



USAID | SENEGAL

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

USAID/Senegal/Sahel Regional Office (SRO)

USAID Sahel Information Integrity

Annual Program Statement (APS) #72068524APS00003_ **Amendment#1**

CFDA: 98.001

Issuance Date: June 28, 2024

Closing Date: June 30, 2025, 5:30 PM GMT (Dakar local time)

Please see Addendum documents for each Addendum's respective deadlines and submission instructions.

Dear Prospective Applicants:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in Senegal's Sahel Regional Office (USAID/Senegal/SRO) hereby announces the USAID Sahel Information Integrity Annual Program Statement.

Through the APS, USAID announces its desire to engage in a diverse range of partnerships, including with new and underutilized development actors to expand and amplify the Agency's work advancing information integrity in the Sahelian countries of West Africa.

This APS is neither a Request for Applications nor a Request for Proposals. Rather, this APS allows for Addenda to be published that will request concept papers. Concept papers should not be submitted in response to this APS, and should only be submitted in response to Addenda. Based on the review of those concept papers, USAID will determine whether to request a full application from an appropriate partner or partners.

USAID is available to respond to questions from interested parties. Applicants should submit questions by email to the point of contact identified in the specific Addendum through which

Annual Program Statement 72068524APS00003_ **Amendment#1**

they are submitting an application. Applicants should send general questions about the below information by email to USAID primary and secondary points of contact, Ms. Aminata Diallo, at amdiallo@usaid.gov and Robert Almosd at ralmosd@usaid.gov, respectively.

Thank you for your interest in USAID Programs.

Sincerely,

Robert Almosd
Regional Agreement Officer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION..... 4

- A. Background..... 4
- B. Purpose 12
- C. Objectives..... 12
- D. Operational Principles..... 14

SECTION II: Federal Award Information..... 17

- A. Funding..... 17
- B. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards 17
- C. Number of Awards 17
- D. Expected Implementation Mechanism..... 17
- E. Intellectual Property..... 18
- F. Authorized Geographic Code..... 18
- G. Benefiting Geographic Areas 18

SECTION III: Eligibility Information 19

- A. Eligible Applicants..... 19
- B. Cost Sharing..... 20

SECTION IV: Application and Submission Information 21

- A. Agency Point of Contact..... 21
- B. Application Process..... 21
- C. Concept Paper Application Content 24

CONCEPT PAPER TEMPLATE 25

SECTION V: Concept Paper Review Information..... 27

- A. Merit Review Criteria 27

SECTION VI: Federal Award Administration Information..... 28

- A. Federal Award Notices..... 28
- B. Types of Award..... 28
- C. Award Discretion..... 30

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

Information manipulation is an age-old problem. However, it has become cheaper, faster, and easier to produce and distribute with the advent of the internet and social media. As these tools are on the rise in the Sahel, information resilience has taken on a new importance. Along with already-existing rumors and false information, recent reports have noted a proliferation of coordinated disinformation and malinformation campaigns across the region, including in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger.¹ These have had an outsized impact in a region with underdeveloped independent media—including print, broadcast and online sources—and limited alternative reliable news sources.

Definition of terms:

USAID’s [Disinformation Primer](#) defines *disinformation* as “information that is shared with the intent to mislead people,” and *misinformation* as “false information spread by someone who believes [it] to be true,” and notes that regardless of intent, the sharing of such false information is dangerous.² The primer also defines the related concern of *malinformation* as “deliberate publication of private information for personal or private interest, as well as the deliberate manipulation of genuine content.”³ The three together make up the broader problem of *information disorder* or *information manipulation*. The term *information integrity* refers to the level of objectivity, rigor, verifiability and trustworthiness of content. This is distinct from *information resilience*, which applies to the ability of people to operate in a complex information landscape, and refers to users who can discern content that can cause harm and have the ability to adapt in reaction to it.

Current challenges:

Information manipulation is a critical threat to the development and social cohesion of Sahel countries in several ways. Above all, information manipulation undermines public confidence in democratic and civic institutions, including governments and media, at a time when the region confronts daunting threats of food insecurity, climate change, economic fragility, violent extremism, and democratic backsliding including multiple coups. Information manipulation leads to a loss of “information integrity,” meaning facts and data that shape public debate are no longer perceived as reliable or easy to discern. As the information landscape or “ecosystem” lacks credible sources or truth-tellers, it is increasingly difficult to bring a range of perspectives to the table for constructive discussions to achieve consensus on solutions to common problems. This issue is becoming more acute as credible media outlets are banned or leave the region and

¹ Africa Center for Strategic Studies. *Mapping Disinformation in Africa*. April 26, 2022. Retrieved at: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/mapping-disinformation-in-africa/> (also available in French)

² *Disinformation Primer* page 3.

³ Ibid.

media outlets promoting false information expand. Importantly, the initial falsehood tends to spread faster and outlast any efforts to counter or discredit it. That is particularly problematic in a region with a low level of media literacy, a high percentage of illiteracy, and weak or underdeveloped independent media.

Information manipulation is not limited to “open” online media. The general public often encounters it via offline or “closed” online media, such as WhatsApp threads, SMS, audio messages or even community radio—which in the Sahel remains overwhelmingly the most common way people get their news. People frequently lack access to alternate sources of information that could provide fact-based information and fact-checks. As researchers on this issue have noted, “the increasingly blurred overlap between traditional media, social media, and word of mouth means that content moves between online and offline spaces in ways that are not always easy to track but are critical to recognize, given how they influence and reinforce each other.”⁴ The chosen platform for information is extremely context specific, and in many areas across the Sahel it is different depending on age, education-level, literacy, and myriad other factors.

The complexity of the networks through which manipulated information is distributed and amplified has also increased, and this obscures its origins, making it harder for ordinary consumers to understand its sources. This threat is particularly acute in societies where a rapid expansion of internet access is exponentially increasing the sources from where people get information, drowning out traditional purveyors of information, and allowing malign actors to take advantage. Coincidentally, as detailed in a 2022 report from Search for Common Ground, the Sahel has some of the highest growth rates of internet usage in the world (even if the base number of users remain low), with internet users increasing by 18.5% in Mali, 18.9% in Burkina Faso, and 20.9% in Niger between 2020 and 2021.⁵ That growth rate also extends to Chad, which has seen internet penetration rates grow from 5% in 2019 to 19% in 2022, and social media usage increase by 42.4 % from 2020 to 2021, and by another 21.8% the following year.⁶ Even though social media usage rates remain low overall, mobile connection rates are very high, and often content that is generated on social media platforms is then propagated through mobile connections (e.g. WhatsApp, text messages, etc.)

