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Closing Time: 10:00 am (Dhaka time)

Subject: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Number: 72038820RFA00006

Program Title: USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* Activity

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 98:001

Ladies/Gentlemen:

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

USAID intends to make an award to the applicant(s) who best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this NOFO subject to a risk assessment. Eligible parties interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and selection process.

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

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifiers and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section D.6. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process.

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](http://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,

Andrew Holland, CPCM  
Supervisory Agreement Officer

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## **SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

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

### **USAID/Bangladesh USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* Activity**

#### **INTRODUCTION and OVERVIEW**

The USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* (ecosystems in Bengali) activity seeks to improve ecosystem conservation in Bangladesh by strengthening environmental governance and management, reducing key threats to biodiversity, and supporting market-based incentives in and around Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) of the country. The initial targeted geographies include areas of significant biodiversity around 1) the Sundarbans Reserve Forest in Khulna Division and 2) the ecologically critical forest and wetland ecosystems in Sylhet Division.

Key focus areas include, but are not limited to, improving local environmental governance; strengthening the sustainability and capacity of co-management organizations; strengthening the capacity of local government units to integrate environmental management into local development planning efforts; engaging relevant Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in environmental governance; mobilizing local communities, integrating women, minority populations and youth in conservation and protection efforts; and providing policy support to the Government of Bangladesh’s (GoB) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Ministry of Land (MoL), and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL).

This Activity will contribute to USAID/Bangladesh’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Development Objective 4, Strengthened Resilience to Natural Hazards, by improving ecosystem conservation (Intermediate Result (IR) 4.1) in and around targeted KBAs and will align with and contribute to Mission Bangladesh’s Objective 3.3 (Resilience to Natural Hazards Strengthened) of the Bangladesh Integrated Country Strategy (ICS). As USAID/Bangladesh is in the process of developing a new CDCS, this activity will need to align with the forthcoming CDCS results framework, as well as other relevant USG policies, strategies, and initiatives.

The USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* activity will contribute to USAID’s *Journey to Self-Reliance* policy by strengthening local capacities, accelerating enterprise-driven development, mobilizing public and private revenues, and achieving locally-sustained results. According to its Self-Reliance Roadmap, Bangladesh is relatively weak in areas such as biodiversity protection, government and civil society capacity, open and accountable governance, and inclusive development. In the spirit of self-reliance, lessons learned from this activity will inform similar initiatives within Bangladesh to further build local capacity, ownership, and sustainability.

In addition, the USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* activity will contribute to regional knowledge and cooperation to advance the objectives of the USG’s *Indo-Pacific Vision* (IPV). Strengthening natural resource management is a key component of the vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific region. The ecosystems of the Sundarbans and Sylhet are part of broader transnational landscapes shared with India; lessons learned from this activity will inform conservation efforts in both countries. This activity will advance the IPV by mitigating threats to biodiversity, combating illegal logging and wildlife poaching, promoting environmental safeguards, fostering private sector engagement, and conserving ecosystems. The effective conservation and

management of Bangladesh's natural resources will be critical for its long-term growth and sustainable development.

## **BACKGROUND and COUNTRY CONTEXT**

Bangladesh straddles the border between the Indian subcontinent and mainland Southeast Asia. Most of its flora and fauna are South Asian, but its eastern uplands lie within the Indo-Burmese biodiversity hotspot. Bangladesh's natural ecosystems include several types of forest, freshwater wetlands, and coastal and marine areas, all harboring remaining fragments of important animal and plant biodiversity. The country hosts a significant number of wildlife species, is a station for migratory birds along the Australasian flyways, and is home to at least 5,000 species of vascular plants. Many of the remaining Convention on the International Treaty of Endangered Species (CITES) listed species continue to exist only under threat of extinction. Direct threats to Bangladesh's ecosystems include the overexploitation of natural resources, land use change, mismanagement of water resources, widespread pollution, and unplanned urbanization. Notable indirect threats include weak inter-ministerial coordination, under-developed local environmental governance structures, lax enforcement of environmental laws, inadequate financial resources allocated for natural resource protection, and over-reliance on natural resources for livelihoods.

Over the last two decades, Bangladesh has implemented a number of natural resource management, reforestation, climate change, and environmental governance projects in partnership with international donors. With USAID support, the Bangladesh Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL) and Ministry of Land (MoL) have implemented the Management of Aquatic Ecosystems through Community Husbandry (USAID MACH<sup>1</sup>) activity, the Integrated Protected Area Co-management (USAID IPAC<sup>2</sup>) activity, and the Climate Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (USAID CREL<sup>3</sup>) activity. The MoEFCC also implemented the Nishorgo Support Project<sup>45</sup> and Bengal Tiger Conservation (USAID BAGH<sup>6</sup>) activity, and together with the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs (MoCHTA) mobilized the Chittagong Hill Tracts Watershed Co-Management (USAID CHTWCA) activity. Since 2014, the Bangladesh Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock has implemented the Enhanced Coastal Fisheries (USAID ECOFISH<sup>7</sup>) activity to conserve Hilsa shad fish in the Meghna River ecosystem.

These investments have made significant contributions to the establishment of formal co-management structures in and around biodiverse aquatic and forest ecosystems of Bangladesh<sup>8</sup>. Co-management is the process whereby communities work in concert with the government, sharing both power and responsibilities, to conserve natural resources and protect ecosystems; a co-management organization is a community group that supports co-management efforts. The general theory of change from USAID interventions over the last 20 years can be summarized as follows: *if resource users are empowered to participate in and benefit from resource management, then they become allies to sustainable resource use, leading to improved ecosystems and more resilient communities.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://rmportal.net/library/content/nric/3300.pdf/view>

<sup>2</sup> [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PBAAA333.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PBAAA333.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://nishorgo.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CREL-Report-2013-2018-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PNAED075.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNAED075.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://nishorgo.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/4-16-NSP\\_Project-Completion-Report.pdf](http://nishorgo.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/4-16-NSP_Project-Completion-Report.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00MTXS.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00MTXS.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00T4ZD.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00T4ZD.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> "USAID/Bangladesh Natural Resources Management Sector Assessment Report", 2019.  
[https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00WFCQ.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WFCQ.pdf)

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many challenges need to be addressed in order to safeguard Bangladesh's remaining biodiversity. Local governments and co-management organizations lack the human and financial resources to properly manage critical ecosystems. Alternative livelihood options that are adequately linked to growing markets and the private sector are often difficult to sustain. Weak enforcement of existing environmental laws hinders the effective protection of biodiversity and wildlife. Human encroachment into forest and aquatic ecosystems is widespread due to a lack of comprehensive land use policies, territorial management plans, and effective local environmental governance mechanisms. These areas are also subject to natural disasters such as cyclones and flooding which exacerbate development and economic growth. In general, women and men of different ages have different access to and derive different benefits from ecosystem services; therefore, their perception and knowledge of ecosystem services tend to differ. Women, children, youth, the elderly, and members of marginalized communities are more likely to lack an external source of income, are more likely to be in non-decision-making roles, are more likely to be ignored in official data collection and research, and are more likely to be negatively impacted by environmental degradation. The functional coordination among relevant GoB agencies remains a major challenge; it is essential that they fully engage with local communities, units of local government, environmental CSOs, the private sector, co-management organizations, and other relevant stakeholders as equal partners in natural resource management and environmental governance around key biodiversity areas.

Bangladesh's forest ecosystems face severe degradation and deforestation. The primary reason for this destruction is the expansion and encroachment of human settlements and agricultural plots into forested areas. In addition, local communities depend upon the exploitation of forest resources and the harvesting of timber for survival, livelihoods, and food security needs. Meanwhile, Bangladesh's aquatic ecosystems suffer from uncontrolled access and over-exploitation. Overfishing, combined with fertilizer and pesticide runoff from agricultural lands, degrade the health of aquatic ecosystems. Other sources of water pollution that damage and destroy aquatic ecosystems include upstream urban and industrial activities as well as inadequate solid waste management and untreated sewage disposal. Wildlife crime, such as illegal deer poaching and bird hunting, impacts both terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity. Top threats to biodiversity in Bangladesh include overexploitation of natural resources, land use change, water mismanagement, pollution, policy gaps, and an overall lack of appreciation of the many benefits that the environment offers and limited awareness of how to conserve these resources. Possible approaches to mitigating these threats include alternative income generating activities with strong linkages to markets and the private sector, disaster resilient governance and livelihoods practices which can respond effectively to natural disasters, participatory resource management and inclusive environmental governance, and positive behavior change related awareness-raising campaigns.

In order to strengthen environmental management, it will be important to engage local government so as to build its capacity, help local officials understand how gender dynamics and inequities play an important role in the use and conservation of biodiversity, strengthen local development planning processes and implementation; engage the private sector as an important player in environmental governance, as a key stakeholder to mitigate threats to biodiversity, as a sustainable source of non-extractive employment, and as a potential sustainable investor in local economies and market-based conservation efforts; strengthen transparency, participation, and accountability of environmental governance processes; promote youth-focused environmental education; address coordination, technical, and policy gaps among ministries; and generate public support for conservation.

