



USAID | ZIMBABWE

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Issue Date: March 26, 2021
Deadline for Question: April 9, 2021
Closing Date: May 7, 2021
Closing Time: 7:30am Harare Time

Subject: Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: 72061321RFA00007

Program Title: Strengthening Media for Accountability in Zimbabwe Program (SMAZ)

Federal Assistance Listing 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 Strengthening Media for Accountability in Zimbabwe Program (SMAZ). 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, 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 process. If you have difficulty registering on 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 for technical assistance.

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section D.6.f. 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.

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,

Michelle Shirley
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.

I. INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development in Zimbabwe (USAID/Zimbabwe) anticipates awarding a five-year, \$7 million, Strengthening Media for Accountability in Zimbabwe program (SMAZ). The Cooperative Agreement to be awarded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) will contribute to results under USAID/Zimbabwe’s five-year Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) 2016-2021¹ and future iterations of USAID’s core strategies for Zimbabwe. This activity will directly support USAID/Zimbabwe’s CDCS Development Objective 3 (“Improved, accountable democratic governance that serves an engaged citizenry”) and intermediate results (IRs) 3.2 (“Systems of accountability strengthened”) and 3.3 (“Citizen action and influence increased at all levels”). U.S. and non-U.S. organizations may participate under this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

The program intends to contribute to the advancement of a culture of accountability in Zimbabwe by enhancing the capacity of the media to hold powerful state and non-state actors accountable for their acts and omissions. The program also aims to strengthen citizen participation in public life and spur demand for accountability by improving citizens’ access to timely and reliable information.

The objectives of this activity are to:

1. Strengthen watchdog journalism and media reporting for accountability;
2. Enhance media pluralism and diversity;
3. Improve the policy, legal and regulatory environment for the media; and
4. Increase media literacy and promote fact-driven action by consumers.

The program seeks to find innovative ways to help the media encourage democratic and accountable governance, reveal corrupt practices and illicit financial flows, and promote constructive dialogue to make democratic processes more accessible to citizens. Program implementation strategies and approaches are expected to be flexible and innovative to respond to challenges and dynamics in Zimbabwe as they evolve.

II. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS

In August 2020, USAID/Zimbabwe commissioned researchers to conduct a *Media Assessment* to study the state of the media and evaluate whether it operates as an independent check against the institutions, public and private, that drive Zimbabwe’s political, social, and economic landscapes.

¹ For access to USAID/Zimbabwe’s CDCS, please visit: <https://www.usaid.gov/zimbabwe/cdcs>

The *Media Assessment* grew out of Embassy and Mission leadership consensus on the need to explore engaging with different actors, including the media, who might be able to promote much-needed political and economic reforms. The *Media Assessment* confirmed the potentially transformative role of the media in supporting Zimbabwe's fledgling democracy through holding officials accountable, increasing reliable information for decision-making, and amplifying the voices of marginalized citizens. In the past USAID has supported media organizations in strengthening their capacity to foster civic engagement and through this NOFO, USAID seeks to build on and amplify those efforts on a larger scale.

In a highly polarized society, the media in Zimbabwe has become compromised, seldom holding political and economic elites accountable for their actions. Often, state-aligned media is complicit in the vilification of dissenting voices and the spread of disinformation, while privately owned media is constrained by economic and political pressures from effectively performing its watchdog role. Journalists critical of authorities experience backlash in the form of arrests, abductions, and public shaming. The *2020 Mid-Term State of the Media Report*² published by the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) revealed an increase in the arrests and assaults of journalists by state security agents from January to August 2020, compared to the same period the previous year. The most egregious arrest in July 2020 was that of Hopewell Chin'ono, an investigative journalist arrested after exposing high-level corruption in public procurement of health commodities. Arrests, abductions, and general abuse of police power create a climate of fear in which many journalists resort to self-censorship as a survival tactic and fail to report on issues exposing wrongdoing by authority figures. Further, state surveillance has increased fear among journalists, as the government has used its surveillance apparatus against journalists with devastating effect. In *Surveillance Regulation and its Effects on Journalistic Practices in Zimbabwe*,³ researchers found that state surveillance disrupted journalism by heightening the risk of retaliation against sources who work with investigative journalists. Additionally, mass communications structures are dominated by the government, although they are hard to access and do not have a high level of public trust. Nationally representative surveys completed in 2017 and 2018 revealed that most Zimbabweans believed that the media should not be subject to government control⁴, thus the demand for more credible media outlets is high. The emergence of 'new media' using internet-based platforms has created an avenue for mitigating the effects of the state monopoly on media. Trained and citizen journalists have been able to shine a light on abuses and to circumvent censorship by the state using new media. However, the state has also extended its surveillance of citizens generally to online platforms, and used the criminal law to constrain online activity.

² MISA Zimbabwe, <https://zimbabwe.misa.org/2020/01/28/state-of-the-media-report-2019-available-now/>

³<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Big-Brother-is-Watching%3A-Surveillance-Regulation-on-Munoriyarwa-Chiumbu/324490d9905bfeb334657fb28cff566e0ab82be3>

⁴ Ibid

Additionally, the lack of diversity in Zimbabwean media extends to the newsroom where women, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups are invisible. There are no female media owners in Zimbabwe, and media and digital technology entrepreneurs, advertisers, and editors are predominantly male. This has resulted in women either being ignored by the media, or portrayed in a negative light when they do receive coverage.

Lastly, despite the highly politicized nature of Zimbabwean society, citizen engagement in the electoral process through media interventions is very low. Rarely does the media fact-check claims by politicians in a systematic way, responsibly use polling or survey data to describe the electorate's hopes or perspectives, or provide a venue for candidates to outline their political positions on a moderated platform. The capacity of journalists to promote fact-based, critical-yet-constructive dialogue is limited.

Against this backdrop, democratic and accountable governance will not take root in Zimbabwe until the media plays its role in promoting accountability and transparency and making reliable information and democratic processes more accessible to citizens.

III. ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

The SMAZ goal is to advance a culture of accountability in Zimbabwe by enhancing the capacity of the media to hold state and non-state actors accountable for their acts and omissions. The activity also aims to strengthen citizens' capacity to demand accountability through improving their access to timely and reliable information.

Applicants are invited to propose a Theory of Change that reflects the approach and methodology they will pursue if they are selected to implement the program. The proposed theory of change will be reviewed throughout the life of the project and, as appropriate, revised to reflect emerging learning about the most effective ways for USAID to support local systems and locally-led change. Applicants must present a holistic project that addresses all four objectives described below and any attendant sub-objectives.

Programmatic objectives and anticipated results detailed below have been intentionally drafted in a broad framework to leave room for the Applicants to present their own understanding of the problem and approaches for addressing it. Applicants are encouraged to submit innovative and creative ideas on how to advance the program's goal and measure their outcomes.

Objectives and Anticipated Results

Objective 1: Strengthen watchdog journalism and media reporting for accountability

In spite of the protections for freedom of expression and freedom of the media in the Constitution of Zimbabwe, watchdog journalism highlighting systemic corruption or exposing the causes of poor governance is uncommon in Zimbabwe. 'Brown envelope' journalism, where journalists are paid to kill or publish stories, coupled with fear of reprisals, has chipped away at the integrity of journalists, resulting in the weakening of objectivity and minimizing the scrutiny of political and economic elites. A few brave journalists continue to engage in high-quality public-interest reporting, sometimes at great personal risk. However, in the absence of dedicated and specialized support and training, their efforts are not always well implemented. Applications

should creatively identify opportunities to promote a more professional and better-capacitated investigative media sector.

Further, although the media is essential to the conduct of democratic elections, state-linked media, which dominates the media landscape, is consistently biased in favor of the ruling party in election-related coverage, as confirmed by the reports of independent observers in the 2018 elections.⁵ With the emergence and near dominance of ‘new’ media utilizing internet based technologies, online platforms have become vulnerable targets for the dissemination of divisive and false narratives. Journalists have a role to play in combating misinformation through fact checking, verifying news and issues shared on social media, and PRE-bunking misinformation before it spreads rather than DE-bunking it after it already has.

Additionally, in many democracies, political debates, often organized and led by reputable media outlets and personalities, are considered a key part of electoral campaign outreach. Debates can reveal information about a candidate's policy positions, leadership or governing style, and personality. Debates also create a public record of pre-election commitments, potentially increasing the accountability of candidates voted into office due to the increase in voter knowledge and participation. In more mature democracies, polling is considered a key component of precision journalism because it brings in a quantitative element into a traditionally qualitative news profession.

The intervention should strengthen the ability of the media to play its rightful watchdog and investigative roles, revealing instances of abuse including but not limited to corrupt practices and illicit financial flows. Proposed interventions should also include elements on fostering electoral accountability, particularly at ward council level, through the media.

