



USAID | DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

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Subject: DRC Mission Annual Program Statement – No: 72060524APS00001

Program Name: Local Partner Fund

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: 98.001

Pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, the United States Government, as represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), USAID/Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is announcing the Annual Program Statement (APS), hereafter known as the **Local Partner Fund (LPF)**.

LPF disseminates information to prospective Applicants so they may develop and submit Concept Notes in response and ultimately to be considered for USAID funding. The Annual Program Statement describes and provides:

- Type of activities for which Concept Notes will be considered;
- Process and requirements for submitting Concept Notes; and
- Criteria for evaluating Concept Notes.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) seeks concept notes from local applicants. USAID/DRC intends to fund multiple awards under this Annual Program Statement. Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. Government to make an award, nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a Concept Note or Application(s). The actual number of assistance awards, if any, is subject to the availability of funds, as well as the viability of eventual full Applications received.

Based on submitted Concept Note(s), USAID/DRC will determine whether to request a Full Application from the local organization(s). To be competitive under the Local Partner Fund, Concept Notes and Full Applications must be fully responsive to all directions provided.

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the entire APS has been downloaded from www.grants.gov and USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the APS, please contact the grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Jamie Lewis

Agreement Officer
USAID/DRC/OAA

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SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

I. Introduction

The U.S. Agency for International Development in Democratic Republic of Congo (USAID/DRC) is issuing this Annual Program Statement (APS) pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. The USAID/DRC will administer any resulting awards in accordance with Part 200 of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Part 700 of Title 2 of the CFR and Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Organizations.

The APS focuses on partnering with local entities in the DRC and in the Central Africa Regional Operating Unit (DRC, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Gabon, and other countries covered by this Operating Unit) to promote humanitarian assistance and development interventions. However, this edition of the APS will focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic (CAR) only. Sustainability and greater access to resources by local organizations will be facilitated by USAID's Local Partner Fund, this Mission-wide APS designed to encourage a close partnership with local organizations.

II. Purpose of the Local Partner Fund (LPF)

The USAID/DRC Local Partner Fund (LPF) will strive to ensure that, in all activities, local partners and/or local communities lead development and humanitarian efforts, including problem identification, priority setting, design, partnership formation, implementation, and measuring results as defined by the [Agency locally-led program indicator](#). The LPF will make a significant contribution to the USAID direct funding to local organizations objectives while enhancing the application of best practices for locally led development.

USAID LPF will advance USAID DRC localization agenda by addressing competition requirements and allowing an open solicitation process to receive concepts for partnering with local organizations and increasing their ability to generate and achieve locally led solutions to major development challenges, and by providing direct awards to local organizations to implement activities. The USAID LPF will work in tandem with USAID Localization Capacity Strengthening Mechanism to respond to capacity building needs in partner organizations and help to strengthen the abilities of local partners beyond the donor-awardee relationship in a way that guarantees consistency, mutual accountability, and sustainability. USAID LPF will consider inclusive development as a key element of USAID local programming across the DRC and CAR, and will foster collaboration, learning, and adapting, as prerequisites for successful implementation.

III. Theory of Change

IF local partners lead responses to the development and humanitarian challenges they face,
IF local partners' readiness and organizational capacity to work with the USG is strengthened,
IF they harness the necessary resources, technical support, and learning opportunities,
THEN local actors will be empowered to lead the implementation of locally led solutions that are more effective and sustainable, while allowing USAID to support evidence-based approaches that advance the outcomes of development and humanitarian programs.

IV. Programmatic Focus

During the initial round of concept note reviews, USAID/DRC Mission will receive concept notes from potential local organizations with innovative ideas to address DRC and CAR's development challenges in the areas of Democracy, Human Rights and Governance; Economic Growth; Youth and Education; and Peace and Security as described below. Future rounds of the APS may be open to any other country or technical office in the Central Africa region supported by USAID/DRC that has needs. After the initial round of concept notes, USAID/DRC will invite selected applicants to co-create a full application with USAID/DRC.

The following USAID/DRC technical units have identified areas of consideration for the LPF theme parameters to prioritize. USAID DRC will receive applications from local organizations as described in the concept note instructions. The concept notes should address one of the prioritized themes presented by the technical units and present a solution or activity for that area of development or humanitarian challenge. LPF award participants will have the opportunity to work with the USAID Localization Capacity Strengthening Mechanism (LCSM) to receive the necessary organizational support for growth and sustainability as well as for gaining a greater understanding of USAID operational requirements including areas such as financial and human resource management, procurement, results reporting, program monitoring and evaluation.