⁴ Hassan, Idayat. “Disinformation is Undermining Democracy in West Africa.” CIGI, July 4, 2022, retrieved at: <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/disinformation-is-undermining-democracy-in-west-africa/>

⁵ Jiaxuan Yue, Habibou Bako, Kelsey Hampton, Katie Smith, “*Conflict and Online Space in the Sahel: Challenges and Recommendations*,” Search For Common Ground, July 2022

⁶ International Crisis Group. “Chad’s Transition: Easing Tensions Online,” Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°183, 13 December 2022. Retrieved at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/chad/b183-chads-transition-easing-tensions-online> (also available in French)

Breakdown of Social Media and Internet Penetration Rates in Some of the African Countries Referenced in This Report

	Total Internet Users	Penetration Rate	Social Media Users	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Mobile Connections
Niger	3.72 million	14.5%	2.5%	2.0%	0.5%	0.1%	47.2%
Mali	6.33 million	29.9%	10.2%	9.0%	1.2%	0.3%	111.5%
Côte d'Ivoire	9.94 million	36.3%	23.4%	20.6%	3.4%	0.7%	137.8%
Burkina Faso	5.95 million	27.3%	10.1%	9.4%	0.8%	0.2%	118.1%
Nigeria	109.2 million	51.0%	15.4%	12.2%	4.2%	0.2%	82.4%
Central African Republic	355,100	7.1%	2.8%	2.6%	0.2%	0.1%	33.1%

Source: *The Disinformation Landscape in West Africa and Beyond* by Jean le Roux and Tessa Knight, p.2

The fast-paced nature of changing technology further complicates efforts to both stem the production of information manipulation and detect it once it is in circulation. Artificial intelligence (AI) is able to churn out manipulated information at scale and AI chatbots are able to both translate messages and generate new content in multiple languages—including local languages of which there are hundreds in the Sahel region—often in a manner than is indistinguishable from content developed by a person.⁷ This level of sophistication outpaces most available tools to detect information manipulation.

The acute impacts of information manipulation on peace and security, social cohesion, and democratic backsliding are described in more detail below.

Peace and security. Information manipulation is a threat to peace and security in fragile environments as it capitalizes on polarizing narratives that drive its dissemination. It is salient in conflict-prone contexts when conditions in society make people feel a greater need for in-grouping and when high profile leaders or political figures encourage their followers to indulge their desire for identity-affirming misinformation. Social media fuels the spread of this kind of information manipulation; as Nobel Laureate Maria Ressa said, “lies laced with anger and hate spread fastest” and ‘belonging’ to one’s in-group is stronger than facts.⁸

⁷ “Transcript: The Truth of the Matter, ‘Distrust of Everything: Misinformation and AI.’” CSIS. July 18, 2023. https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-07/230718_Misinformation_AI_transcript.pdf?VersionId=b9PpomYE5VdLOdB6Zr_b1dk6sUDFFnuW

⁸ “Belonging Is Stronger Than Facts’: The Age of Misinformation,” *The New York Times*. May 7, 2021 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/07/world/asia/misinformation-disinformation-fake-news.html>

While research is limited, there does appear to be a link between information manipulation and radicalization. As Roberts-Ingelson and McCann note, “Misinformation can be a powerful tool of radicalization due to its propensity to arouse strong emotions, particularly anxiety and anger.”⁹ In a region like the Sahel where violent extremism is spreading, information manipulation becomes a very direct threat to peace and security.

Social cohesion. The threat posed by information manipulation to social cohesion comes both from external and internal actors. Over the past two years, foreign influence campaigns weaponizing disinformation have made international headlines, particularly in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. False narratives have been deployed to shape public opinion and exacerbate social tensions to advance certain foreign interests. According to the African Center for Strategic Studies, 60% of Africa’s documented disinformation campaigns were externally coordinated. Russia has been the leading originator of these foreign influence operations, which employ a common Soviet strategy of *dezinformatsiya*:

*This strategy amplifies grievances and exploits divisions within a targeted society, fostering fragmentation and inaction—all while affording the perpetrators plausible deniability. The objective often is less to convince as to confuse citizens—thereby creating false equivalences between democratic and nondemocratic political actors, precipitating disillusion and apathy.*¹⁰

These campaigns have had an almost immediate and dramatic impact, with opinion polls showing drastic changes in the attitudes of how local populations perceive foreign countries and affecting international relations, security partnerships, and the ability of journalists to report. For example, campaigns to spread anti-French sentiment corresponded with an accelerated French military drawdown and the expulsion of international news organizations, such as Radio France International (RFI) and France 24, further decreasing access to information. The campaigns are having a chilling effect on local journalists, who are less inclined to report on the role of Russia.¹¹

Observers have noted the increasing sophistication of these campaigns and their pervasiveness in local popular culture, with some efforts developing animated comics, computer-generated deepfake images, and “infotainment”-type content to appeal to young people. In many countries, information manipulation is also pushed and spread by domestic actors for various reasons. “Fake News in West Africa,” a report published by the Nigeria-based Centre for Democracy and Development, identifies seven different types of actors who engage in information manipulation in the region, most of them domestic.¹² For example, the report notes

⁹ Roberts-Ingelson, Elise M., and Wesley S. McCann. “The Link between Misinformation and Radicalisation: Current Knowledge and Areas for Future Inquiry.” *Perspectives on Terrorism*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2023, pp. 36–49. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27209215>. Accessed 2 Nov. 2023.

¹⁰ *Mapping Disinformation in Africa*

¹¹ Reporters Without Borders. *What it’s like to be a journalist in the Sahel*. March 4, 2023.

¹² Jamie Hitchen and Idayat Hassan, “Fake News in West Africa: Flows, Facilitators and Fixes,” Centre for Democracy & Development, June 2022.

the increasing reliance on “cyberwarriors” rallied (and sometimes paid) by politicians to promote propaganda and disinformation to bolster their bids for office and to attack rivals.¹³ Political disinformation has also been produced and pushed out on an industrial level, by specialized consultancy firms; such activity has been unveiled in Senegal and Niger.¹⁴ Additionally, the report highlights the role of other actors who may not be aiming to spread manipulated information but who, due to their influence and access to social media, have also been vectors or transmission points, such as diaspora communities. Finally, the report identifies local media itself as a transmitter of information manipulation, noting that “[m]edia outlets engage in the spreading of falsehoods indirectly by poor reporting, not verifying stories before they publish them, or by being paid to print press statements or stories that are heavily politicized.”¹⁵

The problem of information manipulation is closely linked to hate speech and online harassment, which also contributes to the degradation of social cohesion. The USAID Disinformation Primer notes that disinformation may have a “disproportionate impact on marginalized populations” and that harassment campaigns use information manipulation to “silence...opposing opinions and/or specific groups in society, such as women or ethnic groups” (page 6). The issue of [gendered disinformation](#), which aims to discourage women’s participation in public life, has recently been gaining more attention. Hate speech and harassment have been on the rise in some Sahel countries. A December 2022 report from the International Crisis Group (ICG) details the rise in online threats and divisive language alongside a sharp increase in the proportion of the population with access to the internet in Chad over the last three years, and notes that this has the potential to “...amplif[y] socio-political tensions already exacerbated by the [political] transition.”¹⁶

Democratic backsliding. The increased public awareness of information manipulation is a double-edged sword for individuals trying to protect or advance democratic principles. Amid a rising tide of information manipulation, many governments have also labeled diverse viewpoints, opposition positions, and civil society voices that challenge official narratives as “fake news” to advance their political interests.