The Applicant, as is necessary and appropriate, should provide capacity strengthening to achieve programmatic results. The activity may also support research to facilitate factual and evidence-based reporting and advocacy.

a. Building journalistic and investigative capacity

Despite most journalists in Zimbabwe having attained tertiary qualifications, the quality of reporting is on a steady decline. The capacity of the media to produce and disseminate high-quality and reliable information is low. As a result, most citizens have minimal access to information, contributing to apathy and low levels of participation in governance issues. This objective invites Applicants to propose an innovative program that enhances the capacity of the media to engage in watchdog and investigative journalism.

⁵ See, IRI/NDI Zimbabwe International Election Observation Mission Final Report October 2018, available at https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2018-10-29_final_zieom_report.pdf

Applicants should consider ways to foster the creation of a local cohort of investigative journalists, with expertise in issues including but not limited to reporting on transnational crime and corruption, verifying beneficial ownership, investigating illicit financial flows, and demystifying government budgets and processes.

The Applicant should also seek to improve the quality of educational resources available to budding and seasoned journalists at private and/or public institutions. To do this, Applicants should look to leverage programs supported by other donors or available through the U.S. Department of State, including the Fulbright Specialist Program and Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), ⁶ so as to have multiplier effects on upgrading and sustaining the professional skills of journalists. The Applicant should also consider including platforms for investigative journalists to converge and connect reporters from different jurisdictions to share best practices and strengthen the cohort of investigative journalists.

b. Strengthen political and electoral reporting for accountability

Applicants should set out ways in which they intend to strengthen coverage and reporting on political issues and community priorities in a way that connects readers and voters to politics and enhances accountability among duty-bearers. This aspect is not limited to covering candidate debates and use of data analysis tools including polls and surveys, to tap into public sentiment over a particular candidate or issue, but should be interpreted liberally to encompass activities throughout the full electoral cycle.

Additionally, the focus should not be limited to interactions with politicians, but should extend to citizens and fellow journalists focusing on how they communicate their interests and participate in democracy making reporting more audience-centric. The Applicant should also incorporate ways to reach out to youth and increase their interest in policy discussion and potential political engagement.

Anticipated results:

- Enhanced capacity of the media to serve the public interest;
- Increased knowledge sharing, mentorship and cooperation between media practitioners;
- Improved reporting and coverage of political issues by the media.

Objective 2: Enhance media pluralism and diversity

A plural, diverse, and inclusive media is essential for the flourishing of any society. Despite repeated pledges by the government, mass communications structures in Zimbabwe remain dominated by the state or by individuals with strong ties to the state. For instance, in November 2020, the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) issued television licenses to six new entities, all with links to the government. Of the 28 independent community radio initiatives,

⁶ Indicative programs are available on the U.S. Embassy Harare website - <https://zw.usembassy.gov/education-culture/professional-academic-opportunities/>

only 3 received licenses in December 2020, and the 8 community radio stations licensed before that are either extensions of national stations or strongly tied to the government. Thus, the state retains a monopoly in the broadcast media, limiting the range of options.

Additionally, although the internet provides extensive content from a variety of sources, access to online media platforms is also hampered by a number of factors. These include prohibitive internet data costs, lack of infrastructure in some parts of the country, and insufficient access to internet devices or services. The digital divide means that the majority of Zimbabweans who reside in rural areas have limited access to the internet, and remain at the mercy of traditional and monolithic media.

Further, due to the lack of diversity in ownership, the media largely reinforces pre-existing inequalities against marginalized communities which are steeped in patriarchy and social conservatism. The media perpetuates biases and stereotypes based on gender, disability, age, and sexual orientation. This results in ‘virtual violence’ against vulnerable groups through hate speech and ridicule which disrupt the participation of these communities in public spaces on- and off-line.

This objective therefore seeks ways to increase the diversity in ownership and content of Zimbabwean media. The implementing partner must widely interpret mass media to work towards plurality across different mediums.

a. Developing alternative and pluralistic media

The Applicant must set out ways of fortifying non-state media actors and cultivating alternative media, so that multiple voices and opinions can be heard. The Applicant must find ways of enhancing the quality of non-state media reporting and outline citizen-oriented alternatives to the state monopoly over mass communication systems. Media suffers from the same patriarchal and hierarchical roles as the society it serves, which limits the ability of women and youth to play influential leadership roles. The Applicant must consider ways to support gender mainstreaming and youth empowerment within and through the media. The aim of this sub-objective is also to encourage accurate, responsible, and nuanced reporting on issues rarely featured in mainstream media such as disability, tribal tensions and politics, gender, and sexual identity.

b. Supporting sustainable media models

In order to be impactful, the media has to operate on a sustainable basis, covering overheads while retaining a good measure of editorial independence from external influences. The business of journalism in Zimbabwe is a casualty of both the country’s political crisis and the economy’s downward spiral, and, with few exceptions, does not perform well. The rise of the internet has also diverted audience attention and advertising revenue away from established media platforms, compounding the situation. The *Media Assessment* revealed that the print run of the country’s most read newspaper -- *The Herald* -- is only 3000–5000 copies per day, and that only 6% of the population accesses newspapers regularly.⁷ Under this objective, the Applicant should creatively

⁷ (2019). “Media and information habits, consumption, and perception in Zimbabwe,” *Zimbabwe Audience Survey Summary Report*, page 3.

set out how the media in Zimbabwe can provide a service, while making a profit, in a way that will be sustainable beyond the life of the program. Given global trends, the applicant should think critically about how new media can be used to generate revenue.

Anticipated results:

- Increased number of independent media outlets providing quality media content.
- Enhanced access to and demand for quality media products in underserved communities.
- Improved capacity of independent media to be self sustaining.

Objective 3: Improve the policy, legal and regulatory environment for media

While there have been positive developments related to court rulings on freedom of expression and an improvement in the access to information laws, the legal framework remains fraught with laws which do not align to the progressive 2013 Constitution and which undermine media freedoms. The prospect of being arrested for trumped up charges and the possibility of harsh penalties, including prison sentences, for violations of anachronistic laws contributes to self-censorship among journalists and citizens. Although the Constitution establishes the Zimbabwe Media Commission as an independent constitutional commission, it has not begun to exercise its mandate in a way that safeguards the freedom of expression and freedom of the media. The pace of legal and regulatory reforms to align laws with the Constitution has generally been slow, as the government is reluctant to introduce major legal reforms that might undermine its direct or indirect control over the media.

This objective seeks to provide support for advocacy and legal action for media reform taking into account the limited political will. Work under this objective should coordinate with and leverage other USAID programming in support of constitutional alignment and citizen engagement.

a. Strengthening constituencies for reform

The activity seeks to promote legal and regulatory media reforms by targeting multiple stakeholders to build cross-sectoral support and momentum for law and policy changes. Proposed interventions should offer integrated approaches. Currently, media-based civil society organizations advocate for law and policy reform in a ‘siloe approach.’ If civic organizations work together, they could achieve sustainable improvements to the overall environment for the media. The Applicant should identify and mobilize ‘unusual suspects’, that is stakeholders who are not normally included in advocacy for media reforms. The activity should make efforts towards aligning existing laws with the Constitution. To safeguard journalists’ sources, applicants should also focus on advocacy for whistleblower protections - which are currently absent in the Zimbabwean legal system.

b. Support for improved internet governance

An increasing number of citizens are relying on the internet to express themselves as the right to freedom of expression in public has been diminished. The opportunities for advancement in the digital space are endless, and so is the potential for repression. While the true extent is unknown, media organizations have observed a noticeable increase in the use of blocking and filtering of online content. Although the Cyber Security and Data Protection bill is pending before Parliament, Zimbabwe does not yet have comprehensive cybersecurity and data protection laws, resulting in the use of legislation enacted before the progressive 2013 Constitution to curtail rights and effect internet shutdowns. The activity should be designed to shape the norms and practices and to influence law and policy on the evolution, safe use, openness, and transparency of the internet in Zimbabwe.

Anticipated results:

- Enhanced quality of laws and policies aligned to the 2013 Constitution for regulating media in Zimbabwe.
- Increased collaborative advocacy for media reforms from all sectors of society.
- Improved legal, policy, and normative frameworks for online information exchange.

