action Plan on Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic*. June 27, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/93343>

¹⁰ *Law of the Kyrgyz Republic: About Protection and Protection from Family Violence*. April 27, 2017. Retrieved from: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/111570>

¹¹ United Nations Development Program (2017). *Comparative Gender Profile of the Kyrgyz Republic 2017*. June 20, 2017. Retrieved from: http://www.kg.undp.org/content/kyrgyzstan/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/comparative-gender-profile-2017--kyrgyz-republic.html

¹² International Republican Institute (IRI). *IRI Poll Presentation*. (2016). Retrieved from: https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/public-iri_poll_presentation-kyrgyzstan_march_2016_eng.pdf

CSOs are concentrated in Bishkek, which makes them susceptible to being viewed as elitist or not understanding the “real” issues faced by local organizations or individuals at the community level. Perhaps because of this and pervasive negative impressions about CSOs’ motivation and ability to accomplish key tasks, Kyrgyz citizens have shied away from joining formal CSOs. This is particularly evident at the local level, where national actors are rarely visible and citizens are more likely to turn to friends, family, and community leaders than to formal civil society organizations to solve their problems. At the same time, civic participation does exist at the local level. In some cases, individuals not associated with formalized groups are entering the stage, driven by issues that affect them directly. Unlike their CSO counterparts, their engagement may be time-bound and limited to a specific issue. However, by working independently these two groups may miss opportunities to build stronger coalitions, pool resources and expertise, and build on previous citizen-government collaboration already underway in order to achieve common objectives.

USAID has supported civil society in the Kyrgyz Republic for more than a decade. The current USAID-funded activity, the Collaborative Governance Program (GGP), focuses on fostering effective collaboration between civil society, the private sector, and the GoKR. This activity has contributed to incremental changes that have led to a more responsible and accountable government, some limited improvements in the delivery of social services to citizens, and strengthened sustainability of civil society. At the same time, low levels of trust and a lack of enduring relationships between public officials and civil society hamper collaboration. Despite certain steps towards better collaboration, such as the introduction of Public Councils in 2014, implementation has been inconsistent and based on the appetite of individual ministries and/or state agencies for collaboration, not on a popular acknowledgement of the role of civil society in government oversight or policy formation.

In this environment, there are few meaningful avenues for genuine civic engagement, particularly at the local level. While the Kyrgyz Republic boasts liberal policies and few restrictions on freedom of assembly, press, or association, this open space has not always translated into effective entry points for organizations or individual advocates. This is in part due the limited number of models of successful partnership. At the same time, citizens overwhelmingly believe that they should be playing a larger role in government decision making,¹³ perhaps recognizing the importance of civic engagement in oversight and policy creation. The recently announced *National Development Strategy 2018-2040* may provide more opportunities for engagement and collaboration with and between civil society and decision-makers.

However civil society needs to be able to act on these opportunities when they arise. One challenge civil society groups face is insufficient capacity to take basic political or analytical information, assess it, and repackage it in a way that the public can understand and that demonstrates its relevance to their lives. Similarly, organizations have found it difficult to

¹³ In IRI’s poll from 2017 – 53% of respondents said citizens should play a larger role in governmental decision-making process. *Public Opinion Survey Residents of Kyrgyzstan – November 19-December 2, 2017*. The full survey is available here: http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2018-2-5_iri_poll_presentation_kyrgyzstan.pdf

identify and assess issues that have the largest impact on the daily lives of their constituents. This leaves a disconnect between those entities that seek to advocate for policy change and the people for whom they are advocating, which in turn weakens their credibility with and ability to influence the government.

Another challenge is insufficient cooperation across civil society. The recent USAID evaluation of Development Objective 1 found that CSOs “strengthened their abilities to advocate for themselves” when they united against the proposed “foreign agents bill” in Parliament in 2014-2016.¹⁴ However, such collaboration between and amongst CSOs is more the exception than the rule. Joint efforts, coordination, and mentorship between CSOs remain limited. This is a lost opportunity. Given the experience of many well-established CSOs, their expertise could be valuable to new entrants and joint efforts between local and national actors could help cement the legitimacy of national actors in the minds of local groups, and in turn, provide these civically-minded individuals with well-tested approaches to communication, influencing policy, resource mobilization, research, messaging, and collaboration. CSOs working in the field also continue to face challenges such as mission creep, lack of strategic planning skills and project design, weak knowledge of Kyrgyz legislation, and a lack of effective methods to collaborate with a diverse group of stakeholders on policy-specific goals.

Rule of law issues also create challenges for both citizens and civil society. Despite longstanding judicial reform efforts, citizens do not have confidence in the judiciary as a means of protecting rights under the law. This lack of trust is illustrated by the fact that one of the most common requests the Ombudsman Institute receives is to monitor court proceedings. The government recognizes these challenges; for example, the President has made the introduction of video and audio recordings of court proceedings a priority in judicial reform efforts.¹⁵ Independent human rights reporting illustrates that average citizens often have little recourse in the event that their rights are violated.¹⁶ Rights issues also pertain to access to government services. Often citizens do not have sufficient knowledge about the services to which they are entitled.

At times, civil society has been divided between those focused on more sensitive political and civil rights and a larger group that works on various social issues. Linking those two camps for deeper impact may hinge on developing a right-based advocacy approach that encompasses the rights of all people, improves public understanding of rights and the rule of law, and provides citizens with courses of action when rights are denied or abused. In the Kyrgyz Republic, rights

¹⁴ United States Agency for International Development. *USAID/Kyrgyz Republic CDCS DO 1 Performance Evaluation*, July 2018. Page 14. Available on: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00TFNH.pdf

¹⁵ Kudryavtseva, Tatyana. (2018). ‘President of Kyrgyzstan Threatens with Dismissal for Sabotaging Judicial Reform’ *24.Kg*, October 18, 2018. Available at: https://24.kg/english/99196_President_of_Kyrgyzstan_threatens_with_dismissal_for_sabotaging_judicial_reform/

¹⁶ Human Rights Watch. ‘We Live in Constant Fear: Possession of Extremist Material in Kyrgyzstan’. September 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/17/we-live-constant-fear/possession-extremist-material-kyrgyzstan>; “Call Me When He Tries to Kill You: State Response to Domestic Violence in Kyrgyzstan,” Human Rights Watch. October 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/10/28/call-me-when-he-tries-kill-you/state-response-domestic-violence-kyrgyzstan>.

advocacy has seen traction around certain issues, including combatting domestic violence and child marriage. Legislative action in recent years paved the way for improvements in these areas, but effective implementation of these laws will require ongoing advocacy and monitoring and strong collaboration with the government to address implementation challenges.

Despite advancements in legislation, there are notable gender disparities in key social, economic, and political indicators in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Kyrgyz Republic ranks 122/188 countries on the UNDP's *Gender Inequality Index* due to child, early, and forced marriage (and as a result, high adolescent birth rates), low participation of women in politics at all levels of government, and low participation in the formal economic sector.¹⁷ While laws and strategies on gender equality adopted by the national Government show political will for these issues, there is a significant gap between these policies and their implementation at the local level. The space for public discussion about the roles of men and women in Kyrgyz society is growing more restricted, especially in some rural areas. In some communities, it is becoming increasingly difficult for women to participate in political and economic decision making about development in their communities and in the country.

Perhaps surprisingly, civil society in the country is mostly dominated by women.¹⁸ At the same time, their participation has been overwhelmingly in areas that disproportionately affect more women than men (such as around domestic violence). All organizations, both male- and female-led, could benefit from learning how to adjust approaches to target key audiences and decision makers, and expanding their approaches so as not to limit their work to one gender or another. One place to start is looking internally at organizations and their institutional capacity to support new members, approaches, and a diversity of experiences in order to broaden their appeal and effectiveness in reaching their target audiences.

Civil society development is a complex development task and while donor-supported capacity building of formal organizations is a well-tested approach, it has had some unintended side effects that may inhibit the flourishing of civil society in the longer term. In some cases, the challenges faced by civil society can be linked to the rigidity of the donor system within which they operate. Approaches are usually pre-determined and based on donor priorities and goals and there are few opportunities for approaches that allow for bottom-up priority setting and adaptation as the situation develops on the ground. In reality, it is difficult to know what interventions will build a strong connection between civil society organizations and their constituents and the culture of listening and learning is not as strong as it could be among CSOs and their donors. While feedback loops and opportunities for evaluation and reflection are necessary, few genuine incentives exist within civil society for embedding a culture of iteration and learning that could help activists refine approaches and achieve their goals.

¹⁷ United Nations Development Programme. (2018). *Summary: Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update*. Retrieved from:

http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_summary_human_development_statistical_update_en.pdf

¹⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Public Administration – Kyrgyzstan Case Study*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Women-s%20Empowerment/KyrgyzstanFinal%20-%20HiRes.pdf>

Theory of Change

USAID's theory of change for this proposed activity is as follows:

If credible local actors are empowered to address issues of public concern in their communities, including by collaborating with government and a diverse group of stakeholders to address barriers that enable challenges to persist, *then* a broader group of citizens will see the value of civic engagement, will be encouraged to participate in local decision-making, and communities will be better able to take action to address issues of public concern.

If CSOs build networks with these actors and strengthen horizontal linkages to others working on similar issues, and in turn, adapt their national agendas and strategies to reflect local concerns and efforts already underway at the local level, *then* they will be seen as more responsive, their advocacy with government will be more effective, and government decision-making and policy will better represent broad public interests.

If more local actors and CSOs adopt a rights-based advocacy approach to educating citizens on their legal rights and entitlements under Kyrgyz law and how to use legal mechanisms to seek remedies when those rights are denied, *then* public expectation of and demand for rule of law will increase.

Proposed Approach

The overall purpose of this activity is to enable horizontal and vertical networks of individuals and organizations to advocate for and bring about change across issues that resonate with local communities and increase government responsiveness and accountability in the Kyrgyz Republic.

USAID proposes to promote joint action by a range of actors, organizations, institutions, and groups on a limited number of focused issues. An important measure of impact is whether the activity can strengthen linkages and collaboration between civil society groups and between government and non-government actors. Linkages may be formal or informal and can fall under one of two categories:

- Vertical linkages – linkages between those working in civic organizing (such as individuals, communities, organizations, and groups) and representatives of government and other actors who are able to influence the actions of local or national leaders and decision-makers.
- Horizontal linkages – non-governmental organizations and individuals working effectively together either in formal networks or informal coalitions between and within the grassroots/local level and the national level.

USAID has seen tangible results from its previous efforts supporting civil society strengthening, local government outreach, and human rights protection. This activity would build on previous efforts, looking where opportunities exist to engage stakeholders on specific issue areas at the local and national level. The activity should not seek to support every issue-based advocacy effort but concentrate its efforts on six to eight priority issues that resonate most deeply with

target communities and where genuine progress could be made. Interventions could support additional knowledge or expertise on particular issues through support for research, knowledge sharing, or joint evaluations or assessments that could then be used by advocates to address issues from positions of knowledge and expertise.