The co-management framework in Bangladesh needs further strengthening. Resource users, including youth, men and women, and members of minority groups and marginalized populations, need open and accountable participation in co-management organizations. In addition, co-management organizations need to develop their own sources of financing and forge enduring connections with the private sector. Another major challenge is alternative income generating activities tend to lack strong connections to markets and the private sector, and as a result they generally do not demonstrate broad conservation impact or compensate for lost income. It is important to note that the co-management model is not yet completely effective and self-sustaining; the shared vision for co-management needs to be strengthened, with a need for greater government buy-in.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO HOST COUNTRY PLANS & DEVELOPMENT PARTNER PROJECTS**

The GoB has been an active supporter in planning and implementing USAID/Bangladesh's development programs. USAID will support the GoB's plans to transform its economy to achieve Bangladesh's vision of becoming a middle income country.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), the Ministry of Land (MoL), and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL) are the apex institutions of the GoB with the broad mandate to oversee forest and aquatic ecosystems and land management. National and local governments in Bangladesh share responsibilities in natural resource management, while local governments are mandated with formulating local development plans. This activity will engage both the central government environmental ministries as well as local governments, co-management organizations, and other civil society stakeholders and leverage the investments of donor projects. Increasing public awareness and GoB prioritization of environmental protection and biodiversity conservation provide an opportunity for USAID to engage GoB planners and the donor community to articulate and implement a long-term vision for biodiversity conservation in Bangladesh.

## **PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL**

**Activity Description:** This activity will build upon successful prior activities mentioned above. co-management strategies to enable local communities to more effectively manage natural resources, safeguard critical ecosystems and biodiversity, and integrate ecosystem-based management into an environmental governance framework. By engaging local communities, disaster management committees, units of local government, GoB agencies, environmental CSOs, the private sector, and co-management organizations as meaningful agents in environmental governance, diverse stakeholders will be better positioned to sustainably manage natural resources and conserve biodiversity over the long term.

This activity will broaden the co-management approach with technical assistance that encompasses both central government agencies and units of local government while also forging linkages to the private sector. Local-level engagement will enhance the sustainability of environmental conservation. At the same time, this activity aims to build the GoB's capacity to respond to a wide array of threats to biodiversity conservation in collaboration with civil society organizations, community stakeholders, and the private sector. The USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* activity will engage these stakeholders in the effective management, protection and governance of critical forest and aquatic ecosystems while advancing economic incentives, including ecotourism and payment for ecosystem services to further the long-term sustainability of biodiversity conservation efforts. It will focus on attaining sustainable nature-based solutions that strengthen the co-management and natural resources governance process. Initiatives such

as the Nishorgo network will be assessed for creating a conservation platform that sustains beyond the life of the activity.

Weak environmental governance is a critical constraint to effective natural resources management. This includes relatively low levels of citizen awareness, commitment to, and demand for sound natural resource management. A lack of institutional resources, personnel, capabilities, structures, and policies at both the local and national levels also impact environmental governance efforts. This activity will advance the use of governance tools to promote environmental stewardship, including strengthening legal frameworks, building institutional capacity, supporting inclusive decision-making by engaging civil society and the private sector, improving transparency and accountability, and fostering diverse and inclusive public participation and environmental advocacy. Targeted environmental education and awareness-raising aimed at fostering environmental stewardship will be integrated into the strategic approach so as to implement and scale up environmental governance initiatives to improve the management and conservation of the country's at-risk biodiversity resources.

**Activity Goal:** *The overall goal of the USAID Ecosystems / Protibesh activity is to improve ecosystem conservation in and around targeted Key Biodiversity Areas of Bangladesh.*

**Development Hypothesis:** If environmental governance and management is strengthened, biodiversity threats mitigated, and market-based incentives advanced for all stakeholders, then ecosystem conservation of key biodiversity areas will be improved.

This activity seeks to improve ecosystem conservation in at least two Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in and around the Sundarbans of southwestern Bangladesh and the Sylhet region of northeastern Bangladesh, while increasing the participation and strengthening the leadership of local communities and civil society, including the private sector; and engaging men, women, and youth at the local level in areas in the general vicinity of these KBAs. The achievement of three key results, namely: 1) environmental governance and management strengthened, 2) threats to biodiversity mitigated, and 3) market-based incentives that promote sustainable natural resource management advanced, will lead directly to the activity goal of improved ecosystem conservation in and around targeted KBAs.

<b>Development Objective 4: Strengthened Resilience to Natural Hazards</b>		
<b>Intermediate Result 4.1: Improved Ecosystem Conservation</b>		
<b>ACTIVITY GOAL – Improved Ecosystem Conservation in and around Targeted Key Biodiversity Areas of Bangladesh</b>		
<b>RESULT 1: Environmental Governance and Management Strengthened</b>	<b>RESULT 2: Threats to Biodiversity Mitigated</b>	<b>RESULT 3: Market-Based Incentives that Promote Sustainable Natural Resource Management Advanced</b>
IR 1.1: Policies, plans and actions that integrate sound environmental management designed and implemented at national and local levels	IR 2.1: Coordinated local and national-level approaches that stem the loss of critical ecosystems implemented	IR 3.1: Sustainable and responsible strategies such as ecotourism that engage the private sector and encourage environmental protection implemented
IR 1.2: Transparent, accountable, inclusive, and participatory environmental governance policies and practices adopted and institutionalized	IR 2.2: Knowledge base and capacity of communities, CSOs, local governments and GoB agencies to sustainably co-manage flora and fauna strengthened	IR 3.2: Market-based mechanisms such as payment for ecosystem services to sustain natural resources demonstrated, implemented, and scaled-up
IR 1.3: Financial sustainability of co-management organizations strengthened	IR 2.3: Environmental protection prioritized by civil society; men, women, and youth; the private sector; and all levels of government	IR 3.3: Gender-sensitive alternative livelihoods with strong market linkages that reduce natural resource dependence increased

USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* will build upon USAID’s leadership in advancing the co-management framework in Bangladesh implemented over the past two decades. It will integrate ecosystem-based management into the local and regional governance context by partnering closely with units of local government, civil society, and the private sector to enhance the sustainability of environmental conservation and to more fully and meaningfully engage local stakeholders. The goal is to improve ecosystem conservation in and around targeted KBAs of Bangladesh. Three key results will support the achievement of this goal. Ensuring sustainability will be a key focus of this activity.

Result 1, *Environmental Governance and Management Strengthened*, will be advanced with the achievement of three intermediate results: IR 1.1: Policies, plans and actions that integrate sound environmental management designed and implemented at national and local levels; IR 1.2: Transparent, accountable, inclusive, and participatory environmental governance policies and practices adopted and institutionalized; and IR 1.3: Financial sustainability of co-management organizations strengthened.

Result 2, *Threats to Biodiversity Mitigated*, will be advanced with the achievement of the following intermediate results: IR 2.1: Coordinated local and national-level approaches that stem the loss of critical ecosystems implemented; IR 2.2: Knowledge base and capacity of communities, CSOs, local governments and GoB agencies to sustainably co-manage flora and fauna strengthened; and IR 2.3: Environmental protection prioritized by civil society; men, women and youth; the private sector; and all levels of government.

Result 3, *Market-Based Incentives that Promote Sustainable Natural Resource Management Advanced*, will be advanced with the achievement of the these intermediate results: IR 3.1: Sustainable and responsible strategies such as ecotourism that engage the private sector and encourage environmental protection implemented; IR 3.2: Market-based mechanisms such as payment for ecosystem services to sustain natural resources demonstrated, implemented, and scaled-up; and IR 3.3: Gender-sensitive alternative livelihoods with strong market linkages that reduce natural resource dependence increased.

The activity's potential beneficiaries include men, women, youth, minority populations, rural households, co-management organizations, civil society groups, units of local government, and national government ministries. Potential partners include private sector businesses, educational institutions, the Government of Bangladesh, and environmental civil society organizations. By engaging all key stakeholders the activity will be more effective in partnering, advocating, and contributing to the achievement of the key results and the overall activity goal. It is envisioned that the applicant would issue a limited number of sub-grants, up to a total of approximately \$1 million over the life of the activity, to environmental NGOs to support field work, build their capacity, and to further activity objectives in and around Sylhet and the Sundarbans. The Activity will work with local stakeholders to identify a sustainable pathway to strengthen the co-management process to conserve flora and fauna of targeted KBAs.

#### **Illustrative Indicators:**

- ❖ Number of hectares of biologically significant areas under improved natural resource management as a result of USG assistance.
- ❖ Number of people with improved economic benefits derived from sustainable natural resource management and/or biodiversity conservation as a result of USG assistance.
- ❖ Number of laws, policies, or regulations addressing biodiversity, conservation or other environmental themes officially proposed, adopted, or implemented as a result of USG assistance.

**Geographical Focus:** This activity will initially target local communities in two regions with key biodiversity areas: 1) the Sundarbans Reserve Forest in southwestern Bangladesh (a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Khulna Division); and 2) the ecologically critical forest and wetland zones (for example, Hakaluki Haor and Tanguar Haor, among others) of northeastern Bangladesh's Sylhet Division. Both landscapes include designated wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. Proposed forest and aquatic sites must be recognized for their biodiversity resources, represent relatively intact ecosystems, be under threat from human activity, and have significant linkages with the broader landscapes. The Activity will be implemented at the national level in collaboration with GoB ministries in Dhaka and at the local and regional level in partnership with units of local government, co-management organizations, regional organizations and other related entities. This activity could involve upstream communities, cities and regional entities as necessary to address specific threats (pollution, agricultural or industrial activities, human settlement encroachment, water mismanagement, etc.) to key biodiversity areas in a coordinated and holistic fashion. The activity may expand

when the need arises to include other communities and regions where significant impacts are occurring to KBAs, and to share lessons from the initial targeted sites and communities.

**Private Sector Leverage:** As the private sector plays an increasingly critical role in shaping sustainable economic development, USAID is increasingly engaging corporations, local businesses, financial institutions, investment firms, private foundations and others as core partners in our efforts to drive economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve outcomes in developing countries. This activity's strategic approach is guided by a commitment to forge partnerships that can leverage the expertise, assets, technologies, networks and resources of the private sector and achieve greater development impact, continuity and sustainability. Ultimately, the private sector has several roles to play, including as a key player in environmental governance, a key stakeholder to mitigate threats to biodiversity, a sustainable source of alternative employment, and a potential sustainable investor in local economies and market-based conservation efforts.

The USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* activity will leverage support from the private sector to identify enterprise-driven conservation solutions that empower resource-dependent communities and link them with alternative sources of income. Innovative solutions that emerge from the private sector will create linkages with local communities and engage youth through conservation initiatives. Partnerships with the private sector can develop eco-friendly, small-scale infrastructure to promote conservation efforts; generate revenue to protect targeted KBAs; develop the capacity of local communities in sustainable, market-driven enterprises; and attract investment from outside business enterprises to generate long-term, sustainable ecosystem conservation.

## **GENDER, YOUTH, AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT**

USAID's policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment requires activities to integrate gender into designs, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. This activity will integrate gender considerations and promote empowerment of women throughout all interventions, for example, by building women's capacity for active participation in co-management bodies and by strengthening women's leadership role in environmental governance.

USAID's Youth in Development Policy requires activities to mainstream and engage youth in Agency initiatives. This activity will include youth within environmental governance interventions, and promote their leadership and participation within the co-management platform. Youth engagement will strengthen and sustain nature-based solutions through skill development and entrepreneurial activities, active participation in decision-making processes and monitoring of environmental activities, and positive behavior change toward conservation.

Environmental degradation and poor planning have a disproportionately negative impact on society's most vulnerable citizens. Women, children, youth, the elderly, and members of marginalized communities are more likely to lack an external source of income, are more likely to be in non-decision-making roles, and are more likely to be ignored in official data collection and research.

USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* will pursue field-level gender responsive initiatives through the promotion of a gender equity approach in natural resource management. The activity will first develop a gender, youth and social inclusion analysis and then, based on the results of that analysis, will then formulate a short, specific, and actionable gender strategy to advance gender equity and female and youth empowerment throughout the life of the activity. It will ensure that interventions build the capacity of women, girls and youth for active participation in natural

resource management; increase women's access to alternative livelihood activities and financial resources; promote women's leadership in natural resource governance; sensitize men and youth on the importance of inclusive natural resource management and participation; identify techniques that transform men's and male youth's behavior toward women; and reduce gender-based violence.

A thorough analysis of gender roles in local governance structures will be evaluated and form the basis for developing enabling and inclusive environments where the voice and opinions of the marginalized, i.e., the poor, women, and youth, are heard and addressed in capacity development, policy-making and implementation of ecosystem-based management actions. An inclusive development approach ensures that all people are included and can participate fully in and benefit from development efforts. The following are illustrative examples of inclusive development that could be considered during the implementation of this Activity:

- ❖ Invest in women-friendly employment opportunities / value chains;
- ❖ Utilize female and marginalized people as trainers throughout activity implementation;
- ❖ Utilize awareness campaigns to publicize opportunities for women, youth, and other disadvantaged groups;
- ❖ Support existing youth groups and women's associations;
- ❖ Engage men and male youth to develop conflict mitigation skills and to reduce the incidence of gender-based violence;
- ❖ Link women and minority populations to broader social networks;
- ❖ Provide flexible training scheduling to support higher levels of female and youth participation;
- ❖ Train women, marginalized populations and youth on leadership, negotiation, public speaking, and livelihoods development; and
- ❖ Ensure inclusion of indigeneous communities in conservation decision making processes, employment or livelihood opportunities and outreach efforts.

## **ESSENTIAL DESIGN ELEMENTS / GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

**Authorizing Legislation:** The Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended, is the Agency's principal authorizing legislation. Section 635(b) of the FAA provides that "[t]he President may make loans, advances, and grants to make and perform agreements and contracts with, or enter into other transactions with, any individual, corporation, or other body of persons, friendly government or government agency, whether within or without the United States and international organizations in furtherance of the purposes and within the limitations of this Act." See FAA § 635(b).

**Geographic Information Systems (GIS):** This Activity is expected to utilize GIS in activity planning, implementation, coordination, and reporting. Applicants will need to describe in detail the proposed use of GIS in their respective technical applications.

**USAID Policies and Strategies:** The following USAID policies and strategies will significantly inform the design and implementation of the activity.

- ❖ **Biodiversity Policy**: The Biodiversity Policy represents a strengthened commitment to conserve biodiversity through strategic actions to conserve the world’s most important biodiversity and a new focus on integrating biodiversity and other development sectors for improved outcomes. Biodiversity conservation itself can be a critical tool for achieving sustainable development.
- ❖ **Digital Strategy**: Building on decades of USAID leadership in digital development, the strategy outlines USAID’s deliberate and holistic commitment to improve development and humanitarian assistance outcomes through the use of digital technology and strengthen open, inclusive, and secure digital ecosystems.
- ❖ **Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy**: The goal is to improve the lives of citizens around the world by advancing equality between females and males, and empowering women and girls to participate fully in and benefit from the development of their societies.
- ❖ **Indo-Pacific Vision**: In support of the President’s vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific, the U.S. Government is advancing a whole-of-government approach focused in three areas: creating open and transparent markets to unlock private enterprise-led growth; advancing citizen-responsive governance that adheres to a rules-based order; and building a resilient network of security partners capable of addressing shared threats.
- ❖ **Journey to Self-Reliance**: “Self-Reliance” is a country’s ability to finance and implement solutions to its own development challenges. USAID’s focus on self-reliance is intended to help partners to plan, finance, and implement their own development solutions.
- ❖ **Local Systems**: This framework recognizes that improving development outcomes results from increasing the performance and effectiveness of multiple actors and interactions; sustaining development outcomes depends on the sustainability of the local system.
- ❖ **Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous People**: The goal is to improve the measurable impact and sustainability of USAID’s programs by ensuring engagement of Indigenous Peoples as meaningful partners in development processes; safeguard against harm; and enhance their ability to promote their rights, determine their own priorities, and advance their self-reliance.
- ❖ **Private Sector Engagement Policy**: This is a call to action for USAID and our partners to embrace market-based approaches as a more-sustainable way to support communities in achieving development and humanitarian outcomes at scale. This is based on the premise that private enterprise is one of the most-powerful forces for lifting lives, strengthening communities, and accelerating countries to self-reliance.
- ❖ **Vision for Ending Extreme Poverty**: The Vision articulates what is needed to end extreme poverty by presenting a theory of change summarizing the evidence on elements across countries that have achieved significant reductions in extreme poverty.

- ❖ **Water and Development Strategy**: By 2025, two-thirds of the world's population could be living under severe water stress, adversely affecting communities, economies, and ecosystems worldwide. Ensuring the availability of safe water to sustain natural systems and human life is integral to the success of USAID development objectives.
- ❖ **Youth in Development Policy**: USAID emphasizes integrating youth considerations as a cross-cutting factor in all programming, as well as the importance of building diverse partnerships and fostering innovation with and on behalf of young people.

**Climate Risk Management**: Climate risk management (CRM) is the process of using climate information to assess and address the risk that climate change poses to USAID projects and activities, and building in flexibility to adjust and adapt to a changing climate to achieve the intended objectives. For USAID's purposes, climate risk is the potential for negative consequences due to existing and changing climatic conditions where the outcome is uncertain. The goal of CRM is both to render USAID's work more climate resilient (i.e., better able to anticipate, prepare for and adapt to changing climate conditions and withstand, respond to and recover rapidly from disruptions) and to avoid maladaptation (i.e., development efforts that inadvertently increase climate risks).

**Conflict Sensitivity and Do No Harm**: Ensure that program activities are maximizing positive and constructive dynamics in the communities in which they operate, and not exacerbating negative or destructive dynamics. A conflict sensitive approach reflects understanding of the context in which the project will operate; the interaction between the proposed intervention and that context; and innovative thinking for avoiding negative impacts and maximizing positive ones. Innovative thinking should inform and be reflected in adaptive management decisions.

**Sustainability and Exit Strategy**: USAID's environmental governance activities strive to achieve long-term sustainability and build upon the work of the Nishorgo Network of co-management stakeholders. Measures need to be put in place to ensure the continuation of a structured environmental governance process beyond the life of this activity. The USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* activity will identify risks, practice adaptive management, and integrate sustainability and exit strategy measures into its Theory of Change and all aspects of activity implementation.

- ❖ Program Area EG 10: Environment (*Ensure that the environment and the natural resources upon which human lives and livelihoods depend are managed in ways that sustain productivity growth, a healthy population, as well as the intrinsic spiritual and cultural value of the environment*); and
- ❖ Program Area EG 13: Sustainable Landscapes (*Sustainable Landscapes programs promote sustainable land use practices through the development of low emissions development plans and/or Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) strategies; improved data and analytical tools; monitoring, reporting, and verification systems; enabling laws and policies; effective implementing institutions; social and environmental safeguards; economic incentives; and demonstration activities*).

Biodiversity programs must be consistent with criteria established in the Biodiversity Code:

- ❖ The program must have an explicit biodiversity objective;
- ❖ Activities must be identified based on an analysis of drivers and threats to biodiversity and a corresponding theory of change;
- ❖ Site-based programs must have the intent to positively impact biodiversity in biologically significant areas; and

- ❖ The program must monitor indicators associated with a stated theory of change for biodiversity conservation results.

**[END OF SECTION A]**

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## **SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

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

USAID intends to award one Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide not more than \$20,500,000 in total USAID funding, out of which \$1,000,000 is exclusively reserved for a Crisis and/or Emergency Response budget line item.

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

The anticipated period of performance is five (5) years or sixty (60) months.