The 2024 Annual Program Statement (APS) concept notes from local organizations may have one or more themes from the technical areas. Local organizations submitting concept notes may apply to one or several themes in a technical area as deemed appropriate.

A. Technical Area One: Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG)

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and activists play a critical role as agents of development, watchdogs of public policy and human rights, and democracy frontliners in the DRC. The [2010 Istanbul](#) principles provide an in-depth description of civil society development effectiveness applicable to Congolese CSOs. They provide an assessment framework for the qualitative engagement of CSOs in development and a basis upon which [evidence-based sustainability gaps](#) in the civil society sector may be tracked to be filled by specific interventions. The 2023 DRC Civil Society Sector Assessment emphasized the need for a reformed approach to institutional

and operational sustainability for civil society, an improved enabling environment, enhanced participation of marginalized groups in decision making in the development sphere, the professionalization of the sector, and protection of human rights defenders.

USAID/DRC will receive concept notes that tackle one or several issues described under technical area one in the following provinces: Congo Central, Equateur, Haut Katanga, Haut Uele, Ituri, Kasai, Kasai Oriental, Kinshasa, Maniema, North Kivu, North Ubangi, South Kivu, South Ubangi and Tanganyika.

Concept Notes from Congolese Civil Society Organizations to respond to the gaps highlighted include:

1. **Electoral Reform and Political Participation:** Concept Notes should focus on the revision and improvement of the electoral system and legal framework to improve the transparent electoral processes:
 - i. Build on 2020-2022 civil society consultations and advocacy campaign for electoral reform; update revisions and recommendations in light of post-election assessments and design of an inclusive dialogue process; establish an election reform working group.
 - ii. Promote civic education among Congolese citizens, with an emphasis on marginalized groups, e.g. Youth, Women, People with Disabilities (PWD), Indigenous Groups, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and minorities.
 - iii. Support and build the capacity of newly elected female municipal counselors so that they are empowered to serve in leadership roles.
 - iv. Collaborate and coordinate with the parliamentary women's advocacy efforts to increase women's political participation and leadership in the legal framework.
2. **Media:** Concept Notes that strengthen DRC's media landscape:
 - i. Advance the role and sustainability of community radio networks to provide essential information and raise awareness of critical issues.
 - ii. Support and advocate for an improved legal framework for the media in the DRC, including the Law on Access to Information (LAI).
 - iii. Promote information integrity to prevent and counter content manipulation and take actions that empower audiences in media literacy and critical thinking among other information and communication resilience techniques.
3. **Governance:** Concept Notes that support anti-corruption efforts:
 - i. Support civic education and raise awareness around corruption and its impacts. This may include supporting communities to advocate for more accountability from extractive industries.
 - ii. Denounce cases of corruption and advocate for appropriate responses from the Government of the DRC (GDRC) institutions to promote more transparency and accountability.

4. **Rule of Law:** Concept Notes that advance people-centered justice solutions:
 - i. Support access to justice for vulnerable groups including people with disabilities, survivors of GBV and trafficking, and indigenous groups.
 - ii. Enhance the capacity of local actors to promote justice and anti-corruption efforts within the judiciary system.
5. **Human Rights:** Concept Notes that promote an enabling environment for greater citizen participation and freedom:
 - i. Support and empower human rights defenders, including women's rights, victim's rights, sexual and gender minority rights, journalists' rights, and indigenous populations' rights.
 - ii. Address human rights violations including gender-based violence (GBV) and trafficking in persons (TIP).
 - iii. Support specific interventions that promote and protect consumer rights in the DRC.
 - iv. Support Civil Society initiatives that encourage human rights compliance in the extractive industry.

B. Technical Area Two: Economic Growth (EG)

USAID/DRC's Economic Growth Office promotes inclusive economic growth that reduces poverty and enhances food security through investments in key aspects of the Congolese economy, namely agriculture, responsible mining, energy, and finance. Local actors and organizations, including the private sector play a critical role as agents of development in identifying and adopting market-based solutions to address development challenges in these sectors. Such local actors include business associations like the *Fédération des Entreprises du Congo* (FEC), Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Mines, seed producers, input dealers, energy providers, private sector companies, financial institutions (commercial banks, Microfinance institutions [MFIs], foundations), civil society organizations, and research institutions (i.e. universities, laboratories and think tanks). Such institutions play a critical role in establishing best practices, advocating for policy reforms, developing, and utilizing new technology, and making investments that are needed to transform the DRC's economy. These local actors can be supported to scale-up successful United States Government (USG) interventions and achieve USAID's development objectives in the DRC. The Economic Growth Office actively seeks opportunities to directly support local organizations and market actors to promote and scale innovation, improvements, and efficiencies through the local market system.