The activity should look to support and amplify the voices and efforts of individuals who may not be formally associated with organizations but who demonstrate a commitment to core issues, have credibility within their community, show a willingness to engage further in their area of interest, and see the value in developing their skills and networks around their priority issues. The proposed intervention should look to support individual champions as well as organizations focused around emerging social movements and civic initiatives, understanding that voices are needed to propel, motivate, and move stakeholders and the public into action. Social mobilizers engaged do not have to fit a single mold of civic participation and the project should look outside of the traditional advocacy model to include diverse actors who are motivated to advocate for broad public interests in their communities. Developing new organizations should not be a goal of the project but rather providing opportunities for individuals and entities to participate in ways that they prioritize. The project should pay special attention to increasing the voice of women in the community by developing safe spaces for women to express their opinions and priorities; helping advocates to develop locally-appropriate advocacy strategies; and supporting their role as champions in their communities on priority issues. In so doing, this activity will increase the number of people involved in decision making and demonstrate that civic participation can be a positive and productive approach to improving communities.

A key development aim for this activity is to encourage collaborative efforts between government and non-government actors (i.e. vertical linkages) around issues of broad public concern. These vertical networks should draw in a diverse group of stakeholders in order to address issues that most affect the lives of individuals. Interventions will be grounded in the local context and should result in joint action by a range of organizations and entities that look to involve and include various power players including representatives from government, business, academic, religious, social or cultural fields. Collaboration could include joint forums or briefings, coalition education campaigns, public hearings, or other efforts. As part of this approach, interventions may include the use of advisory committees for specific issues or covering geographic regions in order to underpin all efforts with collaboration. A key feature of this approach is to empower those who already have a stake in the issues being addressed. Horizontal networks are also key to the objectives of this activity. Civil society has seen some strong accomplishments and this initiative would “tap into” the expertise and success of national actors in order to develop the skills of newer entrants. In so doing, this activity would assist more established CSOs to connect with individuals at the local level, and thereby increase their resonance with individuals who are directly affected by the issues these organizations address. By linking actors they will be able to form more effective alliances and learn from each other. In order to support leading Kyrgyz actors working on rule of law initiatives, this activity will prioritize advocacy efforts that assist citizens to better understand and claim those rights that are important to them. The range of possible rights to focus on can be broad and should be demand-driven. The activity will also support both government and non-government actors addressing systematic rights abuses involving the criminal justice system, including torture, illegal imprisonment, and extortion. The intervention should help defend space for rights-based work,

including supporting those champions who may be working on behalf of individuals or organizations not able to defend themselves. Any interventions should be in accordance with Kyrgyz law and should seek to protect people, their rights, and liberties.

Proposed Gender Approach

The Kyrgyz Republic is a diverse country where support for gender equality and female empowerment varies widely. Overall, opportunities to promote gender equality and female empowerment, prevent and respond to gender based violence, and promote social inclusion of vulnerable groups (boys and girls, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities) will have to be developed based on a good understanding of local context. A detailed social and gender analysis must be done in the first six months of the activity to identify specific opportunities and gender gaps in each region in which the project is implemented that may limit men's or women's participation in CSO activities (please see USAID ADS 205 for guidance for a gender analysis). The gender analysis will identify priority gender gaps that must be addressed through specific activities to reduce gender inequality and/or build on local opportunities to promote gender equality in decision making processes. Activities may differ from region to region and even within regions and may need to be designed to accommodate the gender barriers men and women face in local contexts. For example, if in some communities men and women can only participate in public hearings in different spaces, then interventions to accommodate this gender norm must be designed to ensure that men and women have opportunities to make their priorities heard. Applicants must describe in their applications the methodology they will use to conduct this analysis. Regardless of the gender gaps identified, the selected implementing partner must implement strategies to increase women's meaningful inclusion in: 1) discussions related to identifying local concerns and common goals; 2) decision-making about how these common goals are reached; and 3) understanding national laws that protect their rights and demand for rule of law.

Activity Purpose: Enable horizontal and vertical networks of individuals and organizations to advocate for and bring about change across issues that resonate with local communities and increase government responsiveness and accountability in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Sub-Purpose 1: Improved collaboration between civic, government, and private sector actors to address issues of local concern including linkages between diverse actors with common goals

Underlying this activity is an understanding that strengthening accountability between citizens and government involves a complex set of inter-linkages between actors in which collaboration is necessary to facilitate collective action. The activity would build on the efforts of the USAID Collaborative Governance Program in the Kyrgyz Republic (CGP) to facilitate multi-stakeholder approaches to policy change around issues of collective concern that reflect local needs and include local voices. At the same time, it would also go beyond the scope of CGP by empowering new entrants involved in civic participation, including more informal, grassroots organizations advocating on behalf of communities or other constituency-focused needs. In looking at collaborative efforts, the implementer must prioritize issues that have traction in the local communities and weigh both the impact of the issues and its support base in identifying the six to eight issues it would prioritize over the life of the project. This activity is intended to build

models and demand for collaboration, built on the successes of previous efforts. Incentives for these groups must be based on their interest in the issue, not financial advancement.

Illustrative Expected Results:

- ER 1.1: Vertical networks established or nurtured among a variety of actors around thematic issues
- ER 1.2: Increased collaborative advocacy efforts including a cross-section of actors involved in key issues.
- ER 1.3: Government decision-making and policy better represents public interests

Illustrative Interventions (may include but are not limited to):

- Collaborative groups coordinate on joint fact-finding initiatives and/or public forums around key issues
- Joint policy recommendations or proposals on key issues of concern developed and presented to the public and/or key stakeholders
- Local and national non-governmental organizations, private actors, and government entities develop systems to implement or track government policies covering topics of local concern
- Building communication skills for leading public discourse in local communities

Sub-Purpose 2: Increased networks' access to financial, human, and intellectual assets

In working with both formal CSOs and informal local civic actors, including new entrants, USAID aims to tap into the expertise and organizational capacity of the former, while creating space and providing resources to informal and more local voices who are seeking solutions to the problems facing their communities. Creating linkages between these two groups will help ensure that rights and advocacy agendas better reflect local needs and are expressed in terms that make sense at the local level. These linkages must provide a mutually beneficial exchange: established CSOs will be able to increase the effectiveness of local actors by lending their expertise and providing larger platforms to convey their priorities, while these CSOs will increase their legitimacy and dynamism by bringing in new voices with credibility in local communities. The activity would also continue USAID support for established, formal CSOs whose policy and technical expertise, organizational capacity, and experience collaborating with the GoKR and Parliament will be needed to make progress against issues of collective concern at the national level. The agenda for this part of the activity must be informed by the local priorities defined by informal actors, but USAID also anticipates working with these established CSOs to advance certain national-level policy initiatives. The activity will help local civic actors use community philanthropy to tap local resources in support of identified priorities.

Illustrative Expected Results:

- ER 2.1: Developed network and alliance building with actors who have common interests and objectives
- ER 2.2: Strengthened core skills and knowledge for social and civic organizing
- ER 2.3: Improved ability for actors to identify resources needed in order to strengthen campaigns

- ER 2.4: Improved national and local level advocacy efforts through targeted financial assistance
- ER 2.5: Supported CSOs gain legitimacy in the eyes of their stakeholders

Illustrative Interventions (may include but are not limited to):

- Training for civic actors, mobilizers, and organizations on core skills such as advocacy, communication, public speaking, policy analysis, research, media skills, mediation and negotiation, fundraising, leadership, etc.
- Create national or regional informal networks of organizations working on similar issues to share strategies, approaches, and lessons learned
- In-kind assistance to social mobilizers for time-bound needs
- Promote the adoption of community philanthropy by civic actors

Sub-Purpose 3: Applied ongoing learning and adaptation for more effective civic participation that resonates with people, particularly at the local level

While USAID/KR has seen strong results from its work in the Kyrgyz Republic, it recognizes that in order for this activity to achieve its goals, it will need to remain flexible as it pilots new approaches to support civic engagement, especially by individuals who may not be associated with formal networks or organizations. This activity will be a learning initiative that will draw on best practices from other USAID activities, include mechanisms that allow for adaptation and adjustment of interventions throughout the activity’s implementation, and track longer-term outcomes of apparently successful pilot activities. It is expected that the activity would be launched with a “listening tour” or similar assessment (such as a political economy analysis) to better inform USAID and the implementer on key issues to address throughout the life of the activity. During the assessment and throughout implementation, the implementer will need to have mechanism(s) to determine the popular resonance of the identified priorities and planned interventions. A central element of the activity must be planning for learning to feed into decision making in order to more effectively achieve the activity’s objectives. This requires the intentional incorporation of feedback loops and the establishment of incentives for the implementer and its partners that foster a culture and practice of iteration and learning. Partners should be incentivized to develop, pilot, and learn from complexity-aware theories of change and to create forums for sharing and learning from best practices, develop politically informed strategies for effective advocacy, and pro-actively reach out to government, legislative, and other stakeholders for issue-based events.

Illustrative Expected Results:

- ER 3.1: Established processes for iterative learning about civic participation
- ER 3.2: Promoted new voices in civic participation
- ER 3.3: Fostered mentorship and partnership between civic actors and civil society organizations working toward common goals
- ER 3.4: Citizens see increased value in engaging on issues of concern

Illustrative Interventions (may include but not be limited to):

- Listening tours or similar activities that identify key issues of concern at community and regional levels in target regions

- Assembling key stakeholders under advisory committee framework to assess progress and approach of intervention
- Semi-annual evaluation and impact assessments conducted by the implementer with the goal of assessing progress and relevance of proposed interventions.
- Establishing links between up-and-coming activists and mobilizers with individuals and entities with best practices for civic engagement to share approaches, etc.

Sub-Purpose 4: Strengthen citizens’ understanding of their rights and increase demand for rule of law

The new activity will also reflect a shift in USAID Kyrgyz Republic’s human rights approach to enable local actors to seek solutions to their priority concerns using a rights-based approach. The activity will emphasize legal empowerment to help citizens know their rights as well as government’s legal duties, including which mechanisms to access when those rights are denied. At the same time, the approach will also emphasize practical – and often collaborative – problem-solving, especially at the local or subnational level, including working with government actors on key human rights priorities. It will focus on a range of rights issues, including traditional civil and political rights, while also engaging on economic, social, and cultural issues that have broad resonance such as health, education, and land.

Illustrative Expected Results:

- ER 4.1: Citizens utilize a range of methods and mechanisms for claiming their rights
- ER 4.2: Increased capacity of government and non-government legal service providers to supports rights empowerment
- ER 4.3: Increased assistance to citizens to access legal remedies where rights have been denied

Illustrative Interventions (may include but are not limited to):

- Assistance for legal aid providers who support citizens claiming their rights
- Educate and inform key populations about their rights and mechanisms they can use to protect them
- Training and technical assistance for government and non-government legal service providers

Key Programmatic Considerations

The following considerations must be taken into account when implementing the activity.