The Agreement Officer intends to make an award approximately 6 months following the release of this NOFO. This time period may change based on the negotiation processes.

### **3. Substantial Involvement**

USAID/Bangladesh anticipates a close working partnership with the recipient's programs and as such, in accordance with the ADS Chapter 303.3.11 USAID/Bangladesh shall be substantially involved during the implementation of this Cooperative Agreement in the following ways, but are not limited to:

1. The Agency's approval of the recipient's implementation plans during performance,
2. If the program establishes an Advisory Committee, then USAID would participate as a member to provide advice to the recipient,
3. The Agency's review and approval of proposed subawards or contracts,
4. The Agency's involvement in the selection of key recipient personnel,
5. Agency and recipient collaboration or joint participation and sharing of technical knowledge,
6. Agency monitoring to permit specific kinds of direction or redirection of the work, and
7. Direct Agency operational involvement or participation to ensure compliance with Federal stewardship responsibilities.

### **4. Authorized Geographic Code**

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this program is 937 (the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source).

### **5. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient**

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* activity, which is authorized by Federal statute. The successful Applicant 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.

**[END OF SECTION B]**

## **SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **1. Eligible Applicants**

Eligibility for this NOFO is not restricted.

### **2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

There is no cost sharing requirement for this NOFO.

### **3. 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](http://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](http://www.sam.gov), navigate to Help, then to International Registrants.

### **4. Conflict of Interest Pre-Award Term (August 2018)**

#### **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. Only if an applicant is asked to proceed to Phase 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) 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 C]**

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## SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### 1. Agency Point of Contact

Andrew Holland, CPCM  
Supervisory Agreement Officer,  
USAID Bangladesh  
C/o, American Embassy – Dhaka  
Madani Avenue, Baridhara  
Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh  
Phone: +88-02-55662000  
Email: aholland@usaid.gov

Howard Weston  
Agreement Specialist  
USAID Bangladesh  
C/o, American Embassy – Dhaka  
Madani Avenue, Baridhara  
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Ahsan Rahman  
Agreement Specialist  
USAID Bangladesh  
C/o, American Embassy – Dhaka  
Madani Avenue, Baridhara  
Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh  
Phone: +88-02-55662000  
Email: marahman@usaid.gov

### 2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO should be submitted by email to [marahman@usaid.gov](mailto:marahman@usaid.gov), and copying [aholland@usaid.gov](mailto:aholland@usaid.gov) and [hweston@usaid.gov](mailto:hweston@usaid.gov) no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment to this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicant.

### 3. General Instructions, Selection Process and Application Format

The selection process for an award under this NOFO will proceed in multiple phases.

#### Phase 1

In Phase 1, applicants will submit a Technical Approach that demonstrates how the applicant intends to achieve the objectives and results of the Program Description in Section A. Based on the results of the evaluation process in accordance with the merit review criteria outlined in Section E, The Agreement Officer will select up to three Technical Approaches that show the greatest promise of success. These selected Technical Approaches will proceed to Phase 2. The Agreement Officer may select fewer than three or more than three Technical Approaches if the number of promising Technical Approaches warrant it.

In the event USAID determines none of the initial applications received are acceptable, USAID may issue an amendment to this NOFO to again seek interested applicants.

#### Phase 2

Following the selection of Technical Approaches in Phase 1, applicants will be notified if their Technical Approach will or will not proceed to Phase 2. Technical Approaches not selected in Phase 1 will no longer be considered for an award under this NOFO. Only Technical Approaches selected in Phase 1 will proceed to Phase 2.

In Phase 2, applicants will submit a full Technical Application consisting of 3 sections: a revised Technical Approach that incorporates applicants' answers to questions posed by the selection committee to the applicant, a management and staffing plan, and a statement of institutional

capacity and past performance. In Phase 2, applicants will also submit a Cost Application. Applicants, if notified they will proceed to Phase 2, will be provided instructions for Phase 2 application requirements and merit review criteria (A sample of Phase 2 instructions and merit review criteria are attached to this NOFO). Applicants will have approximately 15 days to submit their complete Phase 2 applications. The Agreement Officer will determine this deadline and include this information with Phase 2 instructions.

The selection committee will evaluate all complete applications submitted during Phase 2 and the Agreement Officer will select an apparently successful applicant (ASA) with whom the Agreement Officer will conduct discussions. In the event that discussions with the ASA are not successful, the Agreement Officer reserves the right to select a new ASA from Phase 2 applications with whom to have discussions or make no award.

It is USAID's intent to issue a cooperative agreement, subject to fund availability, to an applicant based on their Phase 2 application without conducting any further discussions. Therefore, it is imperative that Phase 2 applications be complete. However, USAID reserves the right to either accept or reject applications or conduct discussions to refine elements of an application if deemed to be in the best interests of USAID. If USAID does engage in discussions with an applicant, USAID may substantially seek revision of the technical approach or other sections of the application to reach a consensus with the applicant of a final application.

Submission of an application does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of the application or any other subsequent revisions of the applications. Further, USAID reserves the right to reject any or all application revisions received at any stage of the application process.

### **Submission Format**

Applications must comply with the following:

- Written in English
- Use standard 8 ½" x 11" page format, single sided, single-spaced, 11 point Arial font, or 12 point Times New Roman font, or equivalent, 1" margins all around, left justification and headers on each page that include date of submission, applicant's name and NOFO number. Footers shall contain consecutive page numbers.
- Submitted as a searchable and editable PDF file (USAID may later request a word version).
- Files must not be in ZIP format or encrypted.

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

Applicants must review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to do so may be considered as being non-responsive and may result in an application being rejected or

evaluated accordingly. Applicants should retain a copy of the application and all enclosures for their records.

#### **4. Application Submission Procedures**

Submit applications by email TO [marahman@usaid.gov](mailto:marahman@usaid.gov) and CC [aholland@usaid.gov](mailto:aholland@usaid.gov), [hweston@usaid.gov](mailto:hweston@usaid.gov). No other form of submission will be accepted. Applicants must send one single email and attach the Technical Application. In the subject line write "NOFO Number, Organization Name, Technical Application.

The Technical Application must be emailed as a single file. Do not send multiple files. Do not send organization literature, promotion material, articles, or any other information not explicitly asked for in this NOFO.

After submitting an application electronically, applicants should immediately check their own email to confirm that the attachments were sent. If an applicant discovers an error in transmission, send the material again and note in the subject line of the email "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.

Applications must be submitted no later than the closing date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Late applications may be rejected or evaluated adversely at the Selection Committee's (SC) discretion. Applicants should retain proof of timely delivery in the form of system generated documentation. Applicants are reminded that email is NOT instantaneous, and in some cases delays of several hours occur from transmission to receipt. Therefore, applicants are requested to send the application in sufficient time ahead of the deadline.

#### **5. Technical Application Format**

The Technical Application should be specific, complete, and presented concisely. The Technical Application must demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals, objectives and results of this Activity.

A successful approach will demonstrate thorough understanding and consideration of the requirements of the Activity in the Program Description in Section A, the instructions in this section and the evaluation criterion in Section E of this NOFO.

The Technical Application shall consist of 4 sections: Cover Page, Table of Contents, Executive Summary, and Technical Approach. The Technical Application must not exceed 20 single-spaced typed pages and conform to guidelines in D.3. All 4 sections are included in the page limit. USAID will not evaluate information submitted in excess of the above stated page limits.

##### **(a) Cover Page -**

- Name of the organization(s) submitting the application;
- Identification and signature of the primary contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address) and the identification of the alternate contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address);
- Activity name

- Notice of Funding Opportunity number
  - Name of any proposed sub-recipients or partnerships. (Identify if any of the organizations are local organizations, per USAID's definition of 'local entity' under ADS 303.)
- (b) Table of Contents** - Include major sections and page numbers.
- (c) Executive Summary** - Provide a high-level overview of key elements of the Technical Approach.
- (d) Technical Approach**  
Applicants should present an innovative technical approach that describes the overall strategy and specific implementations proposed by the applicant and how the implementations link to the Goal and IRs 1.1 through 3.3 in the results matrix listed in Section A of this NOFO. The technical approach must demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the background and development challenges in Bangladesh related to ecosystem conservation, environmental governance and management, co-management frameworks, sustainable natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, market-based conservation strategies, a realistic assessment of opportunities to link and synergize with other USAID funded projects, and a strong focus on sustainable results. Applicants are encouraged to propose innovative yet realistic approaches that are most appropriate in the context of Bangladesh. The technical approach should include:
- An Outline of all program elements, with a clearly articulated vision of proposed results;
  - A demonstrated understanding of the issues to be addressed, including recommendations for prioritization;
  - Presentation of challenges to success and mitigation strategies;
  - Criteria for selecting beneficiaries and an illustrative list of partners, as well as benchmarks that would signify graduation from assistance;
  - An exit strategy for the phase-out and sustainability of activities;
  - Creative use of new technology, innovative tools and lessons learned; and
  - Substantive attention to private sector engagement; gender, youth, and social inclusion; and other cross-cutting themes under the USAID Mission Strategy.
  - The Applicant's capability to address gender gaps and to empower women and youth, and will also illustrate how their organization is structured to ensure that gender disparities will be deliberately and adequately addressed in their programming.
  - The applicant will identify the initial challenges and constraints related to gender differences and all applicable forms of social exclusion, such as youth and persons with disabilities and how they plan on monitoring differential impact by gender and ethnicity.

**[END OF SECTION D]**

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## **SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

USAID will conduct a merit review of all applications received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated in a multi-phased process.

Phase 1 applications will be evaluated using the merit review criterion described below. Phase 2 merit review criteria will be provided to Phase 2 eligible applicants with instructions for submitting Phase 2 applications. A sample of Phase 2 instructions and merit review criteria are attached to this NOFO.