USAID/DRC Economic Growth's geographic scope is all provinces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for Energy and Mineral thematic areas. For the Agriculture and Food Security thematic area, only portions of Kasai Central and Kongo Central Provinces as described in the Feed the Future Country Plan and as described as the "Zone of Influence" will comprise the geographic scope.

1. **Agriculture and Food Security:** Concept Notes from the local organizations seeking to:
 - i. Create public private dialogue platforms, conduct regulatory and policy analysis, and carry out advocacy,
 - ii. Innovate post-harvest practices that enhance market potential,
 - iii. Improve the capacity and efficiency of MFIs,
 - iv. Provide off-farm vocational training for youth and women including business incubation,
 - v. Advance production and utilization of nutritious food,
 - vi. Generate and distribute market information and advisory services through digital technology which creates an enabling environment for agriculture-led growth and improved food security, and/or
 - vii. Advance resilience in the Kasai regions to support the Mission's Feed the Future activities in its Zones of Influence. Applications would need to show how they advance resilience outcomes by reducing vulnerabilities to shocks that could hinder programming in the Kasai regions.
2. **Critical Minerals:** Concept Notes from local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) (i.e. Industry associations, watch groups, and/or nongovernmental organizations [NGOs]) that aim to counter corruption, improve policy framework/policy reforms, minimize fraud and smuggling, increase transparency and accountability, enforce environmental, social and governance standards in critical minerals supply chains with focus on:
 - i. Coltan in North Kivu,
 - ii. Lithium in Tanganyika, or
 - iii. Copper/cobalt in Haut-Katanga and Lualaba
3. **Energy:** Concept Notes from local organizations (i.e. energy operators, private utility companies, watch groups, and/or business associations) that aim to:
 - i. Promote innovation and efficiency in energy production and use,
 - ii. Improve energy policy and regulatory reforms, or
 - iii. Facilitate investments in both on-grid and off-grid energy systems.
4. **Private Sector Engagement:** Concept Notes from local institutions (i.e. consulting companies, private companies, service providers, investment promotion foundations, business associations, financial institutions, trade associations, and/or NGOs) that focus on expanding:
 - i. Business development services, including risk mitigation,
 - ii. Public private dialogue around policy reforms and improving the business enabling environment,

- iii. Technological innovation and practices that enhance and enlarge the market potential of DRC's key economic sectors, including agriculture and mining,
- iv. Improving access to finance,
- v. Establishment of a platform or forum to facilitate investment, or
- vi. Conducting market analysis that identifies critical bottlenecks in the market system and identifies market solutions will have a multiplying effect on the larger economy.

C. Technical Area Three: Education (EDU)

USAID/DRC's Education Office (EDU) aims to raise education quality standards in the DRC by expanding access to education and improving service delivery. EDU's interventions strive to provide and improve education services to marginalized populations, including indigenous people, women and girls, and people with disabilities.

USAID/DRC's Youth and Education Office's early-grade learning awards provide children aged six to nine years old an opportunity to build solid expressive oral language, reading, and social and emotional skills. These programs support teachers and facilitators to teach young learners to communicate in Congo's national and official languages, helping students become bilingual or multilingual. EDU's projects reach conflict and crisis-affected areas of DRC, investing in education services for all learners and working to mitigate the impact of repeated crises on foundational learning. EDU's projects incorporate effective school-related gender-based violence interventions that develop the skills of children and youth, especially adolescent girls at risk of sexual assault, early marriage, or child labor.

USAID/DRC's Youth and Education Office partners with other international organizations through the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait grants, advocating for sector reforms, improving learning spaces, programming in strategic geographic zones where access to education is scarce, and developing and distributing textbooks and curricular materials. EDU also engages with private low-cost schools to expand access to education and improve learning outcomes. EDU's projects target innovative financing options, mobilizing private sector investment, and incorporating market-based approaches and solutions, to increase financing for education.

EDU's inclusive youth workforce development program improves access to quality skills training, second-chance education, and adolescent sexual and reproductive health services.

USAID/DRC will receive concept notes that tackle one or several issues in the following provinces: Lomami, Mai-Ndombe, Kwilu, Kwango, Sankuru, Tshopo and Mongala.