A. Building on USAID and USG investments and experience

USAID has been promoting democracy in the Kyrgyz Republic since the early 1990’s. Significant investments have been made towards building the capacity of civil society actors, government institutions, media outlets, and change agents which can be tapped to support civic participation. Activities must foster direct links, where relevant, with the following USAID programs: Collaborative Governance Program (CGP), Community and Municipal Governance Activity (CAMI), Cultivating Media Independence Initiative Activity (Media K), and Enhancing Employability and Civic Education of Youth in the Kyrgyz Republic. Specifically:
Collaborative Governance Program (CGP)

The CGP implemented by East-West Institute fosters partnerships between civil society and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to improve policies and deliver services through a more responsive and accountable government and a credible, sustainable civil society. The program facilitates the transparent, efficient funding of civil society organizations by providing technical assistance to government bodies in their implementation of the Law on social procurement. It also supports university-level non-profit management courses, adult education opportunities, and organizational development for civil society organizations. Part of its approach is in providing targeted sub-grants in support of citizen engagement, civil society input into public policy, and national networks for policy advocacy. The activity also seeks to increase access to justice for the most vulnerable populations, including by assisting the Ministry of Justice to open free legal clinics and improve the management of existing clinics.

Community and Municipal Governance Initiative (CAMI)

The CAMI activity, implemented by Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI), supports the development of a national-level decentralization policy, and improve ability of local government bodies (at the regional, municipal, and/or village levels) to deliver more efficient and inclusive services through capacity building and professionalization of local government officials in core management skills, promote peer-learning and collaboration with civil society and private sector actors, improve access to key government services (in all sectors), strengthen local procurement, increase citizen input into local-level decision-making, and improve the alignment of administrative and budget devolution to benefit local government. The project aims to increase capacity of local government actors to govern well, improve local-level responsiveness to community needs, and promote more effective representation of these needs to national-level bodies.

Cultivating Media Independence Initiative Activity (Media-K)

Media-K implemented by Internews and FHI 360, is a three-year project launch in October 2017 to build the capacity and professionalism of media in the Kyrgyz Republic to increase access to diverse and balanced information. The project aims to strengthen the professionalism and independence of media in the Kyrgyz Republic through support to media organizations to better identify and exploit opportunities to increase advertising revenues, stimulating the market for domestic production and engaging content that responds to the preferences of viewers, widen audiences and increase advertising revenues.

Enhancing Employability and Civic Engagement of Youth in the Kyrgyz Republic

This activity, implemented by Mountains Societies Development Support Program (MSDSP), provides young people, ages 14-28, with opportunities to develop life and professional skills to enable them to more actively participate in the civic and economic sphere of society and contribute to the development of their communities. The activity will result in more active and positive youth participation in civic, social and economic life, increased leadership opportunities for youth in public life, and a stronger sense of civic responsibility among targeted youth. Activities may include, but will not be limited to, creating economic, civic engagement and leadership opportunities for youth in targeted regions. Activities will also include support for school parliaments, youth-led community development initiatives, entrepreneurship training, and advocacy for improved national policies related to youth.

USAID may also launch other new activities during the lifetime of this activity that will be relevant. Other donor programs operating in KR that focus on youth must also be taken into consideration while implementing activities.

Interagency

This activity will build upon and complement interagency activities focused on support for civic participation in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Recipient will closely coordinate its activities with the U.S. Embassy's Democracy Commission Small Grants Program.

B. Consistency with USG and USAID Policies and Programs

Activities must be founded on a sound theory of change based on empirical data and analysis of the situation in the Kyrgyz Republic. Activities must be based on strong analysis and not favor (or give the appearance of favoring) a particular region or population group or individual groups/clans/families or other distinct identity groups over others. USAID's overall goal in the Deepening Linkages in Civic Participation Program is to effectively support and consolidate inclusive and accountable democracy in the Kyrgyz Republic that advances freedom, dignity and development. To ensure that USAID funds do not inadvertently support civic advocacy in the Kyrgyz Republic that undermines or conflicts with USG and USAID programs and policies on, by way of example and not limitation, human rights and economic growth, The applicant must build safeguards into its implementation mechanism that will ensure that its award and any subawards do not support or promote policy themes that undermine or conflict with USG and USAID programs and policies.

C. Geographic Focus

Activities must reflect a geographic balance. The Recipient will select a mix of targeted communities, with representation of rural and urban sites, northern and southern communities, and a mix of multi-ethnic and mono-ethnic communities, in consultation with USAID. In the interests of creating synergies with USAID and other donor or GoKR activities, the recipient must also consider where other relevant activities are currently underway. Final identification of geographic locations should be presented following an initial assessment and review of key issues, local capacity, and needs assessment.

Implementing Principles and Guidelines

The following program elements must be addressed in the activity:

D. Adaptive Management

Collaborative learning and adaptive management will be key to the success of the activity given its dynamic approach to working with new entrants, building collaboration, and strengthening skills of activists.¹⁹ Adaptive management refers to making adjustments in intervention tactics or

¹⁹ For more information on USAID's Collaboration, Learning, and Adaptation methodology and best practices, please visit: <http://usaidlearninglab.org/cla-toolkit>. See also USAID's Discussion Note on Complexity-Aware Monitoring, which is available at <https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/complexity-aware-monitoring-discussion-note-brief>.

design based on iterative learning. As such, establishing implementation decision points will be necessary during the life of the activity. The Recipient must plan for complexity²⁰ in the casual pathways between interventions and outcomes, as well as external factors and the perspectives of other actors that might affect outcomes. While this activity may test a variety of approaches, to ensure results, it will need to learn from its experimentation and quickly hone in on those that are getting results, discard those that are not, and adapt approaches where indicated. Such an approach will also require flexible monitoring systems.

The Recipient will have a small number of learning objectives that are limited in scope and specifically designed to address important gaps in existing knowledge. The recipient must also outline points in time during the activity lifecycle to reflect on impact and what has been learned through implementation. At these “points” the Recipient will use a set of considerations or questions that will be raised to evaluate the activity’s progress in meeting its results, and how those consideration or questions will be assessed. This exercise is intended to be more robust than an evaluation of performance indicators and could include a diverse group of stakeholders and could be conducted at national or local level.

E. Creating Non-financial Incentives/Limited Direct Financial Support:

To support collaboration between actors who have a stake in the issues being addressed and are genuinely interested in its resolution, this activity will provide targeted financial support. However, traditional grants must be given sparingly and most likely to entities that can provide technical assistance to new advocates or civic movements to improve their effectiveness and approach to advocacy and community organizing. Rather, this activity must promote and rely on non-financial incentives for collaboration and civic participation. It will facilitate work that is already being undertaken by stakeholders by providing spaces for engagement, information and organizational development, and technical assistance. The incentives that bring individuals and groups from the civil, government, business, and other sectors must be their shared goals.

F. Gender Considerations

USAID’s Automated Directive System (ADS) states: “Gender issues are central to the achievement of strategic plans and Assistance Objectives (AO), and USAID strives to promote gender equality, in which both men and women have equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to economic, social, cultural and political development; enjoy socially valued resources and rewards; and realize their human rights.” (ADS 201.3.9.3).

Considering a gender perspective is required to ensure that the potential impact of the project on females and males are understood and addressed . Interventions must aim to empower women and girls to help them overcome any barriers or negative social trends such as those cited above that prevent them from realizing their potential, whether in the educational, professional, or

²⁰ Complexity aware monitoring is a type of complementary monitoring used when results are difficult to predict due to dynamic contexts or unclear cause-and-effect relationships. For more information on complexity aware monitoring, see USAID’s Discussion Note on Complexity-Aware Monitoring, which is available at <https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/complexity-aware-monitoring-discussion-note-brief>.

social spheres. Simply stating that the project will ensure X% of women/girls are included in all project activities does not constitute empowerment. The Recipient must be familiar with USAID's definition of female empowerment and implement activities that measurably empower women and girls.

For more guidance on gender analysis and integration, please see the following references:

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACT200.pdf

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Youth_in_Development_Policy_0.pdf

<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/205.pdf>

[END OF SECTION A]

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

Subject to funding availability, USAID intends to provide up to \$14,000,000 in total USAID funding over a five year period. The ceiling for this program is \$14,000,000. Actual funding amounts are subject to availability of funds.

USAID intends to award one Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity.

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

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The period of performance anticipated herein is five years. The estimated start date will be determined at the time of the award.

3. Substantial Involvement

a. Approval of the Recipient's Annual Work Plans: The initial draft Work Plan and subsequent work plans must be submitted to and approved by the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) per the description of work plans in "Reporting Requirements."

b. Approval of Specified Key Personnel: Key personnel as designated in the Section "Key Personnel" must be submitted to USAID for approval.

c. Agency and Recipient Collaboration as follows:

i. Approval of subawards:

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.308(c)(6), prior approval from the Agreement Officer is required for the sub-award, transfer, or contracting-out of any work hereunder, (other than the purchase of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services), unless, it was described in the Recipient's application and funded in the approved budget of the award. In seeking approval, the Recipient must, at a minimum, identify the subrecipient, the amount, and the purpose of the subaward in accordance with 2 CFR 200. Included in the purpose of the subaward must be any description of key issues and/or efforts undertaken by the subawardee, a clear outline of how the subaward will achieve the purpose of the project, and include any specific policy outcomes targeted. In addition, please note the additional requirements of ADS 303.3.21.a "Subawards to PIOs and Partner Government Entities" will apply to this award.

ii. Approval of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MELP):

The initial draft Activity MEL Plan (also referred to as a MELP or AMELP) and subsequent updates to the MEL Plan must be submitted to and approved by the Agreement Officer's Representative. A description of the MEL Plan is found the section "Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning."

iii. USAID monitoring to permit direction and redirection because of interrelationships with other projects. This would include agency and recipient collaboration or joint participation as the implementer assesses impact and results of activities.

d. Halt Construction: The AO may immediately halt a construction activity if identified specifications are not met. In addition, please note that per standard provision “Limiting Construction Activities (August 2013)” Construction is not eligible for reimbursement under this award.

4. Title to Property

Property title under the resultant agreement vest with the Recipient in accordance with the Requirements of the Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations.

5. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for this program is Code 937 (the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source) and 110 (the United States, the independent states of the former Soviet Union, or a developing country, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source).

6. Purpose of the Award

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the “Deepening Linkages in Civic Participation Activity” which is authorized by Federal statute.

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

[END OF SECTION B]

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Qualified U.S. and non-US organizations and Public International Organizations (PIO) may participate under this NFO.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

N/A

[END OF SECTION C]

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

Primary: Ms. Natalya Virt
Acquisition and Assistance Specialist

Secondary: Mr. Brian LeCuyer
Agreement Officer

Address: USAID/Central Asia
41 Kazibek Bi Street
050010 Almaty, Kazakhstan

Email: AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov

Questions and Answers:

All questions regarding this NFO must be submitted in writing to AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov no later than the date and time specified on the cover letter of this NFO, to provide sufficient time to address the questions and incorporate the questions and answers as an amendment to this notice of funding opportunity.

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

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Applicants are expected to review, understand and comply with all aspects of the NFO. Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions below.