Objective 4: Increase media literacy and promote fact-driven action by consumers

With the increase in the use of new media in Zimbabwe, information can now be shared rapidly and widely. Thus, consumers interact with a wider array of media products with declining levels of credibility and reliability. Although internet penetration in the rural areas is only 10%⁸, rural Zimbabweans are also accessing social media, mainly through WhatsApp, at an increasing pace. The expansion in the use of the internet has increased exposure to misinformation, fake news, and propaganda. The internet also provides a megaphone for the broadcasting of hate speech against vulnerable and minority groups and for perpetuating stereotypes. In this context, audience-related interventions to enhance users' ability to discern the truth and to increase resilience to online misinformation become important. Media literacy is not a direct part of the educational system in Zimbabwe. Thus, it becomes important to empower and strengthen critical thinking among audiences as they interact with the media at all age levels, from school-aged users to youth to working class to elderly and across all socio-economic and geographic divides.

⁸ Freedom House (2019a) Freedom on the Net - Zimbabwe. Retrieved at <https://freedomhouse.org/country/zimbabwe/freedom-net/2019>.

Similarly, where evidence of systemic corruption or illicit financial flows has been reported in the media, the missing link has been civic action to hold perpetrators accountable. Thus, many times investigative or public interest reports by journalists do not find traction beyond being conversation pieces or issues for discussion in social settings. The public needs to better understand the available options to change the circumstances reported in the news.

This objective invites Applicants to devise strategies to build and reinforce citizens' ability to critically evaluate media products. The Applicant should also come up with ways to tie in public interest reporting, and civic action and participation, in accountability efforts. Work under this objective should coordinate with and creatively leverage USAID's other programming on citizen engagement.

a. Enhancing media literacy

The Applicant should set out ways of improving media literacy so as to build resilience to misinformation and nurture discerning media creators, consumers, and users. Approaches under this objective could consider primary or secondary school-aged journalism clubs, school papers, or news reading clubs; youth-focused news listening clubs or papers; community sessions to combat misinformation and/or adult learning classes. The activities under this objective must also ensure participation for those without reliable access to the internet.

b. Increasing space and scope for civic engagement

This sub-objective seeks to identify and implement effective strategies to increase knowledge sharing and cooperation between media and civic accountability actions. While Applicants have a lot of scope for design, this work must integrate collaboration and participation by ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations spurring demand for accountability through a broad range of citizen-driven accountability measures. This approach aims to increase the role of the media to mobilize popular participation and action where the media has exposed impropriety. This sub-objective also seeks to positively impact on the capacity of citizens to mobilize using both new media and traditional methods to raise demand for accountability.

Anticipated results:

- Increased role of the media in civic engagement and accountability.
- Improved ability of citizens to critically analyze media products.
- Improved ability of citizens and organizations to organize effectively on and offline.

IV. ACTIVITY PARAMETERS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Results under these objectives will be achieved through close, strategic collaboration with various local and international partners. The activity must be designed and implemented nationwide with the following guiding principles and tenets:

Strategic alignment: In support of USAID/Zimbabwe's CDCS, the proposed activity will contribute to the Mission's IRs under DO3 ("Improved accountable, democratic governance that serves an engaged citizenry") and the attendant sub-IRs.

IR 3.2: Systems of Accountability Strengthened

- Sub IR 3.2.2 Democratic electoral processes better reflect citizen voices

IR 3.3: Citizen Action and Influence Increased at All Levels

- Sub IR 3.3.2 Civil society's representation of citizen views improved;
- Sub IR 3.3.3 Improved dialogue and learning platforms that link citizens and solution-holders;

Crosscutting Sub IR 1 (crosscutting IRs 3.2 and 3.3): Mechanisms for citizen advocacy and oversight activated

Evidence-based programming: To achieve the objectives, potential partners should use evidence-based programming to inform and strengthen the focus and results of the activity. Thus, where possible, the successful implementing partner should incorporate results from existing research before embarking on activities and consistently monitor and evaluate whether planned interventions are delivering the planned results, documenting decision-points throughout the life of the activity. This aspect is closely related to monitoring, evaluation, and learning described below.

Local systems, local ownership and sustainability: Consistent with Program Cycle principles defined in ADS 201.3.1.2, the activity should strengthen local systems so that local actors continue to sustain key results after the activity ends. The activity should be designed to align with the priorities of local actors to secure systemic democratic reforms and long-lasting respect for constitutional rights and peaceful coexistence. The successful Applicant will describe how the activity will engage with local systems. For more information on this approach, see Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development.⁹

This activity should be designed to engage the large pool of local expertise on media reforms, accountability, and internet governance to the furthest extent possible. Applications should include significant engagement of Zimbabweans in demonstrably strategic, programmatic, and decision-making roles. If the prime proposes local sub-partners, then the role and budget for each sub-partner must be included in the application; the applicant's approach can leave room for post-award subgranting. Applicants should clearly address how they will build the capacity of their local sub-partners as well as any other small grants that the prime may support. Applications should clearly demonstrate how the program will foster ownership by local organizations as well as their ability to carry forward the activity and/or the activity's results beyond the closure of the award. To the extent skills transfer or capacity building is required to achieve local ownership and/or sustainability, that should be explicitly outlined in the application.

⁹ Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development, available at <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/LocalSystemsFramework.pdf>

New partner initiative: In line with the Mission CDCS and its New Partnership Initiative (NPI) commitments, USAID/Zimbabwe seeks to increase local citizens' influence and action to shape the country's development. It will achieve this through:

- Awards and subawards to new and underutilized partners;
- Mentoring awards to organizations that sub-award more than 50 percent of total award value;
- Creative and deliberate avenues for local citizen or organization input in development program design and implementation;
- Enhanced local capacity development.

Applicants proposing NPI should incorporate the required NPI indicator: CBLD-9 Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance. This indicator measures whether USG-funded capacity development efforts have led to improved organizational performance in organizations receiving organizational capacity development support. Capacity is the ability of people, organizations, and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully. Capacity development is the process of unleashing, strengthening, and maintaining such capacity. Capacity is a form of potential; it is not visible until it is used. Therefore, performance is the key consideration in determining whether capacity has changed. Organizational performance improvement reflects a deliberate process undertaken to improve execution of organizational mandates to deliver results for the stakeholders it seeks to serve.

USAID is promoting local ownership and building capacity in designated stakeholders and local actors. Since this activity will strengthen the technical, administrative, and financial expertise of its local sub-partners as appropriate, USAID expects international applicants to have Zimbabwean local sub-partners.

Self-Reliance: USAID programs should aim for the day when donor funding can end. Self-reliance should lead a country's continued development. The activity should measure how it contributes to Zimbabwe's self-reliance. The Applicant is encouraged to seek ways to institutionalize relevant approaches, processes and/or mechanisms developed under the program so that they are utilized beyond the end of the program.

Youth focus: Youth (between the ages of 18 and 35) is an identified cross-cutting priority for USAID/Zimbabwe's development strategy. This activity should draw from USAID's Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach, which is premised on the idea that, "given guidance and support from caring adults, all youth can grow up healthy and productive, making positive contributions to their families, schools, and communities." A PYD approach intentionally focuses on developing competencies and behaviors that support pro-social attitudes, a clear and positive personal identity, and positive belief in the future. Additionally, the approach encourages youth leadership and experiential learning, as well as adult approachability and champions. Services and opportunities are designed to support young people in developing a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging and empowerment. This approach offers a paradigm shift in the conceptualization of youth, education, employment, leadership, health and environment and its resources. The activity must include concrete and practical approaches that will address the challenges that youth face to accomplish the activity results, and also involve and support young people in the decision-making, management and leadership of the interventions. (see <https://www.usaid.gov/youthimpact/tools-responses>).

Gender integration: Promoting gender equality and advancing the status of women and girls is vital to achieving USAID’s development objectives. It is USAID policy that all Applicants must integrate gender into their interventions. Therefore, the Applicant will be expected to demonstrate compliance with USAID ADS 205 and should explicitly state how this activity supports the gender policies and strategies of the United States and actuates the Zimbabwean Constitution. Successful Applicants will respond to the questions below to ensure gender integration is adequately incorporated in the activity.

- How will the Applicant incorporate gender analysis prior to or at an early stage of project implementation;
- What activities are needed to ensure that men and women share more equitable participation and decision-making throughout the activity, as both implementers and beneficiaries.

Proposed interventions should explicitly recognize gender in a substantive and integrated manner. The Applicant is expected to examine cultural perceptions, economic barriers, and other factors that affect women and men in terms of their influence as well as capacity to engage and act individually or collectively. Applicants should articulate how specific approaches will affect gender dynamics in the media and society at large, how the program will capitalize on the unique contributions of women and men to protecting rights and all measures taken to assure equitable gender participation in the project. The entire Activity must also reflect sensitivity to the historic negative portrayal of women in the media, identify and address attitudes and perceptions fuelling this phenomenon and actively seek opportunities for more balanced portrayals.