Information manipulation also has the power to impact the most foundational element of democracies: voting. USAID programming in Mali has revealed that information manipulation contributes to voter confusion, voter apathy (e.g. discouraging people from voting by suggesting their vote will not lead to meaningful change), as well as the proliferation of vote-related conspiracy theories.

¹³ Ibid, p. 5

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 10

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 9

¹⁶ International Crisis Group. “Chad’s Transition: Easing Tensions Online,” Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°183, 13 December 2022. Retrieved at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/chad/b183-chads-transition-easing-tensions-online> (also available in French)

Over the past several years, information manipulation has also played a role in coups, including in Mali, Burkina Faso, and most recently Niger. After these coups, false narratives about how democracy is failing to bring development gains and stop the spread of violent extremism was rampant.¹⁷ In the immediate aftermath of the Niger coup, there were false reports about foreign interference, doctored videos, and fake news reports about mobilization of both the French military and Wagner mercenaries.¹⁸ Experts have noted that the spread of information manipulation targeting Niger, “mirrored a pattern already witnessed elsewhere on the continent: it usually originates on encrypted platforms like Telegram and WhatsApp before being shared on other social media apps.”¹⁹

Countering Information Manipulation

While the literature on information manipulation and how to address it has been growing, there is very little research on this issue in Africa in general, and the Sahel in particular. A July 2023 study conducted as part of USAID’s Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Learning, Evaluation, and Research Activity II found that there is, “an acute gap in evidence on what works to counter misinformation in the Global North versus the Global South” and that “this severe imbalance in evidence quantity highlights the challenges of drawing conclusions about effective strategies for countering misinformation in the Global South.”²⁰ Existing research—mainly from Europe and North America—indicates that there are some effective approaches to countering disinformation including tracking disinformation trends; using digital forensics to observe, monitor, and expose the spread of information manipulation; and mapping its sources, diffusion, and audiences. Successful approaches have also mapped key disinformation messages and narratives that are exploited by disinformation purveyors. Those efforts can help pre-bunk and counter emergent narratives before they gain traction, or conduct fact-checking or debunking. Broader efforts can include educating populations on media literacy and building greater social resilience to disinformation; supporting local media to fill information voids with accurate, credible content; building transboundary networks of journalists, news outlets, universities and technologists; and supporting the creation of human rights-respecting legal frameworks related to information manipulation.

Efforts to counter information manipulation and strengthen information integrity and resilience in the Sahel region would need to be adapted based on the context (factors such as platform usage, literacy rates, social institutions, and availability of independent media), and prioritized based not only the impact of the intervention, but also its feasibility, scalability, and durability in

¹⁷ Hassan, Idayat. “Disinformation is Undermining Democracy in West Africa”. *CIGI*. July 4, 2022.

<https://www.cigionline.org/articles/disinformation-is-undermining-democracy-in-west-africa/>

¹⁸ “Niger becomes hotbed of disinformation after July 26 coup.” *Al Jazeera*. August 18, 2023.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/18/niger-becomes-hotbed-of-disinformation-after-july-26-coup>

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ USAID. “Interventions to Counter Misinformation: Lessons from the Global North and Applications to the Global South”. July 2023. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA0215JW.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

a Sahelian context.²¹ Further, a significant effort would need to be made to coordinate actors working to strengthen information integrity space—including governments, the private sector, regional alliances, NGOs, and think tanks—to maximize efficiency. Interventions need to balance treating information manipulation as the transregional/transboundary issue that it is while also acknowledging its local impacts and local solutions and expertise. Finally, all efforts to counter information manipulation must strictly adhere to “do no harm” principles, ensuring safety and security for groups and individuals.

Partner Perspectives

In response to this problem set, in April 2023, USAID/Senegal/SRO issued a Request for Information (RFI # 72068523RFI00002) to solicit broad public input on a range of specific questions related to information manipulation to inform USAID’s understanding of the issue and consideration of possible technical assistance on the issue. A number of well-considered responses were received from international and local organizations, in English and in French, that have helped advance and shape our thinking on this topic. While those responses—and specific technical recommendations—were not intended for public distribution, there were some generalized observations that resonated with USAID and merit further sharing:

- A regional dynamic that requires regional solutions: Put simply, the information ecosystem in Francophone West Africa is not constrained by state borders or policies, and therefore the threat of information manipulation and the opportunities to strengthen information integrity must be considered from a regional vantage point.
- Technical assistance must be highly adaptive: USAID is cognizant of the fact that our solicitations routinely prioritize ‘adaptation’ to the point that the term may start to lose resonance with partners. However, in the case of countering information manipulation, it is truly imperative that our technical approach and support is able to adjust to shifts in context and technology, given the pace at which the information manipulation landscape and trends—including both threats and opportunities—evolve and morph on this issue. Any technical assistance effort must be one built on the principles of collaboration, learning, and adaptation, with a strong focus on feedback loops and other mechanisms that enable adaptive management.
- Support should avoid focusing only on foreign purveyors: Much of the focus on information manipulation understandably centers on malign foreign actors, and often intersects with issues related to strategic geopolitical competition. However, when considering technical assistance needs in the Sahel, it is important to focus as much on the role of domestic purveyors—including states themselves as well as non-state actors such as domestic political opposition—as much as on those from abroad. While vectors—regardless of their origin—often intersect and overlap, it is important to follow local priorities and focus when supporting information resilience efforts.