Electronic. Application and modifications thereof must be submitted in two separate volumes (electronically): (a) technical and (b) cost applications. Email submission must include the following in the subject line:

- a. “Technical application under #72011519RFA00004, submitted by: [name of Applicant organization]. Part X of X”
- b. “Cost application under #72011519RFA00004, submitted by: [name of Applicant organization]. Part X of X”

If your technical or cost application is being sent in more than one email, please highlight the desired sequence of multiple emails. For example, if an Applicant is sending three emails with cost information, include “Part 1 of 3” on the first cost application email submitted.

Our preference is that the technical application and the cost application be submitted as single email attachments, e.g. that you consolidate the various parts of a technical application into a single document before sending them. If this is not possible, please provide instructions on how to collate the attachments. USAID will not be responsible for errors in compiling electronic applications if no instructions are provided or are unclear.

3. Preparation of Applications:

Each Applicant must furnish the information required by this NFO.

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

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

“This application includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the U.S. Government and shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, a grant is awarded to this Applicant as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting grant. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government's right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets {insert sheet numbers} and, mark each sheet of data it wished to restrict with the following legend:

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

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

4. Application Submission Procedures

Each submission must be emailed to AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov.

Fax: Faxed applications will not be accepted.

All applications received by the submission deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the NFO and the application format. No additions or modifications will be accepted after the submission date. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of the NFO.

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

5. Technical Application Format

The technical application will be the most important factor for consideration in selection for award of the proposed Cooperative Agreement. The technical application must 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 must take into account the requirements of the program and evaluation criteria found in this NFO.

The technical application must be in English and submitted in a Microsoft work (.docx) format. The technical applications must not exceed 20 pages, utilizing Times New Roman 12-font size, single spaced, types in standard 8 ½ x 11 on letter size paper with one-inch margins both right and left, and each page numbered consecutively. Cover letter, dividers, table of contents, and annexes will not count toward the page limit. Any pages that exceed the page limitations will not be furnished to the Selection Committee.

The technical application must include the following sections:

a. Cover Page (not included in the 20-page limit)

The Cover Page must include the following:

- A. Program title
- B. Request for Applications reference number
- C. Name of organization(s) applying for the agreement
- D. Any partnerships
- E. Contact person, telephone number, email address, address, and name(s) and title(s) of person(s) who prepared the application, and corresponding signatures
- F. DUNS number of the Applicant

b. Table of Contents (not included in the 20-page limit)

The Table of Contents must list all parts of the technical application, with page numbers and attachments/annexes.

c. Executive Summary (included in the 20-page limit; not to exceed 2 pages)

Provide a concise summary of the Applicant's program description, program methodology and expected results.

d. Technical Approach (included in the 20-page limit)

In this section, the Applicant is not to merely repeat what is already described in the NFO. The Applicant must focus on describing the program that the Applicant will implement and how it proposes to achieve its expected results and make a significant contribution toward achieving the activity purpose and sub-purposes as identified in USAID's activity Funding Opportunity Description (FOD). The Applicant is expected to demonstrate an approach reflecting the guiding principles outlined in the activity FOD, which are central to achieving the purpose and sub-purposes, and must be well described throughout the application. The Applicant must discuss the specific challenges to be addressed, the general strategy and plan to achieve the purpose and sub-purposes, and expected results to be achieved. The FOD provides illustrative expected results but the Applicant is encouraged to develop its own results that reflect the interventions outlined in its approach and that it believes are best suited to achieving the activity purpose. Expected results must be concrete and measurable and within the scope and parameters of the activity.

The FOD set forth in this NFO describes a range of issues that must be addressed in the technical approach. It is not meant to describe all of the issues related to civic engagement and strengthening civil society in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Applicant must describe in its technical application the key challenges to civic engagement around governance, including supporting horizontal and vertical linkages in order to strengthen the impact and effectiveness of civil society with an emphasis on broadening the scope of actors involved. Applicants are encouraged to raise and justify other technical issues that may or may not be raised in the program description but are nevertheless related to achieving the overall objectives.

The approach must include a clear vision and comprehensive strategy, as well as feasibility and sustainability in achieving all the project objectives identified in this NFO, including an understanding of effective strategies in the operational context as it relates to the civil society sector, civic engagement in governance and working on rights-based activities in the Kyrgyz Republic. This must exhibit the Applicant's familiarity with the operational context. Applicants are required to ensure sustainability of interventions is incorporated throughout the Activity, including but not limited to building capacity of organizations and entities seeking to become involved in the decision-making process and continued collaboration of key stakeholders around shared goals.

The Applicant must articulate how programming interventions will adapt to a dynamic and rapidly evolving environment and which learning processes are appropriate to adapt to ensure the most effective approach over time and ensure continued progress toward anticipated results. Proposed approaches must reflect a systematic strategy and continuous process for institutional learning and change, which incorporates lessons learned and best practices as well as emergent opportunities throughout the program. This includes analysis, planning, implementation, assessment, and measurement that are reflected in collaboration, learning, and adaptation practices by the Applicant and its partners to ensure these practices are not only ingrained in the activity but sustained beyond the life of the program cycle.

The approach must:

- Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the programming context
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the role and responsibilities of key local and national stakeholders, including government, non-governmental entities, private sector, and educational entities. This should include how the Applicant will engage these actors and foster partnerships with and between these entities.
- Demonstrate an understanding of non-monetary incentives for collaboration and action
- Outline key rights-based advocacy approaches relevant in the Kyrgyz Republic including challenges and needs of those working in the field of rights advocacy.
- Articulate the proposed approach to achieving results under each of the program's four objectives
- Outline a clear iterative learning approach that is integrated into the program design, implementation, and evaluation.

Gender Equality and Female Inclusion

The FOD outlines some of the key issues and considerations for gender equality and inclusion under this activity. While civil society in the Kyrgyz Republic boasts strong gender diversification, it has not translated into meaningful and consistent participation of women in the decision making process. The Applicant must ensure that its approach reflects key issues that disproportionately affect women and prevent them from further engaging as equal and participatory members of their communities. In addition, the approach must also address functional issues within civil society and civic engagement that prevent the full participation of women in the decision making process.

Part of this approach must consider how to ensure that female-dominated organizations are not marginalized as well as ensuring that these organizations are able to diversify themselves and draw more voices and perspectives into their organizations, as a longer-term strategy to assist with sustainability.

Interventions implemented by the Recipient must be responsive to gender considerations, and seek to ensure that the assistance provided and the results achieved are beneficial to both genders. As appropriate, impact and indicators must be disaggregated by gender. None of the interventions must inhibit the active participation of either men or women. Men and women must be treated as equal partners in their roles as partners of USAID.

The Applicant must conduct a gender analysis as part of its initial assessment and/or listening activities at the beginning of the project.

e. Management Structure and Staffing Plan (included in the 20-page limit)

The Applicant must propose a staffing/organizational structure that demonstrates effective means for managing program resources and working with local partners and organizations under the major objectives of this program.

This section must address at a minimum the following:

- Composition and organizational structure of the proposed team (including an organizational diagram for the program as an annex) and a description of each long/short-term key or non-key team member's role, technical expertise, and estimated amount of time to be devoted to the activity. This should include any proposed institutional partners (subawardees or other arrangements) along with their expertise and relevance to the program including roles and responsibilities.
- Identify positions (up to three) that will be filled by key personnel. For each key personnel position, briefly highlight why the roles and responsibilities justify the position being designated as "key".
- Effective management systems and procedures for personnel, contractors, commodities, training, and information technology solutions. If subawardees are proposed, a demonstrated ability to issue, manage, and monitor subawards and subaward activities.
- A proposed plan for an effective start-up and timely launch of activities, minimally including a demonstrated ability or understanding of: organizational and project registration procedures in the Kyrgyz Republic; recruitment and hiring of non-key personnel.
- Ways in which the structure will ensure effectiveness and efficiency in order to achieve maximum benefits and results at minimum cost.
- Any home office support that will be included and at what level.
USAID neither requests nor desires exclusivity agreements between the Applicant and any proposed subawardee.

Annexes:

The draft plan must provide an overview of the MEL approach in the technical application. This narrative must include the following: a planned staffing structure and resource allocation for the MEL; how data collection, analysis, and reporting of performance data will be managed under the project; how data quality assessments will be undertaken; how gender analysis will be incorporated into the MEL methodology; and how data will be shared and used to inform programming. In addition, given the dynamic nature of the activity and the CLA approach, the MEL outline must also include how the MEL will contribute to the CLA approach.

a. Organigram (up to 2 pages; not included in the 20 page limit)

An organigram must be provided as an annex to support the manage structure and staffing plan narrative.

b. Job Descriptions for Key Personnel (up to 6 pages; not included in the 20 page limit)

Job descriptions for key personnel positions must be submitted as an annex to demonstrate how the Applicant intends to meet Key Personnel requirements and illustrate the experience and expertise each identified Key Personnel position must hold. The job descriptions must highlight the duties, responsibilities and required qualifications each key personnel position will have.

Applicants must not submit individuals for the designated as Key personnel positions and must not submit CV/resumes and other similar documentation related to key personnel. See Section F. “Key Personnel” for additional information.

c. Draft Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (up to 5 pages; not included in 20-page limit)

The Applicant must include an initial draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan that will describe how the project’s performance will be monitored in an annex that must not exceed five pages. Refer to section F of the NFO for MEL Plan content requirements. Applicants are not expected to fully respond to all MEL Plan content requirements in the initial draft MEL Plan, but must present a selectively abbreviated Plan that clearly communicates their proposed approach to Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning under the award. The initial draft MEL Plan must include a description of the learning goals and key decision points underpinning the listening tour (or similar assessment), as well as any subsequent assessments, learning activities, or pause-and-reflect events anticipated over the life of the award, including time periods and evaluation criteria/issues to raise at those points in the program’s life cycle.

d. Draft Year One Annual Work Plan (up to 5 pages; not included in the 20 page limit)

The Draft Year One Annual Work Plan must illustrate how the Applicant will ensure a rapid and effective launch of project activities in Year 1 and a realistic approach to implement the Program Description to achieve the results. Each activity must be clearly linked to an outcome or impact.

The plan must provide a detailed explanation (narrative, graphic, or both) of proposed activities and their sequencing, with an illustrative work plan for Year 1. If part of the plan includes an assessment or other such activity, that should be clearly outlined in the Draft Work Plan. The plan to conduct the gender analysis must be outlined in the Draft Work Plan. Up to two pages of the draft work plan must be used to describe the proposed methodology for the initial gender analysis.

6. Business Application Format

The Business (Cost) Application must be submitted separately from the Technical Application. While no page limit exists for the full cost application, applicants are encouraged to be as

concise as possible while still providing the necessary details. The business (cost) application must illustrate the entire period of performance, using the budget format shown in the SF-424A.

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 200.205. Applicants should not submit any additional information with their initial application.