In addition, the Applicant must ensure that gender issues are suitably integrated into all components of the program. The Applicant will be required to undertake deliberate efforts to ensure that interventions under this program do not discriminate based on sex, age, ability/disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other factor consistent with USAID regulation. To the extent possible, the Applicant is required to encourage the equal participation of men and women in all aspects of this activity.

Disability matters: The activity will integrate People with Disabilities (PWDs) in the design and implementation to ensure that the rights and needs of PWDs are proactively included at all levels. The disabled community is marginalized in the media and represented in a stereotypical way as the recipients of charity and not as contributing members of society. In implementing activities, USAID encourages partners to include PWD not just as passive recipients or participants in the program, but also as stakeholders, key staff, and volunteers. The activity should develop and disseminate disability friendly materials and provide sign language interpretation where necessary. The activity will also include the disability dimension in data collection, analysis and monitoring and evaluation so as to track progress in social inclusion.

Cross-sectoral collaboration and partner selection: USAID/Zimbabwe’s country strategy framework elevates the importance of bringing an integrated lens to its development assistance, and the activity is anticipated to play an important role in identifying and pursuing synergies with other USAID/Zimbabwe and USG programs. Such cross-sectoral linkages with Mission-supported constitutional alignment, accountability, local government, parliamentary strengthening, election support, and community cohesion activities are needed to ensure complementarity and to avoid duplication. To leverage USAID investments and efficiencies,

wherever feasible, the activity will also seek to collaborate with other USAID/Zimbabwe projects and/or areas where the Mission has significant investments. Where feasible, the activity will collaborate with the health, food security, and economic growth activities to identify programming opportunities to foster accountability in identified areas. These interventions are also tied into improving the commitment and capacity of both citizens and civil society and to ensure that there is greater integration in programming across USAID.

Rapid program start up: Zimbabwe’s operational environment is highly unpredictable. Thus, the prospective implementing partner is expected to begin implementation as soon as possible, to hedge against changes in the operating environment. The prospective implementing partner is also expected to begin with sufficient analysis of the environment, stakeholders, and potential spoilers. The prospective implementing partner is also expected to immediately respond to potential incidents that might occur when the program starts. In addition, the implementing partner is expected to conduct analysis to:

- Establish appropriate baseline on the capacity of the media and quantity and availability of credible information;
- Identify individuals and institutions with potential for engaging in watchdog journalism; and
- Determine levels of political will and responsiveness.

VI. COORDINATION WITH OTHER DONORS, IMPLEMENTERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Donors: USAID/Zimbabwe DG activities are complemented by funding and programming from other donors within the citizen engagement and accountability space. These include the European Commission (EC), Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, and Switzerland. The proposed approach should demonstrate awareness of, potential linkages to, and coordination plans with any ongoing donor initiatives. In particular, the EC and Sweden are directly engaged in media support; This RFA has been designed with consideration of those activities, but applications must clearly articulate complementarity and plans to coordinate to maximize synergies and avoid duplication.

USAID implementing partners: USAID expects the implementing partner to coordinate closely with other USAID-supported activities in Zimbabwe. Implementing partners will be expected to work together to identify and capitalize on synergies and to coordinate to avoid potential redundancies. The Mission and the DG Office convene periodic meetings of chiefs of party to promote cross-partner and cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination in which the successful applicant should plan to participate, but partners are expected to seek, identify, and seize opportunities to leverage efforts apart from these convenings. As new programs come online, USAID may guide the implementing partner to collaborate with particular USAID programs.

Stakeholder coordination: USAID/Zimbabwe expects Applicants to propose an expanded list of potential stakeholders (these might include government institutions and non-governmental organizations) to engage under this activity. The selected implementing partner for this award will be expected to engage these and other key actors to explore potential opportunities for

collaboration with them and other stakeholders/donors, leveraging and cooperating where appropriate and always avoiding duplication or wasteful redundancy.

[END OF SECTION A]

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID intends to award one (1) Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide \$7,000,000,00 in total USAID funding over a five (5) year period.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The anticipated period of performance is five years. The estimated start date will be August 1, 2021.

3. Substantial Involvement

USAID/Zimbabwe considers collaboration with the implementing partner crucial for the successful implementation of this activity. USAID's substantial involvement in the Activity will extend to:

- **Approval of Work/Implementation Plan:** For the life of the Activity, on an annual basis, the Recipient shall prepare for and request USAID's prior approval on an activity Implementation Plan or workplan.
- **Approval of Monitoring and Evaluation Plans:** For the life of the Activity, on an annual basis, the Recipient shall prepare for and request USAID's prior approval on a plan to monitor and evaluate the activity's performance.
- **Monitor to Authorize Specified Kinds of direction or redirection:** Given the politically sensitive nature of this activity and its interrelationships with other USAID and donor projects, USAID may provide technical direction or redirection of specific activities within the context of the Program Description and the approved Implementation Plan.
- **Approval of Specified Key Personnel:** Prior USAID Agreement Officer (AO) approval is required for personnel filling those five (5) positions considered to be essential to the successful implementation of the award.
- **Approval of Sub-Awards:** 2 CFR 200.308 already requires the Recipient to obtain the AO's prior approval for the sub-award, transfer, or contracting out of any work under an award. Additionally, prior AOR concurrence is required for the evaluation criteria a recipient utilizes to select sub awardees and must review the substantive provisions of the sub-awards.

4. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this program is 935. This code includes any area or country including the recipient country, 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 and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the Citizen Engagement for Accountability Program which is authorized by Federal statute. The successful Recipient will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The Recipient will assume responsibility for administering Federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award.

6. Selection of Instrument

In August 2020, USAID/Zimbabwe commissioned researchers to conduct a *Media Assessment* to study the state of the media and evaluate whether it operates as an independent check against the institutions, public and private, that drive Zimbabwe's political, social, and economic landscapes. The *Media Assessment* grew out of Embassy and Mission leadership consensus on the need to explore engaging with different actors, including the media, who might be able to promote much-needed political and economic reforms. The *Media Assessment* confirmed the potentially transformative role of the media in supporting Zimbabwe's fledgling democracy through holding officials accountable, increasing reliable information for decision-making, and amplifying the voices of marginalized citizens.

In the past USAID has supported media organizations in strengthening their capacity to foster civic engagement and through this NOFO, USAID seeks to build on and amplify those efforts on a larger scale. The findings from the *Media Assessment* confirmed the Mission's own analysis informed by conversations with CSOs working in that space and the experiences of current media partners that state surveillance has disrupted journalism and freedom of expression.

Brave journalists exposing grand scale corruption have created momentum and increased the appetite of citizens for alternative platforms working to expose corruption and other malfeasance. With targeted investment, USAID can strengthen a corps of dedicated investigative journalists committed to serving the public interest. Moreover, the recently licensed community-based radio stations also provide an opportunity for lower level accountability efforts intersecting with DG programming on constitutionalism and local governance.

DG believes that an assistance instrument would suit this activity best. An assistance instrument will provide scope for substantial involvement by USAID, including technical direction of the implementing partner, which will bolster their capacity to deliver on set objectives. Additionally, given the fluid nature of Zimbabwe's political landscape, the recipient would require some autonomy to make real time tactical decisions to further the goals of the activity. An assistance instrument would provide a level of flexibility which an acquisition instrument might not.

[END OF SECTION B]

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility for this NOFO not restricted.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

USAID/Zimbabwe established a mandatory minimum recipient cost-share of five percent of projected award amount for this award. Such cost-share may be provided directly by the recipient; other multilateral, bilateral, and foundation donors; host governments; and local organizations, communities and private businesses that contribute financially and/or in-kind to implementation of activities. This may include contribution of staff level of effort, office space or other facilities, or equipment which may be used for the program provided by the recipient. Within the guidance on cost-sharing in grants and cooperative agreements found in 2 CFR 200.306, USAID encourages maximum creativity for fulfilling the cost-share requirement. To the extent feasible, cost-share should be used as a means to promote sustainability beyond USAID funding.

3. Other

Any one entity/organization may submit one (1) application for funding in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity NOFO as a prime awardee.

[END OF SECTION C]

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

Debra Nengomasha
A&A Specialist
USAID/Zimbabwe

Email: dnengomasha@usaid.gov with copies to harareprocure@usaid.gov

Alternate Point of Contact

Michelle Shirley
Agreement Officer
USAID/Zimbabwe

Email: mshirley@usaid.gov

2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO should be submitted in writing to dnengomasha@usaid.gov and harareprocure@usaid.gov no later than 07:00 am Harare time on April 9, 2021. 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 Content and Form of Application

Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply all aspects of the NOFO.

Preparation of Applications:

Each applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO. Applications must be submitted in two separate parts: the Technical Application and the Business (Cost) Application. This subsection addresses general content requirements applying to the full application. Please see subsections 5 and 6, below, for information on the content specific to the Technical and Business (Cost) applications. The Technical application must address technical aspects only while the Business (Cost) Application must present the costs, and address risk and other related issues.