²¹ Ibid

- Effective approaches must seek to raise the costs of information manipulation: At present, it costs purveyors of disinformation relatively little to use coordinated inauthentic behavior to distribute and amplify disinformation, extreme views that fan polarization, or the narratives of influencers with dubious intentions. While it is unrealistic to expect to limit or marginalize all or even the bulk of disinformation, efforts to increase information integrity should seek to raise the monetary and reputational costs of such actions (e.g. repeatedly shutting down bot accounts and making inauthentic networks more time- and cost-intensive to sustain, or exposing those who use these tactics by investigating and reporting on the evidence) in order to shift the cost-benefit analysis of such tactics and disincentivize those who seek to profit of information manipulation.
- Need to emphasize offline vectors: A number of responses emphasized the point that while disinformation often originates via open, online sources (e.g. Facebook or Instagram), it is routinely taken and distributed via closed, online channels (e.g. WhatsApp threads) or 'offline' channels (e.g. community radio). Therefore effective inoculation strategies might best be targeted at key individuals at those junction points (e.g. influencers on WhatsApp or community radio station managers).
- Strengthen networks and facilitate relationship building: One of the clearest signals in the RFI responses was the importance of strengthening existing networks and relationships already working in this space. While detailed suggestions were offered for how to best support traditional media, data scientists, fact checkers, and influencers among others, one of the broader points was these groups must be more than the sum of their collective parts, and must work together to improve information resilience across the region.
- Importance of locally-led efforts: Localization is a global priority for USAID and increasingly understood as best practice in all fields of international development. However, there is a particular necessity to focus on locally-led efforts when attempting to strengthen an information ecosystem's resilience to information manipulation, which must by definition be shaped and protected by local actors with the most at stake. USAID assistance must empower African voices and recognize African agency, and avoid creating the appearances of foreign actors attempting to define what is manipulated information or how to respond. Further, as a practical point, the fact that much of the information content in the region is in local languages necessitates having local actors at the forefront of any effort to track, identify, or debunk manipulated information.
- Media literacy is important but challenging to achieve at scale: While efforts to improve media literacy that help audiences better discern information manipulation are worthy goals, as a technical approach for an activity with inherently limited resources, it may be too difficult and potentially very costly to support media literacy or provide education and/or awareness raising at the scale necessary to have a meaningful effect.
- Assistance over acquisition tools preferred: One strong takeaway from RFI submissions was the caution against USAID intentionally or unintentionally instrumentalizing local

stakeholders, and the need to view investments in this space as supporting the missions and objectives of local actors currently active in this space (via assistance), as opposed to procuring goods or services on behalf of the U.S. Government (via acquisition).

B. Purpose

The purpose of the Information Integrity APS is to establish a mechanism for soliciting, co-creating, and awarding activities that *strengthen information integrity and resilience across the Sahel*. This APS frames the overall problem statement, defines the broad parameters of USAID’s programmatic interests on this topic, and establishes a process and criteria for developing specific activities. Specific requests for concept papers will be issued via forthcoming Addenda that define more narrow activity parameters within this broader programmatic frame.

C. Objectives

This APS is a mechanism to invite qualified U.S. and non-U.S., non-profit or for-profit, non-governmental and international organizations to collaborate with USAID in developing and implementing programs that achieve **one or more** of the following Information Integrity APS objectives:

Objective 1: Strengthened local information systems

USAID seeks to support nascent, emerging and established local actors who are seeking to better identify, track, investigate, flag, shutdown, and expose purveyors of information manipulation. There are a broad number of actors working towards that common goal in West Africa, all of which bring different tools and approaches. From data scientists who use forensic analysis to investigate networks where disinformation is being distributed or amplified, to fact checkers that seek to debunk and expose false claims, to journalists that seek to report on the use and impacts of information manipulation, to influencers who are using their platforms to promote informed, fact-based public debate, to lawyers seeking to use legal tools such as defamation law to hold purveyors accountable, there are a broad range of actors working towards the shared objective of increasing information integrity.

The needs of these actors are as varied as the actors themselves. Investigative journalists may need financial assistance to cover the substantial costs of in-depth reporting projects or “follow the money” investigations. Data scientists may need core support for their institutions’ ongoing operational costs—including covering license fees to utilize some of the more sophisticated tools their work requires—in addition to technical training related to sophisticated digital forensic work. Fact checkers may need support developing and implementing income generation models that help sustain their efforts, or obtaining professional credentials that open doors (e.g. certification from the International Fact Checking Network, a prerequisite for working with Meta and other social media platforms). Influencers—including youth content creators—may need

expanded access to studios, software and other creative means to enable their work. Under this objective, USAID seeks to support a broad range of interventions that aim to strengthen the work of key actors or provide critical inputs that strengthen local information systems.

Importantly, given the sensitive nature of much of the work described above and the individual and organizational risks that those actors incur, support for improving the digital, physical and operational security of those actors will also be welcomed in activities supported under this objective.

Illustrative results may include, but are by no means limited to:

- Local institutions have increased means for identifying and dismantling malicious networks and deplatforming bad actors
- Increased number of local fact checking organizations partner with social media platforms to identify disinformation
- Local actors debunk false claims and pre-bunk emerging false narratives
- Revenue streams for fact checking organizations expanded and/or diversified
- Influencers extend their reach and impact
- Digital, physical and operational security of local partners improved

Objective 2: Strengthened regional information systems

USAID seeks to strengthen networks of and facilitate relationships between a diverse range of stakeholders across the Sahel—including journalists, fact checkers, data scientists, and analysts at think tanks and media monitoring observatories—to share information, resources, and insights in support of their collective efforts. Given the regional nature of information manipulation – including its pace and its reach– and the likelihood that AI will dramatically compound the challenge, it is imperative that assistance efforts seek to deepen and strengthen partnerships across the region, wherever and however possible. Whether that involves providing technical or financial support to existing regional networks (e.g. the African Fact Checking Alliance or the African Network of Centers for Investigative Reporting) or helping support new or informal mechanisms, USAID seeks to follow the lead of local actors seeking to improve regional collaboration and partnerships.

Under this objective, USAID expects to consider a broad range of needs and opportunities for supporting regional network strengthening and relationship building. Support may come in the form of facilitating exchanges between technical staff from similar organizations or newsrooms (e.g. financing in-situ training or capacity building among network partners). Consideration may be given to facilitating multimedia content exchange among network members, or efforts to brand the collective work of regional entities. It may take the form of investing in digital infrastructure that better enables collaboration of regional actors, or supporting collective engagement with social media companies. It may also include bringing in short-term technical assistance to help regional entities improve core technical or management structures.