The Cost Application must contain the following sections (which are further elaborated below this listing with the letters for each requirement):

- a. Cover Page
- b. SF 424 Form(s)

The applicant must sign and submit the cost application using the SF-424 series. Standard Forms can be accessed electronically at www.grants.gov or using the following links:

Instructions for SF-424	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424-instructions.html
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html
Instructions for SF-424A	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424a-instructions.html
Budget Information (SF-424A)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html
Instructions for SF-424B	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424b-instructions.html
Assurances (SF-424B)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html

Failure to accurately complete these forms could result in the rejection of the application.

- c. 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” document found at <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mav.pdf>
- (2) Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
- (3) Certificate of Compliance: Please submit a copy of your Certificate of Compliance if your organization's systems have been certified by USAID/Washington's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA).

- d. Budget and Detailed Budget

The Budget must be submitted as one unprotected Excel file (MS Office 2000 or later versions) with visible formulas and references and must be broken out by project year, including itemization of the federal and non-federal (cost share) amount. Files must not contain any hidden or otherwise inaccessible cells. Budgets with hidden cells lengthen the cost analysis time required to make award, and may result in a rejection of the cost application. The Budget Narrative must contain sufficient detail to allow USAID to understand the proposed costs. The applicant must ensure the budgeted costs address any additional requirements identified in Section F, such as Branding and Marking. The Budget Narrative must be thorough, including sources for costs to support USAID's determination that the proposed costs are fair and reasonable.

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 activities implemented by the applicant and any potential sub-applicants for the entire period of the program.
- Detailed Budget, including a breakdown by year, sufficient to allow the Agency to determine that the costs represent a realistic and efficient use of funding to implement the applicant's program and are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.
- Detailed Budgets for each sub-recipient, for all federal funding and cost share, broken out by budget category and by year, for the entire implementation period of the project.

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

- 1) Salaries and Allowances – Must be proposed consistent with 2 CFR 200.430 Compensation - Personal Services. The applicant's budget must include position title, salary rate, level of effort, and salary escalation factors for each position. Allowances, when proposed, must be broken down by specific type and by position. Applicants must explain all assumptions in the Budget Narrative. The Budget Narrative must demonstrate that the proposed compensation is reasonable for the services rendered and consistent with what is paid for similar work in other activities of the applicant. Applicants must provide their established written policies on personnel compensation. 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.
- 2) Fringe Benefits – (if applicable) If the applicant has a fringe benefit rate approved by an agency of the U.S. Government, the applicant must use such rate and provide evidence of its approval. If an applicant does not have a fringe benefit rate approved, the applicant must propose a rate and explain how the applicant determined the rate. In this case, the Budget Narrative must include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., superannuation, gratuity, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in U.S. dollars and as a percentage of salaries.

- 3) Travel and Transportation – Provide details to explain the purpose of the trips, the number of trips, the origin and destination, the number of individuals traveling, and the duration of the trips. Per Diem and associated travel costs must be based on the applicant’s normal travel policies. When appropriate please provide supporting documentation as an attachment, such as company travel policy, and explain assumptions in the Budget Narrative.
- 4) Procurement or Rental of Goods (Equipment & Supplies), Services, and Real Property – Must include information on estimated types of equipment, models, supplies and the cost per unit and quantity. The Budget Narrative must include the purpose of the equipment and supplies and the basis for the estimates. The Budget Narrative must support the necessity of any rental costs and reasonableness in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable property, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased.
- 5) Subawards – Specify the budget for the portion of the program to be passed through to any subrecipients. See 2 CFR 200.330 for assistance in determining whether the sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor. The subrecipient budgets must align with the same requirements as the applicant’s budget, including those related to fringe and indirect costs.
- 6) Construction – If applicable
- 7) Other Direct Costs – This may include other costs not elsewhere specified, such as report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, as well as any other miscellaneous costs which directly benefit the program proposed by the applicant. The applicant should indicate the subject, venue and duration of any proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs. Otherwise, the narrative should be minimal.
- 8) Indirect Costs – Applicants must indicate whether they are proposing indirect costs or will charge all costs directly. In order to better understand indirect costs please see Subpart E of 2 CFR 200.414. The application must identify which approach they are requesting and provide the applicable supporting information. Below are the most commonly used Indirect Cost Rate methods:

Method 1 - Direct Charge Only

Eligibility: Any applicant

Initial Application Requirements: See above on direct costs

Method 2 - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)

Eligibility: Any applicant with a NICRA issued by a USG Agency must use that NICRA

Initial Application Requirements: If the applicant has a current NICRA, submit your approved NICRA and the associated disclosed practices. If your NICRA was issued by an Agency other than USAID, provide the contact information for the approving Agency.

Additionally, at the Agency’s discretion, a provisional rate may be set forth in the award subject to audit and finalization. See [USAID’s Indirect Cost Rate Guide for Non Profit Organizations](#) for further guidance.

Method 3 - De minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC)

Eligibility: Any applicant that has never received a NICRA

Initial Application Requirements: Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate an indirect rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. The applicant must describe which cost elements it charges indirectly vs. directly. See 2 CFR 200.414(f) for further information.

Method 4 - Indirect Costs Charged As A Fixed Amount

Eligibility: Non U.S. non-profit organizations without a NICRA may request, but approval is at the discretion of the AO

Initial Application Requirements: Provide the proposed fixed amount and a worksheet that includes the following:

- Total costs incurred by the organization for the previous fiscal year and estimates for the current year.
- Indirect costs (common costs that benefit the day-to-day operations of the organization, including categories such as salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting, or that benefit and are identifiable to more than one program or activity, such as depreciation, rental costs, operations and maintenance of facilities, and telephone expenses) for the previous fiscal year and estimates for the current year
- Proposed method for prorating the indirect costs equitably and consistently across all programs and activities of using a base that measures the benefits of that particular cost to each program or activity to which the cost applies.

If the applicant does not have an approved NICRA and does not elect to utilize the 10% de minimis rate, the Agreement Officer will provide further instructions and may request additional supporting information, including financial statements and audits, should the application still be under consideration after the merit review. USAID is under no obligation to approve the applicant's requested method.

e. Branding and Communications Costs

Costs associated with branding and communications may be represented separately or incorporated in other direct cost categories. The budget narrative must include a brief description of how the estimated costs for branding and communication activities are represented in the cost proposal. More specifically, the budget will include information about events (such as press tours, activity launch, handovers, representation, community outreach, etc.), content creation (such as photography, video, illustration, graphic design, animation, infographics, etc.), message and content distribution (such as television, radio, magazine, social media, flyers,

posters, billboards, etc.) and any costs associated with monitoring the efficacy of these efforts in terms of the activity's branding and communication goals.

f. Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407

Inclusion of an item of cost in the detailed application budget does not satisfy any requirements for prior approval by the Agency. If the applicant would like the award to reflect approval of any cost elements for which prior written approval is specifically required for allowability, the applicant must specify and justify that cost. See 2 CFR 200.407 for information regarding which cost elements require prior written approval.

g. Approval of Subawards

The applicant must submit information for all subawards that it wishes to have approved at the time of award. For each proposed subaward the applicant must provide the following:

- Name of organization
- DUNS Number
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not appear on the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) list
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not have active exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM)
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not listed in the United Nations Security designation list
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not suspended or debarred
- Confirmation that the applicant has completed a risk assessment of the subrecipient, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.331(b)
- Any negative findings as a result of the risk assessment and the applicant's plan for mitigation.

h. Dun and Bradstreet and SAM Requirements

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier (DUNS number) and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements. Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is exempted from requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

1. Provide a valid DUNS number for the applicant and all proposed sub-recipients;
2. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. SAM is streamlining processes, eliminating the need to enter the same data multiple times, and consolidating hosting to make the process of doing business with the government more efficient (www.sam.gov).
3. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin the process early. 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.

DUNS number: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

SAM registration: <http://www.sam.gov>

Non-U.S. applicants can find additional resources for registering in SAM, including a Quick Start Guide and a video on how to obtain an NCAGE code, on www.sam.gov, navigate to Help, then to International Registrants.

i. History of Performance

The applicant must provide information regarding its recent history of performance for all its cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs, not to exceed 5 awards as follows:

- Name of the Awarding Organization;
- Award Number;
- Activity Title;
- A brief description of the activity;
- Period of Performance;
- Award Amount;
- Reports and findings from any audits performed in the last 3 years; and
- Name of at least two (2) updated professional contacts who most directly observed the work at the organization for which the service was performed with complete current contact information including telephone number, and e-mail address for each proposed individual.

If the applicant encountered problems on any of the referenced Awards, 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.

j. Branding Strategy & Marking Plan

The apparently successful applicant will be asked to provide a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan to be evaluated and approved by the Agreement Officer and incorporated into any resulting award.

Branding Strategy – Assistance (June 2012)

- I. 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.
- II. 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.
- III. Failure to submit and negotiate a Branding Strategy within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.
- IV. 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.
- V. The Branding Strategy must include, at a minimum, all of 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 Section VI of the RFA or APS states that the USAID Administrator 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. Section VI of the

RFA or APS will state if an Administrator 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.
 - (i) Describe the main program message.
 - (ii) Provide plans for training materials, posters, pamphlets, public service announcement, 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. Applicant 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 host-country government or ministry, including any planned acknowledgement of the host-country government.

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.

- VI. 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.
- VII. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Branding Strategy will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement

Marking Plan – Assistance (June 2012)

- I. 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>. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional or substitute logo,

seal, or tagline.

- II. 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.
- III. Failure to submit and negotiate a Marking Plan within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.
- IV. 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.
- V. The Marking Plan must include all of 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, audio-visual 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 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.

VI. 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.

VII. If the applicant receives an assistance award, 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.

k. Funding Restrictions

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award. See 2 CFR 200.330 for assistance in determining whether a sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor.

Construction will not be 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.

Except as may be specifically approved in advance by the AO, all commodities and services that will be reimbursed by USAID under this award must be from the authorized geographic code specified in this BFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

Subawards to government organizations are not eligible for reimbursement.

1. Conflict of Interest Pre-Award Term

A. Personal Conflict of Interest

1. An actual or appearance of a conflict of interest exists when an applicant organization or an employee 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 may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, the obligations and duties of a USAID employee 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.

[END OF SECTION D]

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

The criteria presented below have been tailored to the requirements of the award. The Applicant should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant matters which Applicant should address in the application and (b) set the standard against which the application will be evaluated.

Recognizing that various approaches may have merit, the award seeks a Recipient that, on the basis of its experience, can propose cost-effective ways of implementing this program. USAID may reject the application if the response is not deemed sufficiently responsive.

An award will be made according to the merit review criteria below. The application will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth below in descending order of importance:

- Technical Approach
- Management Structure and Staffing
- Implementation and Monitoring

2. Review and Selection Process

a. Merit Review

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

Technical Approach:

The Technical Approach will be evaluated on the degree to which the Applicant's narrative describes an approach that enables horizontal and vertical networks to bring about change across issues that resonate with local communities and increases government responsiveness and accountability as described in Section A of this NFO.

Management Structure and Staffing:

Management Structure and Staffing will be evaluated with regards to the extent to which the application's management structure, staffing plan narrative, organigram and key personnel job descriptions convincingly demonstrates the ability for effective implementation of the activities proposed and achievement of activity objectives.