The Phase 1 merit review criterion prescribed below is tailored to the requirements of this particular NOFO. Applicants should note this criterion serves to (a) identify the significant matters that applicants should address in their applications, and (b) set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated.

### **Phase 1 Merit Review Criterion: Technical Approach**

The extent to which the applicants approach and interventions, within and around targeted Key Biodiversity Areas of Bangladesh, (i) are likely to sustainably strengthen environmental governance and management, (ii) mitigate threats to biodiversity, (iii) leverage private sector resources and capacity and advance market-based incentives that promote sustainable natural resources management, (iv) effectively partner with local stakeholders to increase sustainability and (v) achieve cross cutting objectives, e.g. gender, youth and social inclusion.

**[END OF SECTION E]**

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## SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### 1. Federal Award Notices

Award of the agreement contemplated by this NOFO cannot be made until funds have been appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award.

It is USAID/Bangladesh's intent, subject to fund availability, to issue one cooperative agreement without conducting further discussions to an Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA) whose Application shows the greatest promise of achieving the Activity's goals, objectives and results. Therefore, it is imperative that applications are complete when submitted. However, USAID reserves the right to accept one or more applications for further discussions before issuing an award if deemed to be in the best interests of the U.S. government.

### 2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The resulting award from this NOFO will be administered in accordance with the following policies and regulations.

For US organizations: [ADS 303](#), [2 CFR 700](#), [2 CFR 200](#), and [Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental organizations](#).

For Non US organizations: [Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations](#).

See Annex 1, for a list of the Standard Provisions that will be applicable to any awards resulting from this NOFO.

### 3. Reporting Requirements

The Recipient shall submit required reports and deliverables as described below. All reports must be submitted in electronic format. Detailed content of the reports will be provided in the resulting cooperative agreement.

Report / Deliverable	Due Date
Quarterly Financial Reports	Within 15 days after end of each quarter
Final Financial Report	Within 90 days following the expiration of the award
Quarterly Performance Reports	Within 15 days after end of each quarter
Annual Progress Reports	Within 30 days after end of each activity year
Final Report	Within 60 days after completion of the Agreement
Annual Work Plans	Initial Work Plan due within 45 days of the Agreement's effective date. Subsequent Work Plans due by September 1 of

	each year.
MEL Plan	Within 60 days of the Agreement's effective date
Security Plan	Within 90 days of award date
Sustainability and Exit Strategy	Within 90 days of the Agreement's effective date
Grants Manual	Within 90 days of the Agreement's effective date
Political Economy Analysis	Within 90 days of the Agreement's effective date
Communication Strategy	Within 120 days of the Agreement's effective date
Branding Strategy & Marking Plan	Within 120 days of the Agreement's effective date
Gender, Youth, and Social Inclusion Analysis and Strategy	Within 90 days of the Agreement's effective date
Weekly Updates	Bullet point summary emailed by COB Thursday each week
Success Stories and Photos/Videos	Integrated into Quarterly Performance Reports, Annual Reports, Final Report, and when as requested by USAID
Technical Reports	As and when developed

**(i) FINANCIAL REPORTING:**

Financial Reports shall be in accordance with applicable 2 CFR 200.327 and USAID Standard Provisions.

**Quarterly Financial Report:**

- a. Quarterly Financial Reports shall be due within 15 days following the end of each quarter corresponding to USAID's fiscal year from October 1 through September 30.
- b. The recipient will submit accruals and projected expenditure reports to USAID on a quarterly basis.
- c. The recipient must ensure that the financial management system always meets the Federal standards for fund control and accountability. The recipient further agrees to furnish USAID an annual financial statement for USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* activity. The annual statements will be provided each year on the date this agreement is effective.

**Final Financial Report:**

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

**(ii) PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

The Recipient will submit reports to the USAID AOR, unless otherwise stated, as described below:

**a. Quarterly Performance Reports (QPR)**

The Recipient will submit quarterly performance reports to reflect progress, the activities of the preceding three months and lessons learned. The report must describe the tasks completed in the last three months relative to what was anticipated in the approved work plan, and will assess the overall activity impact to date relative to the performance indicator targets and results defined in the activity theory of change. More details on the format of the quarterly performance reports will be provided after award.

**b. Annual Progress Report (APR)**

Annual performance reports will summarize actions, progress and results during the year in relation to the approved work plan and the activity theory of change it supports. The report should include lessons learned, proposed adaptive management shifts, and proposed updates to the theory of change. The annual performance report will be used by USAID to assess the status of activity implementation. Each annual performance report will include an assessment as to whether the activity strategic approaches and actions are leading to the activity purpose. The annual performance report will cover all of the items included in the quarterly performance report, with a focus on the Activity results over the entire year. More details on the format of the annual performance report will be provided after award.

**c. Final Report (FR)**

The Final Report must discuss all strategic approaches and results from the start of the award through its completion. More details on the format of the final report will be provided after award.

**(iii) PERFORMANCE PLANNING REPORTING**

**a. Annual Work Plan**

The annual work plan details how the Recipient will use the work plan year effectively to achieve the activity purpose and strategic approaches. The work plan serves as a guide to program implementation and, once approved, represents an agreement as to the objectives and timing of specific tasks and interventions. The work plan is intended to be an annual roadmap for USAID and the Recipient.

(Note: the first year work plan should go from the activity start date through the end of the next fiscal year so it may be longer or shorter than 12 months depending on the date of the award.)

**b. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan:**

For the purpose of routine and formal monitoring and evaluation, the Recipient shall develop a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL Plan) for USAID's review and approval within 60

days of signing the award for the timeframe of the project. The MEL Plan will be developed in adherence with ADS 201. USAID expects that the MEL Plan will underpin a coherent monitoring, evaluation and learning system that will objectively assess the overall progress and impact of the project as outlined in the Program Description. The MEL Plan shall outline the processes that will be used to harmonize instruments and schedules to support

USAID data reporting needs. Monitoring, evaluation and learning data shall be used to inform management decisions, resource allocation and to assess where changes to the project may be

required to help better ensure that the desired impact will be achieved. Quarterly and Annual reports submitted by the Recipient must be focused on reporting progress against the approved MEL Plan.

The MEL Plan should include a Results Framework that is aligned with the approved USAID/Bangladesh Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) with a clear indication of USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* award contributions to DO4 and other relevant DOs.

The MEL Plan should also include: the development hypothesis and critical assumptions; baseline values and targets to show progress over time; a Performance Data Table summarizing key performance indicators; Performance Indicator Reference Sheets for each indicator that include, detailed description of performance indicators to be tracked, source, method and schedule of data collection, reporting frequency, known data limitations and planned actions to address the limitations. Baselines must be established within three months of award. The MEL Plan will include a Performance Management Task Schedule that includes any special studies, assessments and surveys that will be conducted as part of monitoring, evaluation and learning of the project. Surveys must meet rigorous scientific standards in all aspects of sampling, instrumental design and field implementation.

The MEL Plan shall include measurable indicators pertinent to activity-level management, monitoring and reporting. Relevant CDCS indicators should be taken into account as appropriate. The performance indicators should include a list of both output-level and outcome-level indicators as appropriate across the hierarchy of results in the Results Framework. Outcome indicators must be identified for each Intermediate Result (IR) and output indicators for the sub-IR level. In addition to these custom indicators, appropriate standard indicators from the relevant U.S. Foreign Assistance Framework Program Element should be identified, tracked and reported on. Whenever applicable, data must be gender disaggregated and gender impacts included in the overall analysis of USAID Ecosystems / *Protibesh* activity results. If a single gender/ethnicity is disproportionately involved or benefited, the Recipient must explain the reason and whether or not it is appropriate. If deemed inappropriate and the result of a structural cause, the Recipient will inform USAID and suggest remedial interventions to improve the equity of implementation. USAID performance indicators are subject to change and/or modification. The MEL Plan will be reviewed on at least an annual basis during project implementation.

The Recipient shall report on the performance indicators in coordination with USAID's reporting schedules and feed into USAID/Bangladesh's Mission PMP. Periodic Data Quality Assessments (DQA) will be conducted to ensure that the performance indicators meet USAID's data quality

standards on Validity, Precision, Reliability, Integrity, and Timeliness. An initial DQA will be conducted within the first six months of the project's MEL Plan approval. Primary data for some measures will be collected from a variety of sources, including local and national governments. As necessary, the Recipient will provide assistance to selected sub-national government counterparts to develop systems to track and report measures. USAID or its designee may conduct evaluations focused on key implementation issues during this cooperative agreement. Evaluations will be conducted in line with ADS 201 and USAID Evaluation Policy and accompanying documents. Such external evaluation(s) may include a detailed review and analysis of the development hypothesis, cause and effect dynamics, project organization, management, field work, significant outputs, and the quality and quantity of overall performance. The Recipient shall ensure sufficient planning for the regular collection of data that may be required for different types of evaluations, including counterfactual data for impact evaluations. While monitoring will provide USAID and the Recipient with early indications of a program's progress, evaluations will provide deeper insight to help USAID achieve the intended results. The Recipient will be expected to cooperate fully with those conducting the evaluation, and to share any data requested. These evaluations differ from the mandatory recipient performance report, which is an annual report that Agreement Officers and the project manager collaboratively prepare to evaluate recipient's performance.

The Recipient must use effective and efficient mechanisms to monitor and evaluate progress, impact, and learning related to the activities and performances at all levels. USAID expects that the Recipient will be innovative and creative in their efforts to capture, document, and report all the outcomes of USAID assistance.