Illustrative results may include, but are by no means limited to:

- Regional networks increasingly provide value and support services to member organizations
- Country-specific information integrity actors increasingly learn from and benefit from counterparts' experiences in the region
- Increased volume of content (e.g. debunked claims or investigative reports) and research shared with and utilized by regional counterparts
- Content exchange programs enable independent media and fact checkers to re-distribute each others' work
- Regional actors have a stronger voice advocating collectively on social media platforms

Objective 3: Improved information integrity in offline or “closed online” media channels

Under this objective, USAID seeks interventions that focus on reducing information manipulation via offline media (e.g. community radio) or “closed online” media channels (e.g. WhatsApp or Telegram threads), with an emphasis on addressing the “hopover” effect or transmission from manipulated information that originates on open, online sources. While many of the tools and approaches for strengthening information integrity under the first two objectives are relevant to these vectors, there may also be unique approaches to these information spaces worth considering. For example, while media literacy training might be difficult to achieve at scale, targeted training for community radio station managers or influencers of offline or closed online media channels may be worth considering. Other approaches that draw on inoculation theory might include supporting fact-checkers and influencers active in voice message threads. Such support might emphasize pre-bunking potential narratives or debunking false or misleading claims. This might be achieved by working with trusted sources (i.e. community organizations) to emphasize critical thinking and communication of relevant information in ways that resonate in the community. USAID could also consider supporting specific content development for radio or voice messages by influential voices—including women and youth—to counter narratives and hate speech that amplifies social discord and stokes ethnic division.

Illustrative results may include, but are by no means limited to:

- Improved professionalism and capacity of community radio stations
- Community radio stations and offline influencers more likely to discern—and less likely to share—false or misleading claims
- Increased influence of moderate voices in offline and closed social media
- Better sourced information distributed on community radio
- Fact checkers and researchers apply new tools for analyzing voice message content

D. Operational Principles

All concepts supported via this APS and subsequent Addenda should apply the following operational principles:

Gender-informed: In most ways, the susceptibilities to, and harms caused by information manipulation are experienced equally across different demographic groups; for example, men and women both experience diminished confidence in public institutions, increased vaccine hesitancy, and less commitment to social cohesion. But there are certain aspects of this issue that are experienced more acutely by certain genders, particularly the use of disinformation and misinformation to undermine, discredit and threaten women who engage in public discourse. The Global Engagement Center defines “gendered disinformation” as “a subset of misogynistic abuse and violence against women that uses false or misleading gender and sex-based narratives, often with some degree of coordination, to deter women from participating in the public sphere.”²² This can also take the form of online violence against women in politics and public life, as recently seen in places like Cabo Verde, or by doxxing (e.g. intentionally publishing private or identifying information with malicious intent) prominent or outspoken female voices, as witnessed in places like The Gambia, which has a deeply chilling effect and threatens to silence women’s voices in places where they are needed most. Against this backdrop, this activity should be designed and implemented in a way that reflects an awareness of the different ways in which information manipulation is experienced by different sexual orientations and/or gender identities.

Locally-led development: As USAID states in its strategy for measuring localization, “When USAID shifts power to local actors—and our efforts are responsive to local priorities, draw upon local capacities, diverse networks, and resources, and are accountable to local communities—results are more likely to be sustained by local communities, organizations, and institutions.” While a clear priority for USAID is to provide increased funding to capable local partners, there are many other things we can do to shift power dynamics and enable locally-led development, many of which can be done under this activity. This activity should maximize every opportunity to use participatory processes to help local stakeholders explore their collective challenges and opportunities, identify and implement actions, evaluate their effectiveness, and iteratively adapt their approach as they search for greater effectiveness. The activity should also consider establishing one or more Local Advisory Councils, composed of local and/or regional stakeholders with different perspectives and interests to help guide and shape implementation and assess activity progress. Members of such councils should not be direct activity participants, but rather those who can offer candid and constructive feedback to shape implementation.

Local Systems-focused: Wherever possible, activities under this mechanism should include measures for ensuring that “local systems” are built upon -- that includes being recognized, engaged, and strengthened during implementation. By local systems, USAID refers to “those interconnected sets of actors—governments, civil society, the private sector, universities,

²² <https://www.state.gov/gendered-disinformation-tactics-themes-and-trends-by-foreign-malign-actors/>

individual citizens and others—that jointly produce a particular development outcome.”²³ This builds on USAID’s commitment to local solutions generally as a critical component of sustainable development, and more specifically, the Local Systems Framework specifically -- each of which advance the following concept:

“Building the capacity of a single actor or strengthening a single relationship is insufficient. Rather, the focus must be on the system as a whole: the actors, their interrelationships and the incentives that guide them. Realizing improved development outcomes emanates from increasing the performance of multiple actors and the effectiveness of their interactions.”

Wherever possible, activities should build on the principles described in the Local Systems Framework. For example, to recognize, engage and map local systems, front-end analysis should identify the existing key dynamics and stakeholders that contribute both positively and negatively to the status quo (e.g., by utilizing Political Economy Analysis or similar tools). Program approaches should be designed holistically and articulate a theory of change that is cognizant of all relevant parts of a system and their interactivity. Activities should also embed flexibility, for example, by building in dynamic feedback mechanisms for tracking how USAID-funded activities interact with those systems (e.g. advisory groups composed of local leaders). Finally, activities should seek opportunities for strengthening those systems where possible (e.g. building the capacity of local actors through implementation).

Doing No Harm: USAID is mindful of the risk of unintentionally doing harm under this program and the risks that beneficiary institutions or individuals may incur receiving assistance from a U.S. Government institution. This program must support key principles related to "do no harm," which "strongly advises outsiders to allow insiders to make their own choices and identify their own priorities."²⁴ While USAID will apply its own processes for assessing and managing those risks, implementing partners will be expected to articulate and adhere to their own criteria and process for mitigating the risk of doing harm under this APS/associated Addenda.

[END OF SECTION I]

²³ USAID’s “Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development,” April 2014, (<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/LocalSystemsFramework.pdf>)

²⁴ CDA Collaborative Learning Projects “Guidance Note: Human Rights and Do No Harm,” April 2013, (<https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publication/guidance-note-human-rights-and-do-no-harm/>)

SECTION II: Federal Award Information

IMPORTANT: This APS is *not* a request for applications in any form. Concept papers must be provided in response to, and in accordance with the instructions provided in, any specific Addendum issued under this APS. Specific information and instructions for awards under this APS will be provided in individual Addenda, which can be found under the APS funding opportunity posting on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by clicking on the “Related Documents” tab. USAID is under no obligation to review general concepts submitted under this umbrella APS, or to provide feedback for such submissions.

USAID intends that this APS be used to provide for full and open competition for responsible qualified applicants.

A. Funding

This APS is unfunded and represents the framework through which later, funded Addenda will be constructed. USAID may also organize meetings upon the release of Addenda to explain the process to potential partners. Addenda will be the exclusive source of funding through this APS and will be posted on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). As determined by the source of funding, awardee(s) will be expected to comply with the legal and USAID policy requirements that govern the Agency’s programming

B. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

Concept papers must offer a start date and period of performance in accordance with the guidance provided in the Addendum to which it is responding.