Implementation and Monitoring:

Implementation and Monitoring will be evaluated with regards to the extent to which the draft Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning plan, and the draft Annual Work Plan demonstrate the ability to implement, monitor, and evaluate activities.

b. Business Review

The Agency will evaluate the cost application of the applicant(s) under consideration for an award as a result of the merit criteria review to determine whether the costs are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.

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.

Proposed cost share, if provided, will be reviewed for compliance with the standards set forth in 2 CFR 200.306, 2 CFR 700.10, and the Standard Provision "Cost Sharing (Matching)" for U.S. entities, or the Standard Provision "Cost Share" for non-U.S. entities.

The AO will perform a risk assessment (2 CFR 200.205). The AO may determine that a pre-award survey is required to inform the risk assessment in determining whether the prospective recipient 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 200.207).

[END OF SECTION E]

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

A notice of award signed by the AO is the authorizing document for the award resulting from this NFO. USAID will provide it electronically to the authorized individual identified by the Recipient in the application.

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

2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The award will be administered as follows:

Agreement Office:
Acquisition and Assistance Office
USAID/Central Asia
41, Kazibek Bi Street
050010 Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan

Technical Office:
Democracy and Governance Office
USAID/Kyrgyz Republic
171, Prospekt Mira
720016 Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

For U.S. organizations, 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 700 will apply, and ADS 303maa, Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental Organizations are applicable.

For non-U.S. organizations, ADS 303mab, and Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations will apply.

Full copies of the 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 are incorporated hereby by reference. Please refer to ADS 303.4 and 303.5 for guidance. However, the applicable standard provisions will be attached to the final award document.

3. Reporting Requirements.

The Recipient must provide the following reports to the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and to the Agreement Officer at AlmatyAAReporting@usaid.gov, as specified below, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.328 and 200.327 and the Substantial Involvement provisions.

a. Financial Reporting:

The Recipient must submit the Federal Financial Form (SF-425) on a quarterly basis within 30 calendar days after the end of each USG fiscal quarter (i.e. October 30, January 30, April 30, July 30) via electronic format to the USAID/CA Office of Financial Management at CARInvoices@usaid.gov, and to the Agreement Officer at AlmatyAAReporting@usaid.gov and the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR).

The Recipient must submit the original and two copies of all final financial reports to USAID/CA/FMO, the Agreement Officer, and the AOR. The Recipient must submit the final financial report no later than 90 calendar days from the end of the agreement.

Electronic copies of the SF-425 can be found at: www.grants.gov.

b. Performance Reporting:

i. Annual Work Plans (AWP):

Within six months of the award of the Cooperative Agreement, the Recipient must develop and submit the first annual work plan to the AOR. Work plans may be submitted electronically. Upon acceptance of the work plan by the AOR, any substantial revisions to the plan must require the written approval of the AOR. The first year's AWP is expected to reflect the assessment and/or learning efforts undertaken by the awardee and, as such, is not required until the awardee has the opportunity to conduct those activities. The work plan should reflect the gender analysis conducted and its inclusion in activities and approaches should be well outlined and documented. Annual work plans for subsequent years are due to the AOR 30 days prior to the end of the USG's fiscal year or approximately August 31st. Regardless of the start date of this award, work plans will be adjusted to the fiscal calendar of October 1-September 30.

The Recipient must ensure that the AWP appropriately reflects activity objectives and the program description. The AWP should detail the work to be accomplished during the upcoming year. All work plan activities must be within the scope of the award. The AWP will serve as a guide for activity implementation - a demonstration of links between interventions and objectives in accordance with the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan. The AWP must outline key activities and the expected results to be accomplished for that year and will be negotiated and shared with key stakeholders for comments as appropriate. The AWP will also serve as a basis for budget estimates for that year of program implementation. A budget with sufficient detail to allow the AOR to judge the efficiency of the implementation plan should be included. The AWP should delineate an overall budget by line item and a budget per objective and activity.

The Recipient's CLA approach may entail periods of reflection/assessment that lead to significant changes to the workplan in such areas as policy focus, approaches, ext. In these instances, the AWP may be revised in the course of implementation, as needed, to reflect changes on the ground only with the concurrence of the AOR.

The annual work plans must also highlight how gender will be effectively addressed in the activity, using learning and information from the initial gender analysis and subsequent implementation. This includes ensuring the following areas are captured as they relate to gender:

- Prioritize recommendations and action items;
- Highlight key stakeholders in implementation and plans for outreach to stakeholders;
- Training and capacity development plan for staff and targeted beneficiaries;
- A description of tools to be developed or used; and
- Any other content the implementing partner deems pertinent.

If appropriate, the Recipient can highlight for USAID work or research that the implementing partner feels would further the cause of gender integration and social inclusion but is not within the scope of the current award.

ii. Quarterly/Annual Performance Reports:

The Recipient will use the standard form Performance Progress Report (SF-PPR) to report performance progress for the program under the award. Reports may be submitted electronically. Regardless of the start date of the cooperative agreement, all reporting will be adjusted to the USG fiscal year calendar.

Quarterly Reports: The Recipient must submit quarterly reports that include narratives of quarterly achievements, and progress against the work plan and agreed-upon performance indicators. A format for the quarterly report must be approved by the AOR on an annual basis. The Recipient must submit quarterly reports within thirty (30) calendar days of the end of each quarter. The following quarter end dates must be used to determine the date of submission of the quarterly reports: 3/31, 6/30, 9/30, or 12/31. The fourth quarter report must be drafted as an annual report and must cover activities of the quarter as well as overall assessment of performance and progress for the prior 12 months of the program (See Annual Reports below).

The quarterly report must describe and assess the overall progress to date based upon agreed performance indicators. The reports must also describe the accomplishments of the Recipient and the progress made during the past quarter and will include information on key activities, both ongoing and completed during the quarter (e.g. meetings, training, workshops, significant events, subcontracts, and grants). The quarterly report should include targets and results for each indicator agreed upon in the MEL Plan. The quarterly report provides the opportunity to discuss the impacts of learning on the program; for example, how has implementation evolved as the result of information gathered over the course of the quarter. Also, notification must be given in the case of problems, delays, or adverse conditions which materially impair the ability to meet the objectives of the award or which may have an impact on the development hypothesis or theory of change for the activity, and/or other activities (USG-funded or not) which might be informed by such learning. This notification must include a statement of the action taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. Lastly, the quarterly report will outline how the project has collaborated with host country governments and other USG and other-donor funded projects and efforts. The quarterly reports must utilize photos, maps, tables and other graphical elements useful in communicating performance data and activity

implementation and include at least one success story. Any outreach or press reporting about the activity must also be included.

Quarterly reports must include as an annex an updated Performance Indicator Tracking Table, and if requested, an updated site location reporting form. USAID may require that this data be submitted through an online platform.

As Part of Quarterly Performance reporting, the Recipient must address the following:

Gender Reporting: The Recipient will also report any activities implemented during the period, with progress and results that contributed towards promotion of Gender Equality and Female Empowerment. As part of its regular reports, the Recipient must collect, analyze and submit sex-disaggregated data and propose actions that will address any gender-related challenges that might arise from that data. The Recipient will report any challenges to the AOR who, in turn, will work with the USAID/Kyrgyz Republic's gender specialist to find reasonable solutions

Marking and Branding: Throughout the project implementation, (the implementing partner) will provide the following to the USAID AOR and the USAID Development Outreach and Communication (DOC) Specialist:

- An updated quarterly list of public events to be organized by the Recipient during the upcoming three months, including approximate date, location, and audience. The Recipient will coordinate with USAID about all planned events with press participation, press activities, press releases, as well as inclusion of USAID promotional materials for the participants, participation of USAID/USG representatives.
- Two success stories a year with an accompanying photograph. The success stories will be provided in a Word Document format, using a standard USAID success story template.
- The fourth quarterly performance report must also include a digital collection of at least 20 photographs a year that are illustrative of project's achievements in jpeg format. The photographs will comply with a guidance provided in the USAID Graphic Standards Manual. Each photograph will have a brief explanation about its subject, and identify: the author and his/her organization, person(s) featured in the photograph, and the location where the photograph was taken.
- Clippings of press articles that mention the project.
- At least 2 copies of all public communications materials produced by the project. In addition, the Recipient must submit all final documents to USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse.

Participant Training: The Recipient will collect training data on technical training (i.e., conferences and workshops) provided for beneficiaries that were held in the United States, third countries, or in-country under this Cooperative Agreement. The training data will be entered into TraiNET and submitted to the AOR quarterly no later than 30 days following the end of each

fiscal quarter measured from October 1, as relevant. The Participant Training report for the final quarter of the final year of the agreement will be due 30 days prior to the end date of the award. The Recipient will follow ADS 252 policy, which provides detailed information regarding visa compliance guidelines, and ADS 253, which provides guidance on how to implement USAID funded training programs.

Annual Reports: The Recipient must submit annual report, as its fourth quarter report each year that includes narratives of achievements, and progress against the work plan and agreed-upon performance indicators. A format for the annual report must be approved by the AOR on an annual basis. The Recipient must submit annual reports within thirty (30) calendar days of the end of each U.S. Government fiscal year. Annual reports should contain content appropriate for public dissemination. In addition to content summarizing performance from the preceding quarter (See Quarterly Report above), the Annual Report must include a section that summarizes performance from the preceding year. The annual summary must concentrate on outcome and impact based on agreed upon performance indicators. This should be the largest section of the annual report. It will report on annual achievements against targets and will account for any shortfalls. The analysis in the annual section must not be limited to performance measures – it will also summarize progress during the previous year in a qualitative fashion. To this end, the Annual Report must also utilize photos, maps, tables, and other graphical elements useful in summarizing project performance from the past year. In addition, the annual report must include a professionally formatted, four-to eight page annual summary of achievements, noteworthy activities, lessons learned, changes in the environment, etc. The summary must be formatted to function as a stand-alone, externally sharable document, designed to keep key project stakeholders (such as USG agencies, other donors, and other USG implementers) up to date on progress. The summary must include photos, maps, tables, and other graphical elements as relevant. The annual summary must not directly recycle text, photos or other elements from quarterly summaries.

iii. Participant Training

TraiNet and USAID Sponsored J-1 Visas: All host country nationals being funded fully, partially, directly, or indirectly by USAID must enter the U.S. on a J-1 Visa, regardless of the type or duration of the activity. In order to secure a J-1 visa, each participant must first secure a DS-2019 form (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor J-1 Status). TraiNet is the only means of obtaining a DS-2019 for USAID funded Exchange Visitors.

USAID/Kyrgyz Republic delegates the TraiNet data entry, verification, and reporting responsibilities to its implementing partner who is responsible for data entry (the R1 role) and verification (the R2 role) of all training programs and participants that are funded by USAID. USAID/Kyrgyz Republic/SPO is responsible for approval (the R3 role) and the COR/AOR and Program Managers are responsible for working with their implementing partners to obtain the data needed by the R3. USAID/Washington is responsible for submission of the data (the R4 role) to SEVIS.