1. **Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Pre-Primary Education (PPE):** Concept Notes from local organizations which seek to:

- i. Strengthen mothers' ability to provide nurturing play-based learning in adapted home or community non-school spaces which can be equipped with PPE facilities, playgrounds, and age-appropriate learning materials, and
 - ii. Provide pre-service education, in-service technical training, facilitator well-being programs, and supportive supervision for teachers implementing ECD interventions.
2. **Marginalized Communities:** Concept Notes from local organizations seeking to:
- i. Improve access to quality education, and
 - ii. Increase student retention for formal and non-formal education in indigenous communities.
3. **Teacher Training and Mentorship** - USAID/DRC's Education Office aims to raise education quality standards in the DRC by expanding access to education and improving service delivery. Concept Notes from local organizations seeking to build the capacity of local schools and Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) institutions to:
- i. Recruit and retain teachers and instructors,
 - ii. Provide preliminary and in-service training for the duration of the teachers' tenure), and/or
 - iii. Mentor teachers and instructors to improve their instruction and facilitation skills.
4. **Workforce Development** - Concept Notes from local organizations seeking to build the capacity of local Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) institutions to better educate and train learners, both youth and adults, for in-demand jobs in the Congolese economy. This includes building the capacity of TVET institutions to recruit, retain, educate, and certify learners.
- i. In marginalized communities, and
 - ii. In crisis and conflict settings.

D. Technical Area Four : Peace and Security (PSO)

USAID/DRC's Peace and Security Office (PSO) partners with civil society and governmental bodies to support communities affected by conflict, primarily in Eastern Congo and the Central African Republic, to build the foundations for peace and stability. It seizes windows of opportunity to manage, mitigate, and prevent conflict as well as support holistic services for victims of violence through adaptive and integrated programming. It pursues locally led solutions to provide protection to those at risk, countering discrimination and disinformation, and reducing violent conflict within and among communities as well as between communities and other structures such as protected areas. Its programs promote gender equity and empowerment of ethnic minorities, and secure human rights for the disabled and sexual and gender minorities.

USAID/DRC will receive applications that tackle one or several issues in the Central African Republic and in Eastern DRC.

1. **Stabilization and social cohesion measures in conflict-affected communities:** Innovative concepts notes from local organizations seeking to bring conflicting parties together to resolve any disagreements peacefully. This includes efforts to strengthen community organizations that promote peaceful dialogues and resolution of conflicts, activities that can set a foundation for peace as a clear and fair distribution of resources to people in communities, and livelihood support activities designed to prevent recruitment by armed groups.
2. **Countering Gender Based Violence and Stigmatization of Sexual and Gender Minorities:** Concept Notes from local organizations that prevent or respond to gender-based violence and/or support sexual and gender minority communities to combat stigma, discrimination, sexual violence, and other human rights violations that community members face.
3. **Strengthening Human Rights in Central African Republic:** Concept Notes seeking to:
 - i. Strengthen democratic institutions with the potential to advance human rights over the long-term, and/or
 - ii. Mitigate against changing threats to human rights, including from armed groups and foreign actors.
4. **Countering Disinformation and Hate Speech in Central African Republic:** Concept Notes that put in place means to counter local hate speech and the spread of disinformation that can foment conflict.

Relationship to the DRC Country Development Cooperation strategy (CDCS) and US Foreign policy:

USAID LPF is in line with the [DRC Country Development Cooperation Strategy\(CDCS\)](#)'s goal: a more peaceful and prosperous DRC with improved opportunities for communities and individuals to thrive. USAID LPF contributes to DO1, DO2 and DO3.

DO1: responsiveness of public institutions to citizen's needs improved;

IR1.1 Effectiveness of public and private institutions to deliver health and other social services increased and

IR.1.2 Citizens' empowerment to hold institutions accountable increased.

DO2: Resilience to Shocks and Stressors increased;

IR2.1 Sources of resilience for individuals and households increased;

IR2.2 Sources of resilience for communities increased; and

IR2.3 Sources of resilience for systems increased.

DO3: Inclusive, broad-based and sustainable economic growth increased through

IR3.1 Transparent and efficient business enabling environment strengthened; and

IR3.3 Transformation of local enterprise accelerated.

More broadly, USAID's Local Partner Fund will advance the [2023 USAID DRC and Central Africa Regional Localization Strategy](#) which reflects USAID strategic objectives and approach to maximize partnership with local organizations, and set achievable targets compliant with local values and local priorities.