C. Number of Awards

Multiple awards may be made as a result of each Addendum of this APS. The actual number of awards under each Addendum of this APS is subject to the availability of funds and the viability of concept papers/applications received. Accordingly, USAID reserves the right to award multiple awards, one award, or no awards at all under each Addendum.

D. Expected Implementation Mechanism

Each Addendum will define the types of award instruments available for potential awardees, whether grants, cooperative agreements, or Fixed Amount Awards (FAAs). If an Addendum anticipates awarding a cooperative agreement, the expected substantial involvement will be included in the Addendum.

Awards resulting from an Addendum under this APS may take the form of a grant (including but not limited to an FAA), cooperative agreement (including but not limited to framework

agreements and Leader with Associates awards), or FAA. Each Addendum will define the types of award instruments available for potential awardees. Please see Section VI for more information on each type of potential assistance mechanism. An acquisition mechanism will not be awarded under any Addendum of this APS.

E. Intellectual Property

Intellectual property is discussed in 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 200.448 (for US non-governmental organizations (NGOs)) and in Mandatory Provision 7 Title to and Use of Property (December 2014) (for non-US NGOs). In general, awardee(s) may elect to pursue ownership of intellectual property that is developed as a result of an award from an Addendum of this APS. In such cases, USAID would typically retain a nonexclusive, non-transferable, royalty-free license to use any such intellectual property.

F. Authorized Geographic Code

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

G. Benefiting Geographic Areas

If an Addendum of this APS has a specific geographic focus, it will clearly state this.

[END OF SECTION II]

SECTION III: Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

The following types of organizations are eligible to apply for this APS:

- **U.S. and Non-U.S. Non-Profit Organizations:** Qualified U.S. and non-U.S. not-for-profit NGOs may apply for funding under this APS. Foreign government-owned parastatal organizations from countries that are ineligible for assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA of 1961) or related appropriations acts are ineligible.
- **U.S. and Non-U.S. For-Profit Organizations:** Qualified U.S. and non-U.S. private for-profit organizations may apply for funding under this APS. Foreign government-owned parastatal organizations from countries that are ineligible for assistance under the FAA of 1961 or related appropriations acts are ineligible. Potential for-profit applicants should note that, pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, the payment of fee/profit to the prime recipient under grants and cooperative agreements is prohibited. However, if a prime recipient has a subcontract with a for-profit organization for the acquisition of goods or services (i.e., if a buyer-seller relationship is created), fee/profit for the (subcontractor is authorized).
- **U.S. and Non-U.S. Colleges and Universities:** Qualified U.S. and non-U.S. colleges and universities may apply for funding under this APS. U.S. Government and USAID regulations generally treat colleges and universities as NGOs, rather than governmental organizations; hence, both public and private colleges and universities are eligible. Non-U.S. colleges and universities in countries that are ineligible for assistance under the FAA of 1961 or related appropriations acts are ineligible.
- **Private Voluntary Organizations:** A local or indigenous private voluntary organization (PVO), which by definition is a non-U.S. PVO operating in the same foreign country in which it is organized, is eligible to receive funding. **Public International Organizations:** Public International Organizations (PIOs) are eligible to apply for funding under this APS. Please see Automated Directives Series (ADS) 308 for USAID policy on defining PIOs at <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/308>.
- **Local Entities:** As defined in Section 7077 of Public Law 112-74, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-74), as amended by Section 7028 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (P.L. 113-76), and included by reference in subsequent appropriations acts, local entity means an individual, a corporation, a nonprofit organization, or another body of persons that (1) is legally organized under the laws of; (2) has as its principal place of business or operations in; (3) is majority owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of; and (4) managed by a governing body the majority of who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of a country receiving assistance. For the purpose of this APS, local entities also refer to

organizations that have not received more than \$5 million in direct funding (as a prime awardee) from USAID in the previous five fiscal years. Additionally, a “local entity” cannot be a U.S. based organization.

- **New and Underutilized Partners:** USAID encourages applications from and partnerships with new and underutilized partners. A “new partner” is defined for purposes of this APS as an organization that has never received direct or indirect awards from USAID. An “underutilized partner” is defined for purposes of this APS as an organization that has received less than \$25 million in direct or indirect awards from USAID over the five years preceding the organization’s application to a USAID procurement/funding opportunity.

Importantly, specific Addenda issued under this APS may have differing eligibility requirements. For example, one Addendum may indicate that all types of eligible organizations described in Section III of the APS may submit concept papers, while another addendum may restrict eligibility (e.g. to local entities). **Each addendum will indicate eligibility requirements for that specific addendum.**

Awards to new organizations may oblige USAID to undertake necessary pre-award reviews of these organizations to determine their “responsibility” in regards to fiduciary and other oversight responsibilities of the grant, cooperative agreement, or FAA. In order for an award to be made, a USAID Agreement Officer (AO) must make an affirmative determination that the applicant is “responsible,” as discussed in [ADS 303.3.9](#).

Prior to making an award under this competition, USAID may perform a pre-award survey for “new partners” or for organizations with outstanding audit findings. Accounting systems, audit issues, and management capability questions may be reviewed as part of this process. If notified by USAID that a pre-award survey is necessary, applicants must prepare in advance the required information and documents. A pre-award survey does not commit USAID to make an award to any organization.

B. Cost Sharing

There is no requirement for cost sharing or matching in this APS, as it is not a funding opportunity itself. However, cost sharing requirements may be incorporated into individual addenda.

[END OF SECTION III]

SECTION IV: Application and Submission Information

A. Agency Point of Contact

Questions and Answers: All questions regarding this APS should be submitted in writing to Aminata Diallo at amdiallo@usaid.gov with a copy to Robert Almosd at ralmosd@usaid.gov by the deadline specified above.

AS A REMINDER, THIS APS IS *NOT* A REQUEST FOR CONCEPTS.