The DS-2019 approval process is as follows:

Data is entered into TraiNet by the implementing partner's Data Entry Initiator (R1);

- The R1 submits the information to the Visa Compliance System (VCS);
- The designated Verifier (R2) verifies the accuracy of the data in the VCS, uploads documents, and either submits the information to the R3 if all is correct, or rejects the file if there are errors in the data;
- A designated United States citizen in the Central Asia Mission – the Approver (R3) – reviews the electronic versions of documents and either approves or rejects the files (for missing data or other concerns based on a review of the files) sending them back to the R1 with comments;
- When the R3 approves a file, the information is electronically transferred to the Responsible Officer (R4) in USAID/Washington who provides the final approval before the information is submitted to the Department of Homeland Security SEVIS database;
- The DS-2019 form is created, printed and mailed to the R3;
- The R3 gives the form to the USAID AOR who provides it to the implementing partner. The implementing partner is responsible for delivering the form to the participant so that he/she can present it to the Consular Officer during their appointment for a J-1 visa at the U.S. Embassy consular section, or designated Consulate. Exchange visitors apply online at the U.S. State Department's website in each respective CAR countries. When asked to enter a "Program Number", applications should enter USAID's Exchange Visitor Program Number G-2-00263."

iv. Final Report:

The Recipient must submit a final report that summarizes achievements, and progress against the work plan and agreed-upon performance indicators over the life of the project. The Recipient must submit the Final Report within ninety (90) calendar days after the expiration of the award. The Final Report must contain content appropriate for public dissemination. The Final Report must contain the following information:

1. An executive summary of the accomplishments and results achieved;
2. An in-depth analysis of progress and results that synthesizes achievements that contributed to program objectives. This section must clearly describe activities, major accomplishments, and results achieved, including results for all of the activities under the Cooperative Agreement;
3. Describe the reasons why targets were not achieved or were surpassed and why activities were delayed or not carried out, if appropriate;
4. A summary of the problems/obstacles encountered during the implementation, and how those obstacles were addressed and overcome, if appropriate;

5. Success stories, including examples of synergy and collaboration with partners;
6. Lessons learned, best practices, and other findings, along with recommendations for future programming in this sector;
7. A summary of progress made in achieving indicator targets during the activity implementation (based on valid data collection and analysis and credible baseline) including final data, compared to baseline data, for all indicators included in the monitoring and evaluation plan. This section should include disaggregated data by gender, historically disenfranchised groups, and other relevant groups identified;
8. A comparison of actual expenditures with budget estimates, including an analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs, as relevant;
9. Other pertinent information, including recommendations with-in depth- analysis and lessons learned, related to the overall activity results;
10. The Final Report must also contain an index of all reports and information products produced under the award; and
11. The Final Report must include a professionally formatted, four-to eight-page annual summary of achievements, noteworthy activities, lessons learned, changes in the environment, etc.

The Report must be formatted to function as a stand-alone, externally shareable document, designed to keep key project stakeholders (such as USG agencies, other donors, and other USG implementers) up to date on progress. The Final Report must include photos, maps, tables, and other graphical elements as relevant. The Final Report must not directly recycle text, photos or other elements from Annual Reports.

4. Development Experience Clearinghouse Requirements

Consistent with ADS 540, the Recipient must prepare and submit a copy of semi-annual and final performance reports, results of assessments and operational research, if any, required by this award to the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) at:

Online: <https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/submit.aspx>;

By Mail:

USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse
M/CIO/ITSD/KM/DEC
RRB M.01-010
Washington, DC 20523-6100

Essential bibliographic information must accompany submissions, whenever it is available. The submission page on the DEC identifies the minimum required fields to submit. For questions on DEC submissions, contact:

Email: ksc@usaid.gov
Telephone: +1 202-712-0579

*Note: Mail sent to USAID via the US Postal Service undergoes security and irradiation processing. To send sensitive items, like CDs or DVDs, please contact the DEC team at ksc@usaid.gov to arrange delivery.

5. Program Income

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400(g), Recipients may not earn profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the cooperative agreement program and are in accordance with 2 CFR 200 Subpart E - Cost Principles may be paid under the award.

USAID does not anticipate any program income under the award.

6. Key Personnel:

Within 10 days of making the award, the Recipient will propose a combination of three key personnel that corresponds to the proposed technical approach of the Program Description and proposed staffing plan. The Key Personnel team must include monitoring and evaluation expert.

The Key Personnel, as a team, must possess fluency in Russian, English, and Kyrgyz, and the team must possess the following skill sets:

Required:

- Demonstrated experience in managing international development programs including experience in civil society strengthening, policy advocacy, and/or local governance;
- Advanced educational background and knowledge relevant for similar projects in developing countries;
- Strong leadership, administrative, management, presentation, reporting, and communication skills and the ability to implement projects with diverse subject matter;
- Demonstrated ability to research and analyze state policies and legislation and make recommendations for improvement to relevant stakeholders;
- Ability to coordinate with USG and other donor programs on media and seek synergies and complementarities to maximize results; and

- Ability to perform at a high level and apply diplomacy skills with a wide range of stakeholders (i.e., national, provincial, district and local government officials, private sector, NGOs, and beneficiaries).

Preferred:

- Experience integrating gender equality and women's empowerment issues within civic organizing and civil society strengthening initiatives;
- Experience working on civil society activities in Central Asia or the former Soviet Union is strongly preferred;

7. 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) Part 204

(<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/204.pdf>) 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. The Recipient's environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in this section. In addition to complying with the obligations below, 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 will govern. No activity funded under this award will be implemented unless covered by the environmental threshold determination documented in a Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE), Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), or Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO).

A programmatic IEE (PIEE) Amendment #6 for Democracy and Governance programs (DCN: Asia 11-131) was approved on 8/12/2011. It establishes environmental compliance screening, mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements. A PIEE Amendment #7 (DCN: Asia 14-68), approved on February 26, 2014, raises the PIEE Amendment #6 budget ceiling and extends the environmental compliance requirements through September 2020. Further, this activity will be covered by CAR DG IEE amendment #8 (Asia 18-076) approved on May 29, 2018 and valid through FY2025. These PIEE amendments cover the Kyrgyz Republic Deepening Linkages in Civic Participation Activity. They are included as Annex 1. Per these PIEE amendments, USAID has determined that program activities for technical assistance, training, analyses, studies and information transfers qualify for a Categorical Exclusion under 22 CFR Part 216.2(c)(2) (no effect on the natural or physical environment) and, therefore are excluded from environmental review.

It is anticipated that the program solicited in this RFA will fall entirely within the description of activities described as qualifying for a Categorical Exclusion. Furthermore, is not anticipated

that the program solicited in this RFA will include any component that qualifies for a Negative Determination with Conditions (which, for example, includes procurement of electric and electronic equipment or small-scale building renovations). However, should such a component be approved, then implementing partner must screen, mitigate, monitor and report to USAID in accordance with terms established in the PEE Amendment #6, #7 and Amendment #8.

If a provision for sub-grants is included under a proposed project design, the successful applicant must include environmental compliance language in sub-grant solicitations and awards. It must also use impact assessment tools to screen sub-grant proposals to ensure that funded proposals will result in no adverse environmental impact; develop mitigation measures, as necessary; and specify monitoring and reporting procedures. The prime implementing partner is responsible for ensuring that mitigation measures specified by the sub-grant recipient are implemented.

If new information becomes available which indicates that activities to be funded by the program might have some adverse effects on the environment, the successful applicant must report to USAID in accordance with requirements outlined in the IEE Amendments 6, 7 and 8. Specifically, they will submit Environmental Review and Assessment Checklists for USAID approval.

As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the successful applicant, in collaboration with the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and the Mission Environmental Officer (MEO), must review all ongoing and planned activities under this award to determine if they are within the scope of the approved IEE with amendments 6, 7 and 8. If the successful applicant plans any new activities outside the scope of these documents, it must assist the AOR to prepare an IEE amendment for USAID review and approval. No such new activities will be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval of the amendment.

The applicant must consider green procurement concepts to eliminate, reduce, or recycle waste. Furthermore, when applicable, activities must include principles of environmental and human health protection, impact mitigation, and environmental sustainability. Such inclusion or consideration does not require further environmental review or reporting.

Climate risk screening: Most of activity components are rated as Low Climate Risk as they are not expected to materially affect the implementation or outcomes of the activity. Successful applicant is encouraged to evaluate climate related risks and vulnerabilities for NDC activities and adjust them based on relevant analysis. To do that successful applicant may use sources referenced in the Central Asia Climate Change Risk Profile at <https://www.climatelinks.org>. Applicants must include as part of their proposal their commitment to achieving environmental compliance and management, both in principle and by adequately budgeting and planning for all necessary costs and procedures.

8. Marking and Branding

All USAID-funded foreign assistance (including programs, projects, activities, public communications, or commodities) must be communicated, promoted, and marked as coming from the American people through USAID. Branding and marking under this award shall

comply with the USAID Automated Directive System Chapter 320 Branding and Marking (ADS320).

The Project's overall communications and promotion approach will be described in a "Branding Strategy" which will serve as the overall communication and outreach approach for the whole project. Specific marking details, including possible exclusions due to local sensitivities, will be described in the "Marking Plan" for this award.

The Branding Strategy and Marking Plan will be finalized in coordination with USAID and included in the Cooperative Agreement. The plan can be amended on an annual basis to reflect the changing needs and environment. The cost application must incorporate the estimated cost of the proposed Branding Implementation Plan and Marking Plan.

Beyond the standard guidance and requirements set forth by the USAID Automated Directive System Chapter 320 Branding and Marking, applicants will be encouraged to consider the following:

Desired Visibility Level: The Recipient will explain how they plan to ensure that the project receives broad visibility, is well understood, and is viewed favorably by its target audiences which will should include, but may not limited to: project beneficiaries, project counterparts, government officials, the general public in the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as U.S. based audiences such as U.S. policy makers and USAID officials. The project may identify, in consultation with USAID, additional groups/sub-groups of target audiences for its public communication activities. This should also consider where sensitivities exist and how it will address those.

Strategic Implementation: The Branding Strategy will propose an approach to ensure that the desired level of visibility will be achieved. This could include objectives and indicators based on its desired visibility.

Communication Products: The Branding Strategy and Marking Plan will explain what communication products, tools, and platforms it will utilize with details on their distribution or dissemination. Communication tools may include, but are not limited to: brochures, flyers, posters, social media sites, television, podcasts, radio, blogs, online publication, websites, newspaper, infographics, billboards, etc. The communication products should be proposed while demonstrating how they are relevant to the context of this project and the targeted audiences.