#### **(iv) OTHER REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS**

##### **Security Reporting**

As part of the overall security requirements, the Recipient shall report any security threats and/or incidents verbally/by telephone, immediately to the following USAID/Bangladesh representatives:

- Partner Security Liaison Unit (PSLU) Security & Safety Specialist and any other USAID/Bangladesh EXO designated official(s);
- Executive Officer (EXO);
- Agreement Officer Representative (AOR) or Alternate AOR in the AOR's absence

Subsequently, a written report shall be submitted in accordance with approved procedures delineated below. The Recipient shall develop a list of specific steps to track any potential/identified threats, which will be part of its overall security system. All subcontractors will be required by the Recipient to report any threats/incidents to the Recipient, who will immediately after, notify the above listed USAID/Bangladesh representatives.

## **SECURITY REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES**

USAID requires appropriate security reports be submitted to the USAID/Bangladesh/EXO Partner Security Liaison Unit (PSLU) Safety & Security Specialist, Executive Office; AOR; and other USAID/Bangladesh officials as directed by USAID Executive Office. The type and frequency of these reports may vary with the project scope, location, and criticality. The Recipient shall report an Initial Threat Assessment and subsequent changes as often as the situation requires (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly etc.). The recipient is also required to notify USAID of any security related incident in a timely manner according to the following guidelines:

### **Incident Reporting**

There are various types of Incident Reporting: Serious Incident Report (SIR); Incident Report (IR); Situation Report (SITREP); and any other security related report that may be required by USAID.

### **Serious Incident Report (SIR)**

- An incident that involves the death, injury, kidnapping of IP personnel and/or damage to IP property.
- An incident that has critically damaged the funded program, such as fire, catastrophic flood, etc.
- Initial SIR must be reported verbally immediately and within 4 hours of the incident occurrence/discovered.
- A Complete SIR must be filed in writing / email within 24 hours of the incident.
- Updated written SIR will continue to be filed in a timely basis (daily, weekly) as long as the situation exists. The time line will be adjusted as required by the USAID/Bangladesh/PSLU.
- Final Report SIR will summarize the incident, subsequent events, and the final resolution.

### **Incident Report (IR)**

- An incident involving accidents, potential harm, suspicious persons or acts, threats or harassing actions against personnel or the program.
- IR should be initially reported by phone immediately, follow up with a written report filed as soon as possible (within 24 hours). After the incident is evaluated, a complete detailed written report must be submitted to USAID- Bangladesh, not later than 72 hours after the incident.

### **Situation Report (SITREP)**

- A report that a significant, but not critical action or activity, has taken place that has impacted or may have impact on the well-being of the personnel or the success of the program.

- This report may describe trends and/or second hand information that may have bearing on the project or impact on future operations.
- There is no predetermined reporting timeline. The report will be issued as needed and required by USAID/Bangladesh/PSLU.

Telephonic communication is the preferred method to provide the initial information of an incident. A written report by e-mail must follow as soon as possible within the above described guidelines and it shall be as detailed as possible. The report shall follow the format approved in the original Security Plan but at a minimum it shall contain the name of the company, name of the victim(s), date, time, a description of what happened, where the incident occurred, and any other relevant details surrounding the incident. If this is an ongoing incident, progress reports should be submitted in accordance with the guidelines provided in order to keep USAID/Bangladesh Security personnel apprised of the situation.

## **SECURITY CONDITIONS**

The Recipient must be aware of security conditions in Bangladesh, and assumes full responsibility for the safety of its employees. Prior to commencing work, the Recipient shall ensure that it has adequate procedures in place to advise its employees of situations or changed conditions that could adversely affect their security. In order to keep abreast of security conditions in Bangladesh, the Recipient shall seek information from all available sources, including the USAID Bangladesh EXO/Partner Security Liaison Unit (PSLU), for all areas in which its employees work or travel. Recipient acknowledges that security conditions are subject to change at any moment, that USAID cannot guarantee the accuracy of any information that it may provide to the Recipient and that USAID assumes no responsibility for the reliability of such information. The Recipient has sole responsibility for approving all travel plans for its employees and her/his dependents traveling to post if allowed by the Recipient's personnel internal policies. The Recipient is also responsible for immediately notifying USAID Bangladesh and the U.S. Embassy American Citizen Services section in the event a U.S. citizen employee does not return from travel as expected or does not report to work. In the event that USAID requests the Recipient to do so, the Recipient's Chief of Party (COP) shall assume responsibility for contacting all of its employees. The Recipient shall provide to the USAID Bangladesh EXO/PSLU the name, current address, and current home and/or cellular telephone number of the COP and of an alternate designated employee. The Recipient is responsible for ensuring that the information on file in the USAID Bangladesh EXO/PSLU is up-to-date so that in an emergency, the COP or alternate representative can be reached immediately and he/she can rapidly contact all other affected employees.

The Recipient is requested to notify the USAID/Bangladesh COR and EXO/PSLU about any changes to the individuals listed in the security plan and in charge of security.

The Recipient shall be required to submit a list of all personnel involved in the implementation of the project, including subcontractor's personnel. The required list shall be submitted to the AOR and EXO/PSLU no later than 30 days after the start date of the agreement and must be updated as necessary and /or if a change of personnel happens. "Recipient's personal identifying data" will be included as an Attachment in Phase 2.

## **SECURITY PROTOCOL**

The Recipient shall develop a security plan to safeguard all project operations. The plan is to be implemented and maintained also by all sub-awardees to the maximum extent practicable under the circumstances and in accordance with the recipient's plan. The security plan will be reviewed by the Agreement Officer in consultation with USAID/Bangladesh's EXO/PSLU.

The plan shall include, at a minimum:

- Procedures for reporting and addressing security threats.
- Procedures for reporting any deaths related to the project.
- Procedures for reporting and addressing any persons missing or kidnapping incidents.
- Name and contact information of security contact person for the head office and regional office(s).
- An internal "cascade" list for communicating with staff, which should be updated, maintained by the Recipient. The prime Recipient shall provide the name, address and telephone numbers of the COP and their designee to USAID as principle contacts in case of security situations/emergencies. The Recipient will be responsible for passing information to their staff.

## **LIFE SUPPORT AND SECURITY SERVICES**

The Recipient is responsible for maintaining the security of its personnel, materials and equipment. All employees of the Recipient must meet the requirements of their work-site, which may include, but not limited to background checks, security/restricted area clearances, drug-free workplace, safety training and/or any other company safety and security requirements.

### **(v) SPECIAL AGREEMENT REQUIREMENT**

The Applicant must carefully consider the following special provisions to be incorporated in the resulting agreement:

#### **a. Sustainability and Exit Strategy**

The recipient must outline a plan to ensure a smooth close to the activity and ensure sustainability of achievements so that program results can be sustained after completion of the project.

#### **b. Grants Manual**

The manual should be developed by the recipient and cleared by the AOR, which specifies how sub-grants components will be managed and what will be results. More details on the format of the Grants Manual will be provided after award.

### **c. Communications and Outreach Strategy**

In addition to a Branding and Marking Plan, the recipient must develop a Strategic Communications Plan (SCP) with a clearly focused action plan. The SCP will detail how the activity will reach out to stakeholders at the national and local levels, including government officials, other donors and various target populations. After technical evaluation of applications for USAID funding, USAID Agreement Officer will request Apparent Successful Applicants to develop and submit the SCP within a specified time period. The Agreement Officer shall review the plan for adequacy and will negotiate, approve and include the SCP in the award. The purpose of the SCP is to concisely outline how the organization will publicize the activity's achievements and credit USAID to ensure the target audience is aware that the funding is coming from the American people.

The SCP (totaling 2-3 pages) should:

- o State key messages about the activity's objectives and achievements;
- o Identify target audiences, such as media, youth, or government officials;
- o Identify the tools and tactics the partner will use to publicize project achievements, such as social media, television and radio, press releases and newspaper articles, television commercials, public service announcements, and/or media round table discussions;
- o Propose a calendar or timeline for outreach events; and,
- o Include how the partner proposes to monitor the impact of its communication strategy, such as tracking the number of articles or press releases published in newspapers or the number of events organized. This monitoring information can be included in the annual work plan per the direction of AORs.

The recipient is required to submit the draft SCP following the required USAID policies and regulations on Branding Strategy and Marking Plan within 120 days of the effective date of the award for the AOR's clearance.

All final communications materials produced by the Recipient must be submitted to the USAID Development Outreach and Communications team through the AOR for review and approval at key points of concept, design, development, and pre-production. All camera-ready art, final production files, protection master videotapes and other final versions of all program and communications products shall be submitted previously. The AOR shall receive electronic copies of all program and communications products as they are produced.

### **d. Gender, Youth, and Social Inclusion Analysis and Strategy**

USAID's policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment (ADS 205) and Women Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Act 2018 require activities to integrate gender into designs, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. This activity will integrate gender considerations and promote empowerment of women throughout all interventions as mentioned in page 12 under "GENDER, YOUTH, AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT" section. As this activity will also focus on youth, this will follow USAID's Youth in Development Policy that requires activities to mainstream and engage youth in Agency initiatives. This activity will include youth within environmental governance interventions, and promote their leadership and participation within the co-management platform.

The recipient will be required to complete a gender, youth and social inclusion analysis within 90 days of the award with close guidance from USAID Gender Advisor and technical office gender POC. Appropriate actions and gender sensitive indicators will be developed on the basis of the findings of the gender analysis and will be included in the work plan and MEL Plan. All people level data are required to be sex dis-aggregated. It must include its achievement/progress/challenges on the gender related outcomes. Similarly, the annual report must include its achievement/progress/challenges on the gender related outcomes.