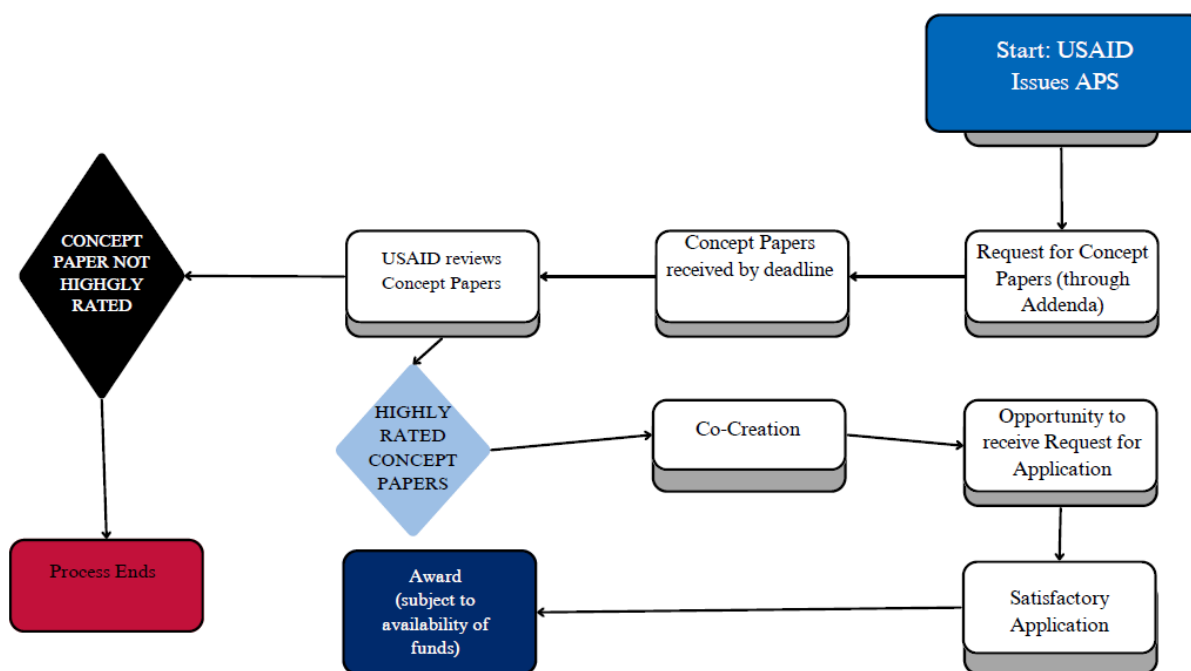
Applications for Information Integrity APS-related awards will *only* be accepted based on specific guidance provided through separate Addenda, which will be issued under this overall frame.

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

Concept paper submissions must be submitted to the email address point of contact specified in separate Addenda.

B. Application Process

The APS uses a multi-phased process with various steps. The flowchart below is illustrative. Please note process steps may be revised or added at USAID's discretion depending on submission instructions in an Addendum and the concept notes received.



PHASE 1: CONCEPT PAPER SUBMISSION

The issuance of a specific Addendum will trigger the request for concept papers. A concept paper is a short document (no more than ten (10) pages) where the applicant provides an overview of their idea, in response to the specific criteria described in Section V of this APS, as well as additional criteria articulated in the Addendum. USAID has provided a template in Paragraph C below.

If there is a difference in instructions between the APS and Addendum, instructions in the Addendum take precedence.

Each issuing Mission will review concept papers against merit review criteria detailed in the Addendum. USAID Addenda managers will provide individual results to each applicant within 20 work days following the Merit Review Committee meeting.

USAID anticipates three (3) possible results from the concept paper merit review process:

- **Conditional Acceptance - Invited for Co-Creation:** Concept paper generally meets Addenda objectives and receives strong ratings against the Program Statement merit review criteria. Additional clarity is needed. USAID Mission invites applicant(s) to engage in co-creation to address the weaknesses identified by the USAID Mission in its Invitation

for Co-Creation letter to the Applicant. If the co-creation process is successfully concluded, USAID Mission may follow with a request for submission of a full application.

- **Evergreening:** If USAID identifies opportunities to strengthen or fund an application by connecting with other USAID mechanisms, other potential funders, and/or external partners, USAID may make that concept paper available internally or externally for appropriate consideration.
- **Rejection:** Concept paper does not meet Addenda objectives and receives average to low ratings against the Program Statement merit review criteria. USAID Mission rejects the concept paper.

PHASE 2: CO-CREATION

[As broadly defined at USAID, co-creation](#) brings people together to collectively design solutions to specific development challenges. Time-limited and participatory, partners, potential implementers, and end-users define a problem collaboratively, identify new and existing solutions, build consensus around action, and refine plans to move forward with programs and projects.

Applicants whose concept papers are invited for co-creation will engage with the USAID Mission to work through areas of weakness and to respond to USAID Mission questions and clarify aspects of the concept that are not clear. The co-creation phase builds on a concept paper that has strength and potential; it is not intended to supplant applicant initiative or build new concepts from the ground up. During this phase, applicants will work with USAID technical teams to address issues such as environmental concerns, impact indicators, and evaluation of their application. This process may take place over the course of one or several sessions (typically half days) and participation can be virtual or in person. USAID Mission envisages a product of the co-creation process is a strong draft project description for the full application phase, as well as quantitative and/or qualitative indicators or performance milestones.

Following successful co-creation, Applicants in Phase 2 may be requested to submit a full application. Not all co-creation invitations may result in an award or request for full application. If an Applicant does not succeed at the co-creation phase, the process ends for that Applicant. Applicants can expect to hear if they are successful no later than 20 business days after the co-creation event/meeting.

PHASE 3: FULL APPLICATION

If Applicants successfully complete co-creation, a full application may be requested based on the consensus reached during Phase 2. At this point, the USAID Mission managing the Addendum may issue a Request for Application (RFA) to the Applicant. If issued, the RFA will provide complete instructions for submission of a full application. The full application will detail and expand upon the concept developed through co-creation. The full application also requires the

Applicant to complete specific USG forms and to provide some additional information that the USAID Mission will need to move forward with an appropriate implementing instrument.

There are reasons why an Applicant may be unsuccessful at the full application phase. For example:

- The detailed program does not satisfy merit review criteria provided in Section V of this APS and/or supplemental merit review criteria defined in the Addendum;
- The application is not responsive to the changes and refinements agreed upon during the co-creation phase;
- The partner does not meet the partner eligibility criteria in Section 3A;
- The USAID Mission has other concerns after conducting due diligence or pre-award surveys.

USAID reserves the right to make no award under this Program Statement at any stage of the process.