Content Creation and Acquisition: The Branding Strategy and Marking Plan will explain how it will acquire professional, high quality content for the design and publication of its communication products. Content may include, but may not be limited to: photography, video or films, written text, infographics, illustrations, graphics, pictograms, maps, GIFs, etc.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Within 6 months of award, the awardee must submit for approval a final Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (MELP or MEL Plan) for the life of the activity. The MELP must satisfy USAID's ADS 201 requirements, as well as the following:

- The MEL Plan must include narrative that clearly articulates the activity’s theory of change, describing the causal and logical relationships between different levels of results, along with the associated interventions, indicators and other performance data, and critical assumptions under each result. The MEL Plan should also present a visually represented logic model that illustrates these results, the causal and logical relationships between them, and the indicator and other performance data required to measure each.
- The MEL Plan must identify and describe the activity’s learning approach. This should include: learning objectives with corresponding information needs; plans for external collaboration in pursuing the learning agenda; strategic opportunities to “pause and reflect” on evidence; plans for documenting and disseminating gained knowledge; resources (financial and human resources as well as tools) needed to implement learning approaches; and, references to planned points of programmatic adaptation as a result of this learning.
- If the activity incorporates specific steps to address identified inequalities in participation or achievement, the MEL Plan should describe the approach to assessing whether the root causes of inequalities and the proposed approach to mitigating them are appropriately identified and effectively pursued.
- The MEL Plan must include an appropriate set of quantitative and/or qualitative indicators, which maximizes validity, reliability, integrity, precision, timeliness, and cost effectiveness. The MEL Plan should contain only indicators with a clear use in management decision-making or reporting. No non-mandatory indicator should be proposed without a clear analytic or communication purpose. USAID will provide a list of required indicators for reporting. Preference should be given to all relevant standard indicators (<https://www.state.gov/f/indicators/>) before proposing custom indicators. For each indicator, the MEL Plan must include a Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) whose content and format follows a template to be provided by USAID. PIRS for required indicators will also be provided.
- The MEL Plan must also include, in consultation with USAID, agreed-upon planned internal and external evaluations and evaluation questions that are salient to the implementation, adaptation or review of the activity in line with the USAID Evaluation Policy. The MEL Plan should demonstrate how the timing and of evaluations and content of evaluation questions is appropriate.
- The MEL Plan must include a narrative description of how data collection will be managed, including the planned staffing structure and resources needed to carry out the MEL Plan.
- The MEL Plan should also include a Performance Indicator Tracking Table (PITT) template, an excel-based file that tracks all quantitative performance data, including: baseline figures, quarterly and/or annual performance figures, quarterly

and/or annual targets, life of project totals, and life of project targets, disaggregated as appropriate. USAID may provide a specific reporting format for the PITT.

- Proposed indicators must, at minimum, include these disaggregates: sex disaggregates for all people level indicators, numerators and denominators for all ratios and percentages, and geographic locations. Sex and ratio disaggregates must be included in the PITT. For geographic disaggregation, all indicators associated with a discrete project site must be disaggregated by the decimal GPS coordinate associated with that site. All indicators associated with an area-wide activity must be disaggregated by province and district name. Geographic disaggregates should not be included in the PITT unless otherwise directed.

The Recipient will directly report performance information (e.g. activities, indicators, quarterly reports, etc.) into USAID/Kyrgyz Republic’s management information system for the entirety of the performance period. Appropriate training will be provided by USAID to support this effort.

10. Non-Federal Audits

In accordance with 22 CFR Part 226.26 Recipients and Subrecipients are subject to the audit requirements contained in the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 (31 U.S.C. 7501–7507) and revised OMB Circular A–133, “Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.” Recipients and Subrecipients must use an independent, non-Federal auditor or audit organization which meets the general standards specified in generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS) to fulfill these requirements.

11. Electronic Payments System

I. Definitions:

a. “Cash Payment System” means a payment system that generates any transfer of funds through a transaction originated by cash, check, or similar paper instrument. This includes electronic payments to a financial institution or clearing house that subsequently issues cash, check, or similar paper instrument to the designated payee.

b. “Electronic Payment System” means a payment system that generates any transfer of funds, other than a transaction originated by cash, check, or similar paper instrument, that is initiated through an electronic terminal, telephone, mobile phone, computer, or magnetic tape, for the purpose of ordering, instructing or authorizing a financial institution to debit or credit an account. The term includes debit cards, wire transfers, transfers made at automatic teller machines, and point-of-sale terminals.

III. The Recipient agrees to use an electronic payment system for any payments under this award to beneficiaries, subrecipients, or contractors.

IV. Exceptions. Recipients are allowed the following exceptions, provided the Recipient documents its files with the appropriate justification:

- a. Cash payments made while establishing electronic payment systems, provided that this exception is not used for more than six months from the effective date of this award.
- b. Cash payments made to payees where the Recipient does not expect to make payments to the same payee on a regular, recurring basis, and payment through an electronic payment system is not reasonably available.
- c. Cash payments to vendors below \$3000, when payment through an electronic payment system is not reasonably available.
- d. The Recipient has received a written exception from the Agreement Officer that a specific payment or all cash payments are authorized based on the Recipient's written justification, which provides a basis and cost analysis for the requested exception.

IV. More information about how to establish, implement, and manage electronic payment methods is available to Recipients at <http://solutionscenter.nethope.org/programs/c2e-toolkit>.

12. Police and Prisons

Under this award, assistance may not be used to provide training, advice, or any financial support for police, prisons, or other law enforcement forces.

13. Salary Supplemental for Host Government Employees

Any payments by the Recipient to any host government's employee at any level is subject to the USAID policy guidance on criteria for payment of salary supplements for host government employees dated April 1988 (or as amended). When this issue arises during the life of the cooperative agreement, the Recipient must consult with the AO on any questions regarding the applicability of the policy.

[END OF SECTION F]

SECTION G: OTHER INFORMATION

ANNEXES:

1. Annex 1:
 - GJD IEE Asia 11-131 Amendment 6
 - CAR DG IEE Amendment 7 Asia 14-68
 - CAR DG Amendment 8 Asia 18-076

2. Annex 2:
 - Branding Strategy and Marking Plan

Annex 3: Standard Provisions

The actual Standard Provisions included in the award will be dependent on the organization that is selected. The award will include the latest Mandatory Provisions for either U.S. or non-U.S. Nongovernmental organizations. The award will also contain the following “required as applicable” Standard Provisions:

(Note: the full text of these provisions may be found at: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa> and <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>).

REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS FOR U.S. NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Required	Not Required	Standard Provision
TBD		RAA1. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATES - PREDETERMINED (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA2. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATES - PROVISIONAL (Nonprofit) (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA3. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE - PROVISIONAL (Profit) (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA4. EXCHANGE VISITORS AND PARTICIPANT TRAINING (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA5. VOLUNTARY POPULATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES – SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS (JANUARY 2009)
	X	RAA6. PROTECTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT (APRIL 1998)
	X	RAA7. CARE OF LABORATORY ANIMALS (MARCH 2004)
	X	RAA8. TITLE TO AND CARE OF PROPERTY (COOPERATING COUNTRY TITLE) (NOVEMBER 1985)
	X	RAA9. COST SHARING (MATCHING) (FEBRUARY 2012)
	X	RAA10. PROHIBITION OF ASSISTANCE TO DRUG TRAFFICKERS (JUNE 1999)
	X	RAA11. INVESTMENT PROMOTION (NOVEMBER 2003)
X		RAA12. REPORTING HOST GOVERNMENT TAXES (DECEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA13. FOREIGN GOVERNMENT DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA14. CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IMPLEMENTATION

		(ASSISTANCE) (FEBRUARY 2012)
	X	RAA15. CONDOMS (ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA16. PROHIBITION ON THE PROMOTION OR ADVOCACY OF THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION OR SEX TRAFFICKING (ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
X		RAA17. USAID DISABILITY POLICY - ASSISTANCE (DECEMBER 2004)
X		RAA18. STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED IN USAID ASSISTANCE AWARDS INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION (SEPTEMBER 2004)
	X	RAA19. STATEMENT FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES ON LACK OF SUPPORT FOR PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA20. ELIGIBILITY OF SUBRECIPIENTS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA21. PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS TO PROMOTE, SUPPORT, OR ADVOCATE FOR THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
X		RAA22. UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM OF AWARD MANAGEMENT (July 2015)
X		RAA23. REPORTING SUBAWARDS AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION (DECEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA24. PATENT REPORTING PROCEDURES (DECEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA25. ACCESS TO USAID FACILITIES AND USAID'S INFORMATION SYSTEMS (AUGUST 2013)
X		RAA26. CONTRACT PROVISION FOR DBA INSURANCE UNDER RECIPIENT PROCUREMENTS (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA27. AWARD TERM AND CONDITION FOR RECIPIENT INTEGRITY AND PERFORMANCE MATTERS (April 2016)
	X	RAA28. PROTECTING LIFE IN GLOBAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE (MAY 2017)

REQUIRED AS APPLICABLE STANDARD PROVISIONS FOR NON-U.S. NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Required	Not Required	Standard Provision
TBD		RAA1. ADVANCE PAYMENT AND REFUNDS (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA2. REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENT AND REFUNDS (DECEMBER 2014)
TBD		RAA3. INDIRECT COSTS – NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA) (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA4. INDIRECT COSTS – CHARGED AS A FIXED AMOUNT (NONPROFIT) (JUNE 2012)
X		RAA5. UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM OF AWARD MANAGEMENT (July 2015)
X		RAA6. REPORTING SUBAWARDS AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA7. SUBAWARDS (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA8. TRAVEL AND INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORTATION (DECEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA9. OCEAN SHIPMENT OF GOODS (JUNE 2012)
X		RAA10. REPORTING HOST GOVERNMENT TAXES (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA11. PATENT RIGHTS (JUNE 2012)
X		RAA12. EXCHANGE VISITORS AND PARTICIPANT TRAINING (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA13. INVESTMENT PROMOTION (NOVEMBER 2003)
	X	RAA 14. COST SHARE (JUNE 2012)
	XX	RAA15. PROGRAM INCOME (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA16. FOREIGN GOVERNMENT DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES (JUNE 2012)
X		RAA17. STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED IN USAID ASSISTANCE AWARDS INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION (SEPTEMBER 2004)
	X	RAA18. PROTECTION OF HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECTS (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA19. STATEMENT FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF ANTI-

		TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES ON LACK OF SUPPORT FOR PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA20. ELIGIBILITY OF SUBRECIPIENTS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA21. PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS TO PROMOTE, SUPPORT, OR ADVOCATE FOR THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA22. VOLUNTARY POPULATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES – SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS (JANUARY 2009)
	X	RAA23. CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IMPLEMENTATION (ASSISTANCE) (FEBRUARY 2012)
	X	RAA24. CONDOMS (ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA25. PROHIBITION ON THE PROMOTION OR ADVOCACY OF THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION OR SEX TRAFFICKING(ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA26. LIMITATION ON SUBAWARDS TO NON-LOCAL ENTITIES (JULY 2014)
X		RAA27. CONTRACT PROVISION FOR DBA INSURANCE UNDER RECIPIENT PROCUREMENTS (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA28. CONTRACT AWARD TERM AND CONDITION FOR RECIPIENT INTEGRITY AND PERFORMANCE MATTERS (April 2016)
	X	RAA29. PROTECTING LIFE IN GLOBAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE (MAY 2017)