#### **e. Political Economy Analysis**

PEA is a structured approach examining local and international power dynamics and economic and social forces that influence development. USAID is working to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its international development with programming that incorporates PEA. This requires development practitioners to undertake a deliberate and continuous process of understanding how PEA influences programs and activities. This involves reflection on: foundational influences (such as history or geography); the impact of immediate events and actors (such as leadership changes or natural disasters); and the institutional framework (encompassing formal laws and informal practices) that shape the behaviors and outcomes observed. Considering these dynamics, incentives and interests, PEA investigates where locally driven opportunities for change may emerge and where constraints to such change may need to be addressed. PEA is intended to guide adaptive management of smart, dynamic, locally owned and sustainable interventions.

#### **f. 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. to ensure the program and publicity materials clearly communicate that assistance from the U.S. Government is made possible by the generous support of the American people. Successful recipients must agree to follow the branding and marking policies established for assistance awards under ADS Chapter 320. The details of these policies and the official USAID Graphic Standards Manual, which includes guidelines on proper logo use and positioning, verbal branding and attribution, and co-branding with implementing partner logos can be found on the USAID website at [www.usaid.gov/branding](http://www.usaid.gov/branding). Adhering to these guidelines in the ADS and the Graphic Standards Manual are compulsory for all USAID-funded program and communications materials. Recipients must submit the draft BMP within 120 days of the effective date of the award for the AOR's clearance.

#### **g. Development Experience Clearinghouse Requirements**

Development experience is the cumulative knowledge derived from the planning, design, implementation, evaluation, and results of international development assistance programs. The repository for USAID's cumulative knowledge is the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), the largest online resource of USAID-funded technical and programmatic materials.

The products of development activities include many types of materials: text, images, video, audio, maps, charts, and raw data. All of these products, except structured data or datasets (CSV, JSON, XML, etc.), must be submitted for inclusion in the DEC database. Raw data

created or obtained with USAID funding must be submitted to the Development Data Library (DDL) in compliance with ADS 579, USAID Development Data. ADS Chapter 540 only covers the submission of information products to the DEC.

Materials must be submitted through the public-facing and searchable DEC Web site(<https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/submit.aspx>) or through the U.S. Postal Service delivery to the following:

USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse M/CIO/ITSD/KM

Ronald Reagan Building M. 01-010

U.S. Agency for International Development Washington, DC 20523-6100

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](mailto:ksc@usaid.gov) to arrange delivery. For questions on DEC submissions, contact:

Knowledge Service Center M/CIO/ITSD/KM/DEC

Telephone: +1 202-712-0579

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

Any pesticide(s) procurement or use, or both shall be in compliance with Asia 16-003: Bangladesh Programmatic Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe

#### **4. Other Requirements**

##### **a. Value Added Tax Procedures**

As set forth in ADS Section 155.3.2a, "USAID has a long-standing policy that USAID assistance should be exempt from host government taxes and customs duties." Pursuant to the Agreement between the Government of Bangladesh and the United States Government, the Government of Bangladesh's National Board of Revenue (NBR) has issued a VAT exemption Special Order which is valid for USAID and identified USAID Implementing Partners and which confirms that USAID financed procurements are exempt from VAT.

USAID will distribute sequentially numbered VAT coupon books after the award is executed. The coupon will only be used for those procurement transactions which include VAT charges by vendors with a VAT registration number. Each procurement transaction, including coupon number, must be recorded by the Implementing Partner on the USAID VAT Exemptions Reporting Form and by the 25th of the following month the form must be submitted to USAID.

However, the processing of VAT exemption coupons from NBR would take months. Therefore, until the recipient receives VAT exemption coupons from USAID/Bangladesh, pursuant to 2 CFR 200.470(b)(1)(i), USAID Agreement Officer's prior written approval is required before

spending any VAT amount with respect to expenditures under the resulting award. to the end of the project.

### **b. Geographic Information System (GIS)**

GIS will be used for strategic allocation of resources for overall aid effectiveness, and for upholding the Agency's open data and transparency goals. Implementing Partners will apply geospatial methods using GIS and Geographic data collection, analysis, and submission methods must be included in the annual work plan and MEL Plan.

All geo-data should be submitted to the COR/AOR in any form of digital media, who in consultation with the GIS specialist, will ensure that it meets the geographic data reporting requirements.

- Activity data, Thematic data, and Activity-specific needs must be submitted as point/line or polygon with latitude and longitude coordinates in Decimal Degree (DD.DDDDD).
- All Geographic Data must be submitted in industry-standard formats such as Shapefile, Feature Class, GeoJSON, CSV, XML etc. including metadata.
- The Data must be projected to the Geographic Coordinate System with World Geodetic System 1984 (WGS 1984) datum.

### **c. Program Income**

No program income is anticipated to be generated under the resulting award(s) of this NOFO. However, if program income is generated during the implementation of the program, the Agreement Officer reserves his/her rights in determining exactly how that income will be treated and considered under the award, in line with 2 CFR 200.307. Otherwise, the following will be observed:

For U.S. Organizations, the following paragraph (e) (1) of the 2 CFR 200.307, and for provision, "Program Income" for non-U.S. organizations must apply:

"With prior approval of the Federal awarding agency, program income may be added to the Federal award by the Federal agency and the non-Federal entity. The program income must be used for the purposes and under the conditions of the Federal award."

### **d. Environmental Compliance**

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201.5.10g and 204 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. No such new activities shall be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval. This activity is covered under IEE Asia

19-013, and the IP will follow the compliance and reporting requirements as started in that document.

With reference to ASIA-OAPA Programmatic IEE Emerging Threats (COVID19), (<https://ecd.usaid.gov/repository/pdf/52764.pdf>), all actions will be done following relevant health guidance on Covid19. For example, maintaining social distancing, without direct contact with potentially affected people, use of video conferencing when possible, without gathering any number of people in situ and without associated activities that are likely to have adverse environmental, health or safety impacts.

#### **e. Covered Telecommunications Equipment or Services.**

Under this NOFO, “The 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Section 889” applies. This law prohibits recipients of loans, grants, and cooperative agreements from USAID from obligating or expending U.S. Government grant funds to procure or obtain, extend or renew a contract to procure or obtain, or enter into a contract (or extend or renew a contract) to procure or obtain ‘covered equipment, services, or systems.’ The statute does not provide waiver authority for assistance awards. For details, please refer to the following guidance.

<https://www.congress.gov/115/bills/hr5515/BILLS-115hr5515enr.pdf>

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-07-14/pdf/2020-15293.pdf>

#### **f. Crisis Modifier and/or Emergency Response**

Bangladesh is vulnerable to natural hazards such as cyclones, floods, landslides and earthquakes, and epidemics caused by bacterial, fungal and viral infectious diseases. These disasters, whether natural or human made, can quickly and significantly set back development gains in Bangladesh. Hence, we encourage USAID implementing partners to have the capacity to dispatch resources, realign budgets, redirect funds, support the rapid delivery of humanitarian assistance, and respond to direction from USAID to address unanticipated events that may impact the success of Protibesh Activity, or support new activities that could enhance its results. This may include disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Furthermore, the response may include assistance to government and other key stakeholders, taking advantage of new or changing market opportunities.

Accordingly, an award resulting from this NOFO will allow redirection of the Program Description or funds to support activities to address unknown and unanticipated disaster events. Any use of this provision must be mutually agreed upon by USAID and the Recipient. Prior to any use of this Provision, the Recipient and USAID shall identify activities to be carried out and the cost of such activities, and obtain written concurrence from the AOR, with specific reporting instructions, and approval from the Agreement Officer.

The scope and deliverables expected from the realignment of project resources will be mutually agreed upon by USAID/Bangladesh and the Recipient. This will also necessitate directing resources to other regions if a situation warrants and USAID requests it. Funds from the Crisis

Modifier and/or Emergency Response budget line item must not be expended without the prior written approval from the Agreement Officer.

A separate line item will be added to the budget of the resultant award to fund implementation of emergency response activities.

**[END OF SECTION F]**

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**SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)**

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**[END OF SECTION G]**

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## **SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION**

USAID reserves the right whether to fund or not any application submitted. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. Any award and subsequent incremental funding will be subject to the availability of funds and continued relevance to Agency programming.

### **Application with Proprietary Data**

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

“This application includes data that must not be disclosed, duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, an award is made as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government will have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting award. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government’s right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets {insert sheet numbers}.”

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

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

**[END OF SECTION H]**

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## ANNEX 1 - REFERENCES

1. Standard Provisions For U.S., Nongovernmental Recipients  
<http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa>
  2. Mandatory Standard Provisions For Non U.S Non-Governmental Recipients  
<http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>
  3. 2 CFR 700  
<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/textidx?SID=2d1b5d9221b2dd0c0fe7ad5a5a9b98fd&mc=true&node=pt2.1.700&rgn=div5>
  4. 2 CFR 200  
[http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200\\_main\\_02.tpl](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl)
  5. ADS Series 300 Acquisition and Assistance  
<http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/>
  6. Prohibition on Federal Contracting with and Providing Federal Assistance to Entities That Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements  
<http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/aapds-cibs/aapd-15-01>
- Bangladesh Country Investment Plan for Environment, Forestry and Climate Change 2016-2021. Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
- Bangladesh Sundarban Delta Vision 2050. IUCN.
- Chowdhury, M.S.H., Gudmundsson, C., Izumiyama, S., Koike, M., Nazia, N., Rana, M.P., Mukul, S.A., Muhammed, N. and Redowan, M. Community attitudes toward forest conservation programs through collaborative protected area management in Bangladesh. Environment, Development and Sustainability. 2014.
- Community Based Ecosystem Conservation and Adaptation in ECAs of Bangladesh. Department of Environment. 2015.
- Ecosystem-based Adaptation and Extreme Events: Evidence Summary. USAID.
- Local Governance and Decentralization Programme for Union Parishad and Upazila Parishad. Progress Report, July 2013-June 2014. UNDP.
- MoEFCC. Guide Book on Wildlife Law Enforcement in Bangladesh. October 2015.
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- Mukul, S.A., Rashid, A.Z.M.M., Quazi, S.A., Uddin, M.B. and Fox, J. Local peoples' response to co-management in protected areas: A case study from Satchari National Park, Bangladesh. Forests, Trees and Livelihoods. 2012.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Bangladesh 2016-2021. Department of Environment; Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.