Gender and Social Inclusion Learning Agenda

Applicants should demonstrate respect for human rights, gender equality, the inclusion of people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, decent work conditions, environmental consciousness, and community involvement in their operational practices. All applications must advance and incorporate USAID gender policies that support the proposed technical approach including the following:

- [USAID Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy](#)
- [USAID Policy on Countering Trafficking in Persons\(C-TIP\)](#)
- [USAID Implementation of the US National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security](#)
- [US Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally](#)
- [The US Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls](#)
- [USAID Disability Policy Paper](#)

Donor and Interagency Collaboration

USAID/DRC will collaborate with other donors working directly with local organizations in sectors under education, economic growth, human rights, democracy and governance, peace and security in DRC and CAR to minimize duplication and maximize learning throughout the program cycle.

V. Program Geographic Targeting

The Local Partner Fund provides a broad framework for USAID DRC's interest in supporting partner-driven solutions, diversifying the partner base, and increasing local leadership over USAID development goals.

Potential applicants will submit Concept Notes to specific themes under technical areas and specify their geographic coverage. The choice of the geographic coverage is informed by the need for increased interventions in post-conflict zones, the inclusion of marginalized communities as stakeholders and recipients of development interventions, the integrated Country Strategy and needs assessment reports, and evaluation reports. Potential applicants to the USAID LPF do not have to consider all geographic zones mentioned under each technical area unless it is relevant, feasible and justified by the problem(s) to which the application intends to provide a solution. The geographic coverage may be confirmed during the co-creation phase based on priorities defined with involved USAID local partners.

[END OF SECTION A]

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

I. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

The total estimated program budget is up to \$1 million annual funding per activity for each awardee. Budgets submitted should reflect the organization's absorptive capacity.

II. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Award

The period of performance for each activity awarded under the LPF is three to five years that will depend on the starting date.

III. Authorized Geographic Code

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

IV. Type of Instrument

Assistance awards that result from the Local Partner Fund will be dependent on the Agreement Officer's discretion.

[END OF SECTION B]

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

USAID/DRC welcomes submissions from local organizations who bring an understanding of the development challenges facing their communities, country, or regions and who demonstrate a way to determine local priorities in their approach.

Eligible applicants:

1. Must be local entities in DRC or CAR. When determining if an entity is a “local entity” for the purposes of this APS, USAID will consider:
 - a. Whether the entity is legally organized under the laws of DRC or CAR respectively,
 - a. Whether the entity has its principal place of business or operations in DRC or CAR respectively,
 - b. Whether the entity is majority owned and controlled by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of DRC or CAR, respectively, and
 - c. Whether the entity is managed by a governing body, the majority of whom are citizens or lawful permanent residents of DRC or CAR respectively.
2. Cannot have received more than \$5 million in direct funding (as a prime awardee) from USAID in the previous five years.
3. Cannot be a U.S. based organization. US based organizations are not eligible as prime awardees under this APS.

Note: For purposes of this definition, “majority-owned” and “managed by” include, without limitation, beneficiary interests, and the power, either directly or indirectly, whether exercised or exercisable, to control the election, appointment, or tenure of the organization’s managers or a majority of the organization’s governing body by any means.

Submissions can include one or more entities as partners working together (teaming arrangements) to achieve a common goal in a consortium. If the consortium itself is not a separate registered entity, then one of the organizations will receive the award as the prime recipient. In that case, the prime recipient must meet the eligibility requirements noted above.

[END OF SECTION C]

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

I. Agency Point of Contact

USAID DRC – Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA) is the POC for this APS. Questions regarding this Annual Program Statement can be sent to the addresses below, by the date and time listed on the cover page.

USAID/DRC/OAA Kinshasa, DRC drcoaa@usaid.gov Mobil Building, N° 198 Avenue Isiro Gare Centrale / Gombe / Kinshasa	Zef-Osee Muteba, A&A Specialist zmuteba@usaid.gov Mobil Building, N° 198 Avenue Isiro Gare Centrale / Gombe / Kinshasa Democratic Republic of Congo
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USAID/DRC will post all the questions and responses through an amendment to the APS on grants.gov.

II. Application Process

The application process for the Local Partner Fund will have three phases:

Phase 1: Concept Paper Submission

An interested local organization will submit a brief Concept Note to the specific themes under technical areas and specify their geographic coverage and estimated period of time.

Concept Papers must be submitted in English or French using the [google form here: \[https://forms.gle/P8BxZy3gKS686cft6\]](https://forms.gle/P8BxZy3gKS686cft6)

General Content and Form of Application

Concept Papers:

- Must follow this [template](#);
- Must be written in English or French;
- Must include [the name and contact information of the individual](#) authorized to negotiate on behalf of the prime Applicant.