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

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

- Program name
- Notice of Funding Opportunity number
- Name of any proposed sub-recipients or partnerships (identify if any of the organizations are local organizations, per USAID’s definition of ‘local entity’ under ADS 303.

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

Applicants 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 title page with the following legend:

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

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

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

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

Applications must comply with the following:

- USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections. Please ensure that applications comply with the page limitations.
- Written in English
- Use standard 8 ½” x 11”, single sided, single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1” margins, left justification and headers and/or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and applicant’s name.
- 10 point font can be used for graphs and charts. Tables however, must comply with the 12 point Times New Roman requirement.

- Submitted via Microsoft Word or PDF formats, except budget files which must be submitted in Microsoft Excel.
- The estimated start date identified in Section B of this NOFO must be used in the cost application.
- The technical application must be a searchable and editable Word or PDF format as appropriate.
- The Cost Schedule must include an Excel spreadsheet with all cells unlocked and no hidden formulas or sheets. A PDF version of the Excel spreadsheet may be submitted in addition to the Excel version at the applicant's discretion, however, the official cost application submission is the unlocked Excel version.

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

4. Application Submission Procedures

Applications in response to this NOFO must be submitted no later than the closing date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Late applications will not be reviewed nor considered.

Applications must be submitted by email to dnengomasha@usaid.gov with a copy to harareprocure@usaid.gov. Email submissions must include the NOFO number and applicant's name in the subject line heading. In addition, for an application sent by multiple emails, the subject line must also indicate whether the email relates to the technical or cost application, and the desired sequence of the emails and their attachments (e.g. "No. 1 of 4", etc.). For example, if your cost application is being sent in two emails, the first email should have a subject line that states: "[NOFO number], [organization name], Cost Application, Part 1 of 2".

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

After submitting an application electronically, applicants should immediately check their own email to confirm that the attachments were indeed sent. If an applicant discovers an error in transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email or indicate in the file name if submitted via grants.gov that it is a "corrected" submission. Do not send the same email more than once unless there has been a change, and if so, please note that it is a "corrected" email.

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

There may be a problem with the receipt of *.zip files due to anti-virus software. Therefore, applicants are discouraged from sending files in this format as USAID/Zimbabwe cannot guarantee their acceptance by the internet server. File size must not exceed 25MB.

5. Technical Application Format

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

It should be in English, Times New Roman, 12-point font, and at a minimum, must contain the following **all of which count towards the 20-page limit (unless specified otherwise)**:

Cover Page: (one page - does not count toward the 20-page limit)

The cover page must include:

- Name and address of organization(s)/institution(s) involved with the lead or primary applicant clearly identified.
- Any proposed sub-grantees clearly listed.
- The total estimated cost, the dollar amount requested from USAID, and the amount of cost share.
- Contact person (lead contact name, title, telephone numbers, and e-mail information). Applicants should also clearly state whether the identified contact person has the authority to negotiate on behalf of the applicant, and, if not, the contact information for the appropriate person with authority to negotiate should also be listed.

Table of Contents: (not to exceed one page - does not count toward the page limit)

Acronym List: (not included in page limitation).

Executive Summary: (maximum one page)

The Executive Summary must provide a high-level overview of key elements of the Technical Application.

Technical Application: (20 pages maximum, including Executive Summary)

Applicants must organize the narrative sections of their technical applications in the same order as the evaluation criteria and include the major components below.

Technical applications should be no longer than 20 pages, excluding cover page and annexes. Applications, excluding annexes, will be evaluated using the criteria outlined below. Technical Approach is most important. Key Personnel and Management Approach, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan, and Past Performance and Experience will be equally weighted. The Cost Application will not be scored.

1. Technical Approach

The Technical and Implementation Approach is the most important part of the proposed activity. This section should provide a clear overall vision and operational strategy to achieve the expected results of the activity. It should include the applicant's analysis of the important challenges and priority needs, and key activities.

Applicants are required to propose a comprehensive approach to achieve the activity's intermediate results and ensure that interventions are sustainable. A high level of coordination with other USG-funded awards and other development partners is required. Duplication and redundancies in assistance must be avoided.

Applicants have flexibility to propose their own solutions to the four program components and tasks/performance indicators are described under Section III of the Program Description to guide applicants in preparing their applications. The applicant should design an innovative subgrants program to achieve the activity objectives and provide the required technical assistance to enable the selected sub grantees to successfully implement activities. USAID encourages applicants to propose innovative approaches to create incentives for program success. Applicants will compete to propose solutions which best address the desired results of this Activity.

The applicant will be evaluated not only on how it meets the expected results but progress towards ensuring sustainability as well. Special consideration will be given to innovative alliances. The applicant is expected to develop all assistance activities with the guiding principles and programmatic considerations in mind which are stated under Section IV of the Program Description.

2. Key Personnel and Management Approach

The Applicant should provide an overview of the proposed key personnel, their qualifications and experience, and relevant curriculum vitae and references. This includes the quality and appropriateness of the proposed key personnel, the division of labor between in-country and home office personnel in the event the applicant is or proposes to partner with an organization(s) based outside of Zimbabwe, and the division of responsibilities and authorities between prime and sub-partners. This section should also include how the offeror will organize its staff, including sub-partners to achieve the goals and objectives of the RFA. The management plan should describe how the project will relate to and respond to USAID.

Applicants must identify and propose three positions, in addition to Chief of Party (COP)/Program Director and Finance/Finance & Administration Director, as Key Personnel to collectively fulfill functions such as Deputy COP, Technical Director, M&E Director, Subgrants Manager, or any other function that best responds to the program description. Applicants should provide detailed job descriptions with necessary qualifications for all five Key Personnel positions. The rationale behind the technical and/or management responsibilities assigned to each position should be described in relation to the qualifications of the corresponding proposed position. Non-key personnel may also be discussed in the context of the Activity management plan but detailed position descriptions are not necessary. Personnel should have extensive experience and expertise in designing, implementing, and evaluating activities similar to those

described in the program description, as well as managing the relationships with high-ranking government officials, USAID, and other key stakeholders. Applicants may propose specific candidates to fill key personnel positions who have the required skill sets that cover all objectives, providing curricula vitae and references, for key personnel positions.

Applicants may employ U.S., third-country, and local experts as permanent key staff or short-term employees. Applicants shall use local rather than international personnel for both short-term and permanent positions whenever possible.

3. Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan

The Applicant should provide an overview of the proposed Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy and draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the activity. The draft MEL plan table itself should be included as an annex. Indicators and annual targets in the MEL plan should directly relate to the technical assistance and support to be provided. Illustrative indicators have been provided in the program description.

Applicants are encouraged to propose in their MEL plan, a set of benchmarks to be achieved against a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators. It is expected that all indicators, when practical, be disaggregated by gender and that specific attention be paid to strategies for better including women as direct program beneficiaries. Knowledge of data management systems may be included in the Applicant's submission when discussing the tracking of information.

The Applicant will submit a draft monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan as part of the application. The successful Applicant will articulate and report on its approach to collaboration, learning, and adapting (CLA) and describe its process to include CLA in its annual work plans and quarterly reports, with special attention to internal controls and processes and procedures to adapt implementation on an iterative basis.

Monitoring: Successful Applicants will address the following questions in their draft MEL Plan:

- How effective is the approach to enhancing the accountability of powerful actors through the media?
- How will results registered under the activity be tracked to inform decision-making and address the role of the media in fostering accountable governance?
- How will the partner change strategies and adjust to a change in the political environment?
- What specific gender, youth-sensitive, and vulnerable population-related indicators will be used?
- What strategies will the partner put in place to monitor unintended consequences?
- What types of questions will be asked about male and female roles to uncover intended and unintended positive and negative changes?
- How will progress towards self-reliance be monitored at the activity level?

Evaluation: Successful Applicants will address the following questions in their draft MEL Plan:

- What type of evaluation is expected?

- What key evaluation questions or lines of investigation will be pursued under this activity?
- How will knowledge gaps be accommodated and lessons generated during the course of implementation of this activity in order to adapt implementation?
- How are these considerations for performance monitoring, evaluation, and learning factored into the team composition and management approach?
- How will progress towards self-reliance be evaluated?

The Applicant will undertake an internal midpoint performance evaluation whose objective, among others, is to reflect on the effectiveness of the activity against the operational environment and intended activity outcomes.