Payments for Ecosystem Services: Legal and Institutional Frameworks. IUCN Environmental Policy and Law Paper No 78. Thomas Greiber, Editor. 2009.

Payments for Ecosystem Services: A Best Practice Guide. UK Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs. May 2013.

The Study of the Upazila Governance and Development Project in the People's Republic of Bangladesh: Final Report. JICA, 2015.

7th Five Year Plan 2016-2020. General Economics Division, Planning Commission.

**[END OF ANNEX]**

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## **ATTACHMENT 1: PHASE 2 SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONS AND MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA**

Only applicants who are selected to proceed to Phase 2 of this NOFO will be invited to submit a full Application. A full application consists of 2 volumes: a Technical Application and a Cost Application.

Phase 2 Technical Applications will include 3 sections: (i) a revised Technical Approach that incorporates applicants' answers to questions posed by the selection committee to the applicant, (ii) a Management and Staffing Plan, and (III) a Statement of Institutional Capacity and Past Performance. Applicants will also be required to submit a separate Cost Application.

The instructions and evaluation criteria below, while highly informative, are subject to change. Applicants should consider the requirements presented by the instructions below to determine if it is in their interest to submit a Technical Approach for Phase 1.

### **I. General Content and Form of Application**

The applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO. The application must be submitted in two separate parts: the Technical Application and the Cost Application. The Technical application must address technical aspects only while the Cost Application must present the costs, and address risk and other related issues.

Applicants must review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to do so may be considered as being non-responsive and may result in an application being rejected or evaluated accordingly. Applicants should retain a copy of the application and all enclosures for their records.

#### **1. Technical Application Format**

A successful application will demonstrate thorough understanding and consideration of the requirements of the Activity in the Program Description in Section A, the instructions in this section and the merit review discussed below.

The Technical Application shall consist of 6 sections, described in detail below: Cover Page, Table of Contents, Executive Summary, Technical Approach (information submitted from Phase 1 with specific changes made to the Technical Approach highlighted or explained as a result of Phase 1 questions/comments), Management Plan, and Institutional Capacity and Past Performance. The Technical Application must not exceed 35 single-spaced typed pages. All sections are included in the page limit.

- (a) Cover Page**
- (b) Table of Contents**
- (c) Executive Summary**
- (d) Technical Approach**
- (e) Management and Staffing Plan**

There is no specific structure required of the management plan, but it should include at a minimum the following.

- The management and staffing plan should state specifically and justify the composition and organizational structure of the entire country-based Activity team. It should contain an organogram and describe the role of all technical and relevant operational staff, especially key staff. It shall describe the reporting relationship among staff and how each staff will contribute to successful implementation of the activity.
- The applicant must identify at least 3 and no more than 5 key staff positions, 2 of whom must be the COP and DCOP. All key staff must be fluent in English. The plan should specify the role and estimated amount of time each staff member will devote to the Activity or specific components within the Activity. Support staff from the Applicant's central office should be included in this section with a brief description how they will support the Activity. Delineation of roles, responsibilities, authority, and processes for decision making within applicant's in-country team and between the home office and the field should be clearly outlined. In the Annex Section, the applicant shall provide an organogram of staff.
- A mobilization plan within the management and staffing plan must present how the applicant will launch activities immediately after receiving an award and provide a step-by-step timeline of actions for the first six months of Activity implementation.
- It is imperative the mobilization plan describe qualifications and responsibilities of key staff and especially recruiting efforts for all key staff carried out prior to submission of the application and planned to continue after submission. Results of recruiting efforts must be included in the mobilization plan, but names and resumes of key staff shall not be included and will not be considered. Names and resumes of Key Staff will be requested only of the Apparently Successful Applicant and must be submitted as soon as possible, or the ASA may risk being deselected as the ASA. However, approval of key personnel will take place after award.
- Potential partners in the implementation of the award and the services to be provided by each partner institution or organization shall be described. Applicants shall describe the process of identifying and supporting subawardees, if any. Applicants must also specify the technical resources and expertise of proposed subawardee organizations, if any.
- Applicants should indicate how they would work with the private sector to share knowledge with government and civil society partners for more effective, sustainable conservation results.
- The management plan should also describe how the applicant would coordinate its implementation with other Activities of USAID/Bangladesh and other donors.
- Proposed field management structure and financial controls.
- Home office backstopping and its purpose.

**(f) Institutional Capability and Past Performance**

Applicants must describe their organization's actual technical and managerial expertise demonstrated in prior relevant work that will directly benefit implementation of this Activity. Applicants should also provide evidence of their capacity to respond to common and unusual challenges and widespread emergencies of prior interventions. Applicants are

advised to articulate their ability to engage in the following programming areas: natural resources management, ecosystem conservation, mitigating threats to biodiversity, engaging the private sector and co-management organizations in sustainable NRM, capacity building of environmental stakeholders, and integrating environmental conservation in long-term planning, policy development, and public outreach efforts. Information in this section should include (but is not limited to) the following.

- Brief description of organization's history
- Institutional strength as represented by experience in managing successful Activities of similar scope and complexity
- Organizational structure and support from HR, Programming and Operational offices
- Financial management and resources
- Successful integration and monitoring of subrecipients' interventions within awards
- Gender and youth integration in Activities and other successful diversity outreach
- Environmental compliance
- Host country relations
- Cost effectiveness

Applicants must submit a past performance table of all cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs during the past three years. If the applicant has no past performance, they must state that fact.

Information for past awards must include the following:

- Name of awarding organization or agency
- Address of awarding organization or agency
- Place of performance of services or program
- Award number
- Amount of award
- Period of Performance (begin and end dates of services/program)
- Name, telephone number and email address of two responsible technical representatives of the awarding organization or agency who have direct and substantial knowledge of the award
- Description of the work
- Audit or performance findings, cause and mitigation, and awards received for exceptional service delivery

Similar information must be provided for every partner organization proposed in the application whose proposed cost is 15% or more of the total proposed Activity cost.

## **2. Cost Application Format**

The Cost Application contains three separate forms explained below. All forms of the Cost Application must be submitted as a single PDF, Word.Doc or Excel file and emailed as an attachment in the same email as the Technical Application as explained in Section D.4.

The Cost Application must illustrate the entire period of performance, using the budget format shown in the SF-424A.

The applicant's budget shall not contain any amount for the Crisis and/or Emergency Response Fund. This line item will be included later in the resultant cooperative agreement.

The Budget should be expressed in US dollars using an exchange rate of BDT85 = \$1.

Please note that there are requirements listed below and in the following section such as Branding and Marking Plan, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, Security Plan and a Political Economy Analysis that must be submitted only by the ASA or following an award. However, even though these plans are not required as part of the initial application, the costs for implementing these plans or writing reports must be included in the cost application.

**a) SF 424 Form(s)**

The applicant must complete and sign the SF-424, SF-424A and SF-424B. All three forms must be compiled into a single file and emailed as explained in 6. above. Standard Forms can be accessed electronically at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or using the following links:

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

Additional budget information will be requested later only from the ASA.

**[End of Instructions]**

## **II. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **Criteria**

The merit review criteria prescribed here are tailored to the requirements of this particular NOFO. Applicants should note these criteria serve to (a) identify the significant matters that applicants should address in their applications, and (b) set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated.

Technical and other factors will be evaluated as described here and prescribed in the Technical Application Format. The Technical Application will be evaluated by a Selection Committee (SC) using the criteria described in this section.

### **Review and Selection Process**

USAID will conduct a merit 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

#### **Evaluation Criteria #1: Technical Approach**

The extent to which the applicants approach and interventions, within and around targeted Key Biodiversity Areas of Bangladesh, (i) are likely to sustainably strengthen environmental governance and management, (ii) mitigate threats to biodiversity, (iii) leverage private sector resources and capacity and advance market-based incentives that promote sustainable natural resources management, (iv) effectively partner with local stakeholders to increase sustainability and (v) achieve cross cutting objectives, e.g. gender, youth and social inclusion.

#### **Evaluation Criteria #2: Management and Staffing Plan**

The extent to which the Application convincingly demonstrates how its allocation of staff, mobilization plan, Bangladesh and HQ team structure, partner strategy and integration of existing USAID and other donor Activities in Bangladesh will contribute to the successful implementation of its technical approach.

#### **Evaluation Criteria #3: Institutional Capability and Past Performance**

The extent to which the Application proves its organization's actual technical and managerial expertise will directly benefit implementation of this Activity, including evidence of their capacity to respond to common and unusual challenges, including that any references from prior activities that substantiate assertions made in their application and the quality, timeliness and professionalism of prior work, if any.

## **Cost Review**

USAID 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 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.

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 Activity 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 Merit Review Criteria]**

**[END OF ATTACHMENT 1]**

**[The Remainder of the Page Left Blank Intentionally]**

**ATTACHMENT 2: INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMINATION, “Asia 19-013”**

Attached as a separate file

**[END OF ATTACHMENT 2]**

-----[END OF NOFO]-----