Phase 2: Co-Creation Process

USAID/DRC will invite applicants whose approaches in response to the problem statement and theory of change are innovative, [meet the needs of the USAID/DRC mission](#), and which can be further developed in the co-creation process. Applicants should work directly with civil society organizations, youth-led organizations, and representatives of underserved and marginalized populations to formulate concepts.

USAID/DRC will invite a subset of the most highly qualified concept note applicants to engage in a round of co-creation with USAID/DRC prior to submission of full applications. The aim of the co-creation phase is to further define activity objectives, design interventions, and align timelines. This process may involve extensive discussions with USAID/Washington, USAID Mission staff, or other experts within or outside of USAID.

By applying to the Local Partner Fund, applicants give USAID/DRC the right to share concept notes with appropriate parties for the purposes of evaluation or co-creation. All party's privy to the contents of submitted concept notes, whether within or outside of USAID, will be required to keep contents in confidence.

Note: Communication with USAID/DRC during the concept note/co-creation phase should NOT be interpreted as a commitment to funding or guaranteed request for a full application. Any expenses incurred by applicants during this time are solely the responsibility of the applicants.

If USAID/DRC decides to continue with the proposed activities following the co-creation phase, USAID/DRC will issue the NOFO for a full application from successful applicants resulting from the co-creation phase.

Phase 3: Full Application

USAID/DRC will only accept full applications from successful concept note applicants invited to continue in the application process. It is expected that full applications will expand upon their concept note and incorporate any discussions, ideas, plans, feedback or changes from USAID/DRC and other partners discussed during the co-creation phase. **Note: USAID/DRC's Request for Application (RFA) should not be interpreted as a commitment of funds.**

[END OF SECTION D]

SECTION E: INFORMATION ON THE REVIEW OF CONCEPT NOTE APPLICATIONS

I. Review

Concept Notes submitted in response to the Local Partner Fund APS, will be initially reviewed per the technical area of interest in Section A. Next, the Concept Note will be evaluated using the criteria outlined in the Merit Review Criteria and Considerations section below. Concept notes will be selected based on elements such as the technical approach and sustainability of the proposed intervention.

USAID/DRC plans to provide individual results of the Concept Paper merit review process to each Concept Paper Applicant within approximately 20 workdays of the Selection Committee meeting date. USAID/DRC will notify potential Applicants of significant changes in the review process timeline through a written amendment to the Annual Program Statement. USAID/DRC, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to review Concept Papers out of cycle.

II. Merit Review Criteria and Considerations

PHASE 1: Concept Notes

USAID/DRC anticipates two possible initial results from the Concept Paper merit review process:

- **PASS - Invited for Co-Design:** Concept Paper generally meets DRC APS objectives and receives strong ratings against the development challenges identified in the Program Areas. Concept paper represents an innovative approach that contributes to the technical goals of USAID/DRC's CDCS. USAID/DRC will invite these Applicants to engage in Co-Design by USAID/DRC for additional details and clarity of the activity concept. If the Co-Design process is successful, USAID/DRC will follow with a request for submission of a full application.
- **FAIL** - Concept Paper did not meet DRC APS objectives and received a low rating against the Annual Program Statement merit review criteria. The Applicant will not move forward in the application process.

PHASE 2: Co-Design

Applicants invited for Co-Design will engage with USAID to work together to clarify aspects of the concept. The Co-Design process **only** builds on a Concept Paper that has strength and potential; it is not intended to change Applicant's initiative or build new concepts. During this phase, Applicants will work with USAID/DRC's technical teams to address issues such as environmental concerns, impact indicators and evaluation of their application. USAID/DRC envisions the product of the Co-Design process to be a strong draft project description for the full application phase with quantitative and/or qualitative indicators or performance milestones, and a draft activity budget estimate (ABE).

The goals of a co-creation workshop would likely be to explore and validate key challenges and problems, and then jointly develop promising solutions or adapt and expand upon existing

solutions. Ideas described within the Concept Papers may be discussed and further developed in the workshop. Organizations must ensure that any submission under all Round(s) of this APS is free of any third party proprietary data rights that would impact the license granted to USAID herein.

The process ends if the co-design phase is not successful.

PHASE 3: Full Application

If Applicants successfully complete Phases 1 and 2, a full application will be requested based on the consensus reached during Phase 2. At this point, USAID/DRC will issue a Request for Application (RFA) to the Applicant with complete instructions for submission of a full application. The full application will include the detailed and expanded Co-Designed program description and specific USG forms to provide some additional information that USAID/DRC will need to move forward with an appropriate implementing instrument.