Collaborating, Learning and Adapting: This activity is expected to contribute to USAID/Zimbabwe’s commitment to a multi-faceted Collaborating¹⁰, Learning¹¹ and Adapting¹² (CLA) approach to development. The CLA approach is based on the understanding that development efforts yield more effective results if they are coordinated and collaborative and test promising, new approaches in a continuous yet also rapid, targeted search for improvements and efficiencies. Activities should build on what works and eliminate what doesn’t. In the draft Monitoring Evaluation Learning (MEL) plan requested, the successful Applicant will clearly articulate what CLA approaches, methods, and/or processes will be used in program management and oversight.

4. Past Performance and Experience

Applicants should provide evidence, including past performance references for similar procurements that the applicant and any proposed sub-partners have the ability to successfully carry out a project comparable in scope and complexity to the RFA.

6. Business (Cost) Application Format

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

¹⁰ Facilitating collaboration internally and with external stakeholders to promote increasingly nation-led socio-economic development; e.g. enhancing existing stakeholder engagement into learning platforms, substantially coordinating with other USG- or other complementary activities to ensure complementarity and reduce overlap, while also facilitating learning among activities programs that are complementary to this activity.

¹¹ Generating and feeding new learning, innovations, and performance information back into the system to inform program management and design.

¹² Translating learning (from within the implementation experience or external sources) and considering changing conditions, along the lines of the risks, assumptions and game changers, into strategic and programmatic adjustments.

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

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

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

a) Cover Page (See Section D.5 above for requirements)

b) SF 424 Form(s)

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

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

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

c) Required Certifications and Assurances

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

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

d) Budget and Budget Narrative

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

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

- Summary Budget, inclusive of all program costs (federal and non-federal), broken out by major budget category and by year for activities implemented by the applicant and any potential sub-applicants for the entire period of the program. See Section H, Annex 1 for Summary Budget Template
- Detailed Budget, including a breakdown by year, sufficient to allow the Agency to determine that the costs represent a realistic and efficient use of funding to implement the applicant's program and are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.
- Detailed Budgets for each sub-recipient, for all federal funding and cost share, broken out by budget category and by year, for the entire implementation period of the project.

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

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

superannuation, gratuity, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in U.S. dollars and as a percentage of salaries.

- 3) Travel and Transportation – Provide details to explain the purpose of the trips, the number of trips, the origin and destination, the number of individuals traveling, and the duration of the trips. Per Diem and associated travel costs must be based on the applicant’s normal travel policies. When appropriate please provide supporting documentation as an attachment, such as company travel policy, and explain assumptions in the Budget Narrative.
- 4) Procurement or Rental of Goods (Equipment & Supplies), Services, and Real Property – Must include information on estimated types of equipment, models, supplies and the cost per unit and quantity. The Budget Narrative must include the purpose of the equipment and supplies and the basis for the estimates. The Budget Narrative must support the necessity of any rental costs and reasonableness in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable property, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased.
- 5) Subawards – Specify the budget for the portion of the program to be passed through to any subrecipients. See 2 CFR 200 for assistance in determining whether the sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor. The subrecipient budgets must align with the same requirements as the applicant’s budget, including those related to fringe and indirect costs.
- 6) Other Direct Costs – This may include other costs not elsewhere specified, such as report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, as well as any other miscellaneous costs which directly benefit the program proposed by the applicant. The applicant should indicate the subject, venue and duration of any proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs. Otherwise, the narrative should be minimal.
- 7) **Indirect Costs for Institutions without a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement**
Institutions, especially local institutions usually do not have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) letter with the US Government. Institutions without NICRAs may either treat all indirect costs as direct costs or may choose to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (see 2 CFR 200.414(f)).
- 8) Cost Sharing – The applicant should estimate the amount of cost-sharing resources to be provided over the life of the agreement and specify the sources of such resources, and the basis of calculation in the budget narrative. Applicants should also provide a breakdown of the cost share (financial and in-kind contributions) of all organizations involved in implementing the resulting award.

e) Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407

Inclusion of an item of cost in the detailed application budget does not satisfy any requirements for prior approval by the Agency. If the applicant would like the award to reflect approval of any cost elements for which prior written approval is specifically required for allowability, the

applicant must specify and justify that cost. See 2 CFR 200.407 for information regarding which cost elements require prior written approval.

e) Approval of Subawards

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

- Name of organization
- DUNS Number
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not appear on the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) list
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not have active exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM)
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not listed in the United Nations Security designation list
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not suspended or debarred
- Confirmation that the applicant has completed a risk assessment of the subrecipient, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.332(b)
- Any negative findings as a result of the risk assessment and the applicant's plan for mitigation.

f) 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.beta.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.beta.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.beta.sam.gov, navigate to Help, then to International Registrants.

g) History of Performance

1. Past Performance and Experience – This section will address the following:
 - Brief description of the applicant’s organizational history and experience;
 - Examples of accomplishments and results in developing and implementing similar programs;
 - Relevant experience with proposed approaches;
 - Institutional strength as represented by breadth and depth of experienced personnel in program relevant disciplines and areas; and
 - Explanation of how lessons learned will be applied in achieving the goals of the program.

2. The applicant must provide information regarding its recent history of performance for all its cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs, not to exceed 3 years, as follows:
 - Name of the Awarding Organization;
 - Award Number;
 - Activity Title;
 - A brief description of the activity;
 - Period of Performance;
 - Award Amount;
 - Reports and findings from any audits performed in the last 3 years; and
 - Name of at least two (2) updated professional contacts who most directly observed the work at the organization for which the service was performed with complete current contact information including telephone number, and e-mail address for each proposed individual.

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

h) Branding Strategy & Marking Plan

The USAID/Zimbabwe Mission Director has approved a Branding and Marking (B&M) waiver that applies to all USAID/Zimbabwe DG programs. The Agency is currently in the process of revising its B&M policy and USAID/Zimbabwe will work with the implementing partner to make necessary adjustments to comply with the Agency’s revised policy, if necessary.

i) Funding Restrictions

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award. See 2 CFR 200.331 for assistance in determining whether a sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor.

Construction will not be authorized under this award.

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

Except as may be specifically approved in advance by the AO, all commodities and services that will be reimbursed by USAID under this award must be from the authorized geographic code specified in Section B.4 of this NOFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

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

Construction will not be authorized under this award.

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

Except as may be specifically approved in advance by the AO, all commodities and services that will be reimbursed by USAID under this award must be from the authorized geographic code specified in Section B.4 of this NOFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

j) Conscience Clause

This NOFO will not obligate HIV/AIDS funds.

k) Conflict of Interest Pre-Award Term

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. The applicant must provide conflict of interest disclosures when it submits an SF-424. Should the applicant discover a previously undisclosed conflict of interest after submitting the application, the applicant must disclose the conflict of interest to the AO no later than ten (10) calendar days following discovery.
- b. Organizational Conflict of Interest The applicant must notify USAID of any actual or potential conflict of interest that they are aware of that may provide the applicant with an unfair competitive advantage in competing for this financial assistance award. Examples of an unfair competitive advantage include but are not limited to situations in which an applicant or the applicant's employee gained access to non-public information regarding a federal assistance funding opportunity, or an applicant or applicant's employee was substantially involved in the preparation of a federal assistance funding opportunity. USAID will promptly take appropriate action upon receiving any such notification from the applicant.

(END OF PRE-AWARD TERM)

[END OF SECTION D]

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

The merit review criteria prescribed here are tailored to the requirements of this particular NOFO. Applicants should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant matters which the 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 relative to each other, as described here and prescribed by the Technical Application Format. The Technical Application will be scored by a Selection Committee (SC) using the criteria described in this section.

2. Review and Selection Process

The required format and content for the application are described in Section D. The applications will be evaluated using an adjectival rating system, in accordance with the selection criteria set forth below, by a Selection Committee (SC) comprised of USAID employees, other U.S. Government representatives, and/or host country experts. The SC will make a recommendation regarding which applicant should receive the award.

Prior to negotiating an actual award, the Agreement Officer will review the apparently successful applicant's budget to ensure that costs, including cost sharing, are in compliance with OMB's and USAID's policies. The costs proposed must be determined to be reasonable, based on the Cost Application and other information before award can be made.

Award will be made to the responsible applicant whose application is determined to be the best based on the criteria specified in this NOFO. The Agreement Officer must also evaluate risk of the apparently successful applicant and is charged with the final determination of whether to make an award to the apparently successful applicant. Among other issues, the apparently successful applicant's history of performance will be reviewed using the reference information contained in the Technical Application, along with any other information deemed relevant by the Agreement Officer or Selection Committee.

The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally obligate the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either an Agreement signed by the Agreement Officer or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

a) Merit Review

Evaluation criteria and scoring: Technical applications will be evaluated against the criteria below. Technical Approach is most important. Key Personnel and Management Approach, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan, and Past Performance and Experience will be equally weighted. The Cost Application will not be scored.