C. Concept Paper Application Content

Unless otherwise specified in an Addendum, concept papers MUST be in English and submitted electronically via email in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF. When concept papers are accepted in French under a specific Addendum, USAID will provide additional submission guidance. Concept papers must not exceed ten (10) pages, using standard page margins with 12 **calibri** point font. Applicants must follow the format below. Clarity and specificity are important as is ensuring that concept paper narratives address the points outlined in each Addendum that will be used to review the concept paper. During the merit review process, a USAID Mission is likely to reject funding those concept papers that are vague or merely restate language found in the Addendum. The approximate page lengths are provided as a rough guide and are not mandatory as long as the entire Concept Paper **does not exceed** ten (10) pages. **The information requested in Section A, Application Overview, does not contribute to the 10-page limit set for concept papers. USAID permits using a 10-point font for textboxes, tables, and graphs.**

CONCEPT PAPER TEMPLATE

- A. Application Overview – (to the extent possible or applicable, please complete the following questions below:)**
- a. Proposed Activity Name/Title:**
 - b. Proposed Period of Performance (i.e., start date and end date):**
 - c. Total Program Amount (in USD):**
 - d. Total Amount of Funding Requested from USAID and total amount leveraged (if applicable), including from what source(s):**
 - e. Applicant Organization Name:**
 - f. Applicant Contact Person (name, phone, e-mail):**
 - g. Full Address for Applicant Organization:**
 - h. Type of Organization (e.g., US, non-US, multilateral, private, for-profit, not-for-profit; date of incorporation, etc.):**
 - i. If local entity, include affirmation as to how the organization meets USAID’s “local entity” definition (See Section III.A. above):**
 - j. Name(s) of Partner(s) (Name Subpartners here)**
 - k. Current or most recent program funding levels:**
 - l. Current organization staff size:**
- B. Concept Introduction:** (approximately one-half [½] page). Identify the problem you will address, linking it to one or more of the Addenda focus areas and briefly describe your intervention for tackling this problem. Describe why there is a strategic need for your concept, how it differs from alternatives, and any relevant partner-specific considerations for the problem or solution.
- C. Beneficiaries:** (approximately one-half [½] page). Describe the types of benefits the intervention will produce and the types and range of people who will benefit from this intervention. Was the concept designed with end user input?
- D. Geographic Location:** (approximately one-half [½] page). In what location(s) (e.g, countries, regions, cities) are you proposing to operate under this proposed partnership? Describe key elements of and actors in the geographic location(s) in which you propose to work. What are the biggest challenges and opportunities related to this geographic focus?
- E. Technical approach:** (approximately two [2] pages) Building on the introduction, propose a Theory of Change for how this intervention will produce the desired impact in the focus area(s) identified. Briefly describe critical barrier(s) or problem(s), related to your focus area(s) that your concept addresses. What are the key technical interventions that your approach will draw upon? Be sure to include information describing why the approach is

creative or innovative, how it is potentially scalable, and evidence to support it as a tested solution or as an intervention likely to have a significant development impact, and how it will be sustained.

- F. Implementation approach:** *(approximately three [3] pages) What key systems and learning processes will you use to ensure that your approach is responsive to the implementation approach as described in the Addendum?*
- G. Intervention results:** *(approximately one-half [½] page) As specifically as possible, describe the anticipated outputs, outcomes, results and/or impact of the proposed intervention. What are the key, quantifiable metrics related to your project’s performance or expected performance? What are the baselines that you will measure before the project begins?*
- H. Localization:** *(approximately one [1] page) Describe how this concept adheres to the principles of locally-led development?*
- I. Applicant capacity:** *(approximately two [2] pages). Describe organizational capacity – technical, managerial, financial, etc. – of the partner(s) involved to carry out the proposed intervention. This should include a description of all subpartners and a definition of their roles, an overview of existing or recent programs (within the last 5 years), staff levels, and total funding managed under those programs.*

[END OF SECTION IV]

SECTION V: Concept Paper Review Information

A. Merit Review Criteria

USAID Missions and Bureaus/Independent Offices (B/IOs) will review for merit all concept paper applications that comply with the instructions in the Program Statement.

Each Addendum will specify additional merit review criteria appropriate for their context. All Addenda must include the following review criteria:

Merit Review Element	Definition
1. Technical Approach	Extent to which the Applicant provides a technical approach that is tailored to the problem set, taking into account the specific needs of local and regional information ecosystems in the Sahel and identifies evidence-based and regionally-appropriate interventions for advancing information integrity and resilience.

[END OF SECTION V]

SECTION VI: Federal Award Administration Information

A. Federal Award Notices

The AO is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government (USG) to the expenditure of public funds. Applicants are prohibited from charging or incurring costs to the proposed award prior to receipt of either a fully executed Award or a specific, written authorization from the AO. Awards will be administered in accordance with 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 700, and Standard Provisions for US/Non-US organizations as applicable.

B. Types of Award

USAID has a number of assistance award types to choose from when providing funds under an Addendum of this APS to the Apparently Successful Applicant(s). The type of award and terms and conditions included therein is based upon the recipient organization type, programmatic factors, and other due diligence matters (including a pre-award risk assessment) determined by the AO (in consultation with the Selection Committee). Following is a matrix of commonly used awards, their general prescription for use and key characteristics:

Award Type:	Generally used when:	Characterized by:
Cooperative Agreement	Recipient has adequate financial and management capacity to operate on a cost-reimbursement basis with the USG.	Recipient is free to pursue its sponsored program with USAID Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and AO involved in defined technical areas (referred to as "substantial involvement"). Such involvement may include but is not limited to: approval of annual work plans, approval of key personnel, authority to halt a construction project, and joint collaboration and participation (defined in the award and specific to the project).
Grant	Recipient has adequate financial and management capacity to operate on a cost-reimbursement basis with the USG and USAID will not be "substantially involved" in selected programmatic elements.	A grant is a legal instrument used when the principal purpose is to transfer anything of value (i.e., money, property, or services) to a recipient in order to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute. Grants are appropriate when substantial involvement by USAID is not anticipated. For more information, see link below: https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303
Fixed Amount Award (FAA)	Milestones can be defined; adequate pricing information is available; recipient has limited financial and management capacity.	Advantages for both USAID and the recipient (when used appropriately). Milestones with fixed amounts assigned to each. Focus is on outputs and results, limits risk for both parties. Grantee is paid when USAID concurs the milestone is completed. Minimizes administrative burden on USAID and the grantee since payment is not a cost-reimbursement. Assists in building institutional capacity of new grantees.

		For more information, see link below: https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303saj
--	--	--

C. Award Discretion

USAID reserves the right to make or not make awards under the Addenda of this APS. The actual number of assistance awards, if any, under an addendum of this APS is subject to the availability of funds and the interests and requirements of Missions and B/IOs as well as the viability of concept papers received. There is no predefined minimum or maximum number of partners or partnerships USAID Missions and B/IOs will support through the Addendum/Addenda of this APS. However, USAID will not provide funds under any Addenda of this APS for products and services that would be purchased through a contract.

[END OF APS #72068524APS00003_ **Amendment#1**]