The Applicant will need to demonstrate that it satisfies the applicable eligibility requirements set forth in Section 3: Eligibility Information. Moreover, pursuant to Part 25.110 of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR 25.110), an organization must do the following before the Agreement Officer can accept the final submission:

1. Be registered in the U.S. Government's SAM system (<http://www.sam.gov>);
2. Provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number in its submission; and
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 Department or Agency.

In addition, USAID must evaluate the risks posed by applicants before making an award in accordance with principles established by USAID and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) (see 2 CFR 200.205). Therefore, USAID will conduct an examination to inform a Pre-Award Risk Assessment. USAID may commence this assessment while the initial Co-Creation Phase is on-going or wait until the Applicant is invited to co-create the final submission.

The following are some of the reasons why an Applicant may be unsuccessful at the full application phase. For example:

- The final program description fails to reflect the consensus reached during co-design and co-creation;
- A Resource Partner drops out or does not materialize;
- The Applicant is non-responsive or slow to respond to USAID's requests;
- The Applicant cannot provide evidence that it is a legal entity in the DRC; or
- USAID/DRC has other concerns after conducting due diligence or pre-award surveys.

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

[END OF SECTION E]

SECTION F: INFORMATION ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF FEDERAL AWARDS

I. Federal Award

The USAID Agreement Officer (AO) is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government 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. USAID will administer awards in accordance with Parts [700](#) and [200](#) of Title 2 of the CFR, and [Standard Provisions for U.S./non-U.S. organizations](#).

[END OF SECTION F]

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

APS Points of Contact:

Jamie Lewis, Agreement Officer jamilewis@usaid.gov Mobil Building, N° 198 Avenue Isiro Gare Centrale / Gombe / Kinshasa Democratic Republic of Congo	Zef-Osee Muteba, A&A Specialist zmuteba@usaid.gov Mobil Building, N° 198 Avenue Isiro Gare Centrale / Gombe / Kinshasa Democratic Republic of Congo
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[END OF SECTION G]

Appendix A – Concept Paper Required Content

Please note concept papers will be submitted via a [google form](https://forms.gle/P8BxZy3qKS686cft6) that can be accessed using this link [<https://forms.gle/P8BxZy3qKS686cft6>].

Prior to submitting a concept paper, please confirm eligibility by reviewing the requirements outlined in Section C of this APS.

Below are the questions for the Google Form, including Character Limits where applicable:

1. Email:
2. Name of the Organization
3. Physical Address of the Organization
4. Name of the POC of the Organization
5. Position of the POC in the Organization
6. Contact Number of the POC
7. Email Address of the POC
8. Additional Contact information for Alternate POC: Name, Position, Contact Number and email.
9. Language of Work in the Organization: French, English, Other
10. Country where the Organization is based
11. Type of Organization
12. USAID Technical Office to which the Concept is submitted
13. Are there other donors for the Concept?
14. Are you an organization based in DRC or CAR?
15. Was the concept independently developed by your Organization?
16. Was this submission completed without the U.S. Government supervision, endorsement, direction, or direct Government involvement?
17. Is your Organization majority owned and controlled by at least 50% of individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of DRC or CAR?
18. What is the maximum amount of Funding your organization received directly from USAID as PRIME?
 - a. None
 - b. \$1 - \$1 000 000
 - c. \$1 000 000 - \$3 000 000
 - d. \$3 000 000 - 4 999 999\$
 - e. \$5 000 000 and More
19. Title of the Concept Note
20. **Context:** What is the development challenge you are seeking to address? (1000 characters)
21. **Description:** Please provide a complete explanation of the activities, including a detailed description of the technical approach and projected results. Please note that the LPF cannot be used to support construction activities. (2000 characters)
22. **Local Input:** Please explain how the beneficiary communities were directly involved in developing the ideas presented in this concept. Please include: (1200 characters)