- Technical Approach
- Key Personnel & Management Approach
- Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan, and
- Past Performance and Experience

Criteria #1: Technical approach

The Technical and Implementation Approach is the most important part of the proposed activity. This section should provide a clear overall vision and operational strategy to achieve the expected results of the activity. It should include the applicant's analysis of the important challenges and priority needs, and key activities.

Applicants are required to propose a comprehensive approach to achieve the activity's intermediate results and ensure that interventions are sustainable. A high level of coordination with other USG-funded awards and other development partners is required. Duplication and redundancies in assistance must be avoided.

Applicants have flexibility to propose their own solutions to the four program components and tasks/performance indicators are described under Section III of the Program Description to guide applicants in preparing their applications. The applicant should design an innovative subgrants program to achieve the activity objectives and provide the required technical assistance to enable the selected sub grantees to successfully implement activities. USAID encourages applicants to propose innovative approaches to create incentives for program success. Applicants will compete to propose solutions which best address the desired results of this Activity.

The applicant will be evaluated not only on how it meets the expected results but progress towards ensuring sustainability as well. Special consideration will be given to innovative alliances. The applicant is expected to develop all assistance activities with the guiding principles and programmatic considerations in mind which are stated under Section IV of the Program Description.

Criteria #2: Key personnel and management approach

The Applicant should provide an overview of the proposed key personnel, their qualifications and experience, and relevant curriculum vitae and references. This includes the quality and appropriateness of the proposed key personnel, the division of labor between in-country and home office personnel in the event the applicant is or proposes to partner with an organization(s) based outside of Zimbabwe, and the division of responsibilities and authorities between prime and sub-partners. This section should also include how the offeror will organize its staff, including sub-partners to achieve the goals and objectives of the RFA. The management plan should describe how the project will relate to and respond to USAID.

Criteria #3: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan

The Applicant should provide an overview of the proposed Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy and draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the activity. The draft MEL plan table itself should be included as an annex. Indicators and annual targets in the MEL plan

should directly relate to the technical assistance and support to be provided. Illustrative indicators have been provided in the program description.

Applicants are encouraged to propose in their MEL plan, a set of benchmarks to be achieved against a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators. It is expected that all indicators, when practical, be disaggregated by gender and that specific attention be paid to strategies for better including women as direct program beneficiaries. Knowledge of data management systems may be included in the Applicant's submission when discussing the tracking of information.

The Applicant should provide an overview of the proposed Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy and draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the activity. The draft MEL plan table itself should be included as an annex. Indicators and annual targets in the MEL plan should directly relate to the technical assistance and support to be provided. Illustrative indicators have been provided in the program description.

Applicants are encouraged to propose in their MEL plan, a set of benchmarks to be achieved against a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators. It is expected that all indicators, when practical, be disaggregated by gender and that specific attention be paid to strategies for better including women as direct program beneficiaries. Knowledge of data management systems may be included in the Applicant's submission when discussing the tracking of information.

Criteria #4: Past Performance and Experience

Applicants should provide evidence, including past performance references for similar procurements that the applicant and any proposed sub-partners have the ability to successfully carry out a project comparable in scope and complexity to the RFA.

b) Business Review

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

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

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

The AO will perform a risk assessment (2 CFR 200.206). The AO may determine that a pre-award survey is required to inform the risk assessment in determining whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organizational, experience, accounting and operational controls, financial resources, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award. Depending on

the result of the risk assessment, the AO will decide to execute the award, not execute the award, or award with “specific conditions” (2 CFR 200.208).

[END OF SECTION E]

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.

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

3. Reporting Requirements

The Recipient shall be subject to the following reporting requirements:

i) Financial Reporting: As permitted by 2 CFR 200.327, the Recipient must submit quarterly financial reports to USAID within 30 calendar days following the end of each quarter utilizing the Office of Management and Budget SF-425. Financial reports are due January 31, April 30, July 31, and October 31. The SF-425 (and SF-42Sa, if necessary) must be submitted via electronic format to the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR), the Agreement Officer (AO), and the USAID Office of Financial Management. The Federal Financial Report (FFR/SF-425) is available in PDF or Excel format at the following OMB website: <https://www.usaid.gov/forms/sf-425>

ii) Program Reporting: The following reports are required:

- a. Annual Work/Implementation Plans
- b. MEL Plan
- c. Quarterly success
- d. Semi-Annual and Annual Performance Reports
- e. Branding and Marking Plan
- f. Final Report
- g. Close-Out Plan

- a. **Annual Work Plans:** The Recipient is expected to submit a draft first year workplan with the application and subsequent annual work plans 30 days before the beginning of the annual reporting period, which aligns with the USG fiscal year, for approval by USAID's Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR). Work plans and changes and/or revisions thereto shall describe the activities to be conducted during the period at a greater level of detail than the Program Description but shall not serve to change the Program Description. All work plans and changes/revisions thereto shall cross-reference the applicable section(s) in the Program Description. Workplans will include, among others, programmatic targets, results metrics, context indicators, performance indicators (standard, custom (qualitative and quantitative), and key assumptions, to be jointly agreed in consultation with the USAID AOR. Periodic reviews will provide regular check-in points to review progress, reflect on changes in the context, and decide on appropriate programmatic adjustments. Depending upon operational circumstances, some components of the Program Description may not be activated through the work plan or may be activated through incremental work plan revisions.

- b. **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan:** The MEL plan must include how the applicant will learn during implementation and describe how it intends to adapt its management and implementation approaches based on its learning platform. Within 30 days of award, the Recipient will submit a revised draft MEL plan to the AOR. The MEL plan shall cover the full period of this Cooperative Agreement and include the process for collecting and analyzing baseline data. USAID will review the draft MEL plan and provide comments/suggestions within 30 days of receipt. The Recipient will then submit one copy of the final MEL plan to the AOR for approval in writing not later than 15 days from receipt of USAID's comments/suggestions. The MEL plan will include specific benchmarks and indicators for measuring progress for all activities that are ongoing, including DO-related Performance Monitoring Plan and Performance Plan & Report indicators specified in the PD and USAID/Zimbabwe's performance management plan along with additional benchmarks and indicators developed by the Recipient. The MEL plan will also highlight how data collected will show the impact and effectiveness of program approaches and methodologies employed and how the data will contribute toward enhancing understanding of best practices in the sector. The MEL plan should show feedback loops that allow the program to use monitoring and evaluation information for decision making within the program. Measurement will focus on both output and outcome data as well as on higher levels of impact to demonstrate the effects and results of program activities. For each objective, there should be at least two to three qualitative outcome-oriented indicators. All data should be disaggregated by sex, disability, age, and geography, whenever applicable.

The MEL Plan will be updated and revised as necessary annually in conjunction with the Annual Implementation/Work Plan, most specifically related to annual indicator targets.

- c. **Quarterly success stories:** The successful applicant will submit at least one story of general interest (or success story) every three months, including data that demonstrates the impact of programming on individuals and institutions in Zimbabwe. These may be submitted at any time during the three-month period.

Each story will be no longer than two pages and will include a photo and where appropriate, informed consent regarding use of the photo. Priority should be given to stories which demonstrate how gender gaps, and/or the unique needs and interests of males and females, have been addressed.

- d. **Semi-Annual Performance Reports:** The Recipient will submit semi-annual performance reports within 30 days of the close of the reporting period. These reports will indicate progress achieved towards benchmarks, highlight tangible results, identify any problems encountered in implementation, and propose remedial actions as appropriate. In addition to meeting the performance reporting requirements, these cumulative reports must include data collected to measure progress against the M&E plan and the documentation of "success stories". Reports will be submitted electronically to the AOR and the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC); submission instructions can be found at <http://dec.usaid.gov>. The reports must be reviewed and cleared by the AOR prior to submission to the DEC.
- e. **Branding and Marking Plan:** The USAID/Zimbabwe Mission Director has approved a Branding and Marking (B&M) waiver that applies to all USAID/Zimbabwe DG programs. The Agency is currently in the process of revising its B&M policy and USAID/Zimbabwe will work with the implementing partner to make necessary adjustments to comply with the Agency's revised policy, if necessary.
- f. **Final Report:** No later than 45 days after the completion date of the Agreement, the Recipient must prepare a completion report which highlights accomplishments against work plans, gives the final status of the benchmarks and objectives, addresses lessons learned during implementation, and suggests ways to resolve identified constraints. This is in line with requirements as set in 22 CFR 226.51. The report should provide recommendations for follow-on work that might complement the completed work and details of close-out and transition plans. The Recipient shall submit an electronic version as well as two copies of the final report to the AO and AOR. One additional copy of the report must be sent to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC); submission instructions can be found at <http://dec.usaid.gov>. Final Report must be reviewed and cleared by the AOR prior to submitting to DEC.
- g. **Close-Out Plan:** Three months prior to the completion date of the Agreement, the Recipient will submit a demobilization plan for AOR's approval. The Close-out Plan will include, at a minimum, an illustrative property disposition plan, a plan for the phase-out of in-country operations, a delivery schedule for all reports or other documents requested and a timetable for completing all required actions in the Close-out Plan, including the submission date of the final property disposition plan to the Agreement Officer.

iii) Environmental Considerations

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID includes 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) 204, which require, in part, 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 activity funded under this Cooperative Agreement will be implemented unless an environmental threshold determination, as defined by 22 CFR 216, has been reached for that activity, as documented in an Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), or Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO). Hereinafter, such documents are described as "approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation."

The activity environmental compliance obligations under these regulations are specified in the IEE <http://gemini.info.usaid.gov/repository/pdf/39281.pdf> posted on the USAID Environmental compliance database <http://gemini.info.usaid.gov/>. The applicant shall be responsible for implementing all IEE conditions pertaining to activities to be funded under this solicitation.

- 1) In addition, the Recipient must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter shall govern.

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

[END OF SECTION F]

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

1. NOFO Points of Contact

Any questions regarding this NFO may be addressed to:

Debra Nengomasha
Acquisition & Assistance Specialist
Email: dengomasha@usaid.gov

With a copy to: harareprocure@usaid.gov.

The Agreement Officer for this award is:

Michelle Shirley
Email: mshirley@usaid.gov

The Financial Office for this award is:

Financial Management Office USAID/Zimbabwe
No. 2 Lorraine Drive, Westgate
Harare, Zimbabwe
Email: harareinvoice@usaid.gov

2. Acquisition and Assistance Ombudsman

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

The A&A Ombudsman may be contacted via Ombudsman@usaid.gov

[END OF SECTION G]

SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

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

Applications with Proprietary Data

Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation 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]

ANNEX 1 - SUMMARY BUDGET TEMPLATE

Attached.

[END OF ANNEX 1]

ANNEX 2 - STANDARD PROVISIONS

(Note: the full text of these provisions may be found at: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa> and <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>). The actual Standard Provisions included in the award will be dependent on the organization that is selected. The award will include the latest Mandatory Provisions for either U.S. or non-U.S. Nongovernmental organizations. The award will also contain the following “required as applicable” Standard Provisions:

Please note that the resulting award will include all standard provisions (both mandatory and required as applicable) in full text.

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

Required	Not Required	Standard Provision
TBD		RAA1. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATES - PREDETERMINED (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA2. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATES - PROVISIONAL (Nonprofit) (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA3. NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE - PROVISIONAL (Profit) (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA4. INDIRECT COSTS – DE MINIMIS RATE (NOVEMBER 2020)
X		RAA5. EXCHANGE VISITORS AND PARTICIPANT TRAINING (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA6. VOLUNTARY POPULATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES – SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS (JANUARY 2009)
	X	RAA7. PROTECTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT (APRIL 1998)
	X	RAA8. CARE OF LABORATORY ANIMALS (MARCH 2004)
X		RAA9. TITLE TO AND CARE OF PROPERTY (COOPERATING COUNTRY TITLE) (NOVEMBER 1985)
X	X	RAA10. COST SHARING (MATCHING) (FEBRUARY 2012)
	X	RAA11. PROHIBITION OF ASSISTANCE TO DRUG TRAFFICKERS (JUNE 1999)
	X	RAA12. INVESTMENT PROMOTION (NOVEMBER 2003)
X		RAA13. REPORTING HOST GOVERNMENT TAXES (DECEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA14. FOREIGN GOVERNMENT DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA15. CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IMPLEMENTATION (ASSISTANCE) (FEBRUARY 2012)
	X	RAA16. CONDOMS (ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA17. PROHIBITION ON THE PROMOTION OR ADVOCACY OF THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION OR SEX TRAFFICKING (ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
X		RAA18. USAID DISABILITY POLICY - ASSISTANCE (DECEMBER 2004)
	X	RAA19. STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED IN USAID ASSISTANCE AWARDS INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION (SEPTEMBER 2004)

	X	RAA20. STATEMENT FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES ON LACK OF SUPPORT FOR PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA21. ELIGIBILITY OF SUBRECIPIENTS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA22. PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS TO PROMOTE, SUPPORT, OR ADVOCATE FOR THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
X		RAA23. UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (NOVEMBER 2020)
X		RAA24. REPORTING SUBAWARDS AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION (NOVEMBER 2020)
	X	RAA25. PATENT REPORTING PROCEDURES (NOVEMBER 2020)
	X	RAA26. ACCESS TO USAID FACILITIES AND USAID'S INFORMATION SYSTEMS (AUGUST 2013)
X		RAA27. CONTRACT PROVISION FOR DBA INSURANCE UNDER RECIPIENT PROCUREMENTS (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA28. AWARD TERM AND CONDITION FOR RECIPIENT INTEGRITY AND PERFORMANCE MATTERS (April 2016)
		RAA29. RESERVED
X		RAA30. PROGRAM INCOME (AUGUST 2020)
	X	RAA31. NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY (NOVEMBER 2020)

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

Required	Not Required	Standard Provision
TBD		RAA1. ADVANCE PAYMENT AND REFUNDS (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA2. REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENT AND REFUNDS (DECEMBER 2014)
		RAA3. INDIRECT COSTS – NEGOTIATED INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT (NICRA) (NOVEMBER 2020)
		RAA4. INDIRECT COSTS – CHARGED AS A FIXED AMOUNT (NONPROFIT) (JUNE 2012)
		RAA5. INDIRECT COSTS – DE MINIMIS RATE (NOVEMBER 2020)
X		RAA6. UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM OF AWARD MANAGEMENT (NOVEMBER 2020)
X		RAA7. REPORTING SUBAWARDS AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION (NOVEMBER 2020)
X		RAA8. SUBAWARDS (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA9. TRAVEL AND INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORTATION (DECEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA10. OCEAN SHIPMENT OF GOODS (JUNE 2012)
X		RAA11. REPORTING HOST GOVERNMENT TAXES (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA12. PATENT RIGHTS (JUNE 2012)
X		RAA13. EXCHANGE VISITORS AND PARTICIPANT TRAINING (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA14. INVESTMENT PROMOTION (NOVEMBER 2003)
X		RAA 15. COST SHARE (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA16. PROGRAM INCOME (AUGUST 2020)

	X	RAA17. FOREIGN GOVERNMENT DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA18. STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED IN USAID ASSISTANCE AWARDS INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION (SEPTEMBER 2004)
	X	RAA19. PROTECTION OF HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECTS (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA20. STATEMENT FOR IMPLEMENTERS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES ON LACK OF SUPPORT FOR PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA21. ELIGIBILITY OF SUBRECIPIENTS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA22. PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING FUNDS TO PROMOTE, SUPPORT, OR ADVOCATE FOR THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION (JUNE 2012)
	X	RAA23. VOLUNTARY POPULATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES – SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS (JANUARY 2009)
	X	RAA24. CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IMPLEMENTATION (ASSISTANCE) (FEBRUARY 2012)
	X	RAA25. CONDOMS (ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA26. PROHIBITION ON THE PROMOTION OR ADVOCACY OF THE LEGALIZATION OR PRACTICE OF PROSTITUTION OR SEX TRAFFICKING(ASSISTANCE) (SEPTEMBER 2014)
	X	RAA27. LIMITATION ON SUBAWARDS TO NON-LOCAL ENTITIES (JULY 2014)
	X	RAA28. CONTRACT PROVISION FOR DBA INSURANCE UNDER RECIPIENT PROCUREMENTS (DECEMBER 2014)
X		RAA29. CONTRACT AWARD TERM AND CONDITION FOR RECIPIENT INTEGRITY AND PERFORMANCE MATTERS (April 2016)
		RAA30. RESERVED
	X	RAA31. NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY (NOVEMBER 2020)

[END OF ANNEX 2]

ANNEX 3 - ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directives System
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
BAZ	Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe
CAL	Collaborating, Learning and Adapting
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CEAP	Citizen Engagement for Accountability Program
COP	Chief of Party
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EC	European Commission
FAA	Foreign Assistance Act
GOZ	Government of Zimbabwe
IR	Intermediate Result
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan
NPI	New Partnership Initiative
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
PYD	Positive Youth Development
RFA	Request for Application
SMAZ	Strengthening Media for Accountability in Zimbabwe
TA	Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
YALI	Young African Leaders Initiative

[END OF ANNEX 3]

[END OF NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NO. 72061321RFA00007]