- a. Evidence that there is genuine local demand for the proposed effort, including details from any consultations with the local communities that are to be impacted by the proposed activities.
 - b. Examples of how local ideas and/or voices were incorporated
23. **Local Ownership:** The proposed activity must advance locally led development and empower local actors to take the lead in addressing their own development challenges. Please explain how each of the following elements will be fully incorporated in the activities: (1000 characters)
- a. Local leadership will own and implement the effort
 - b. The activities will creatively tap into existing in-country resources and networks (such as local expertise, universities, think tanks, associations, the private sector, philanthropy, etc.).
24. **Sustainability:** Clearly explain how the activities will produce results that are more sustainable over the long-term compared to existing practices. (700 characters)
25. **Adaptability:** USAID is committed to adaptive management, defined as “an intentional approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new information and changes in context.” Please present a strategy for how you will monitor your activities, respond to potential challenges, and adjust activities as necessary. (1000 characters)
26. **Resources:** Provide a realistic assessment of the resources needed to carry out the proposed approach in the given country context (facilities, equipment, materials, or personnel resources). (1000 characters)
27. **Staffing:** Indicate the level of staff effort anticipated, including key personnel positions and their brief descriptions.
28. **Activity Implementation Model:** Single Led or Consortium
29. **Proposed Duration of the Activity:** 3-5 years
30. **Budget:** What is the Total Estimated Cost of the Activity in USD Dollars. Include the following:
- a. Total Amount Requested
 - b. Salaries
 - c. Activities
 - d. Other Direct Costs
 - e. Indirect Cost
31. Please provide a brief description of the organization, previous experience in the field, and facilities to be used. (1000 characters)
32. Does your Organization have a Chart?
33. Does your organization have policies on procurement, contracts, and professional development management of Staff?
34. What type of funds have you received in the past? (Check all that applies)
- a. Government of DRC or CAR
 - b. International Donors
 - c. Indigenous Organizations
 - d. Civil Society Organizations
 - e. Other:
35. What range best represents the maximum amount of yearly funding that your organization has received in the past 5 years?

- a. \$0 - \$50 000
- b. \$50 000 - \$100 000
- c. \$100 000 - \$500 000
- d. \$500 000 - \$1 000 000
- e. More than \$1 000 000

36. Do you have any questions?

To have a full view of all the entire Google Form including all questions, the required content and the character limits for specific sections, follow the [link](#) below:

[\[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hkn30bpQ5Ik3ZrLB3CihxIM55tbmJhCj/view?usp=sharing\]](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hkn30bpQ5Ik3ZrLB3CihxIM55tbmJhCj/view?usp=sharing)

After reviewing the specific sections, Applicants must submit their application via this [Google Form](#) [\[https://forms.gle/P8BxZy3gKS686cft6\]](https://forms.gle/P8BxZy3gKS686cft6)

[END OF APPENDIX A]

Appendix B – Key Definitions and Acronyms

Agreement Officer	A person with the authority to (1) enter into, administer, terminate, and close out assistance agreements, and (2) make related determinations and findings on behalf of USAID. An Agreement Officer may only act within the scope of a duly authorized warrant or other valid delegation of authority. The term "Agreement Officer" includes persons warranted as "Grant Officers." It also includes certain authorized representatives of the Agreement Officer acting within the limits of their authority as delegated by the Agreement Officer.
Assistance	Financial support to accomplish a public purpose, including Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and other agreements in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, by the Federal Government to an eligible recipient. The term does not include technical assistance, the provision of services instead of money; other assistance in the form of loans, loan guarantees, interest subsidies, or insurance; direct payments of any kind to individuals; or contracts which are required to be entered into and administered under procurement laws and regulations.
Award	A form of implementing mechanism through which USAID transfers funds to an implementing partner, generally selected through a competitive process resulting in a contract, grant, or cooperative agreement.
Local Entity	<p>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, is titled "Local Competition Authority" and provides as follows:</p> <p>(a) Local Competition - Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the USAID Administrator may, with funds made available in this and prior Acts, award contracts and other acquisition instruments in which competition is limited to local entities if doing so would result in cost savings, develop local capacity, or enable the USAID Administrator to initiate a program or activity in appreciably less time than if competition were not so limited.</p> <p>Provided that the authority provided in this section may not be used to make awards in excess of \$5,000,000 and shall not exceed more than 10% of the funds made available to USAID under the Act for assistance programs.</p> <p>Provided further, that such authority shall be available to support a pilot program with such funds:</p>

	<p>Provided further, that the USAID Administrator shall consult with the Committees on Appropriations and relevant congressional committees on the results of such pilot programs.</p> <p>(b) For the purposes of this section, local entity means an individual, a corporation, a nonprofit organization, or another body of persons that—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 from funds appropriated under title III of this Act. <p>(c) For purposes of this section, “majority-owned” and “-managed by” include, without limitation, beneficiary interests and the power, either directly or indirectly, whether exercised or exercisable, to control the election, appointment, or tenure of the organization's managers or a majority of the organization's governing body by any means.”</p>
Non-US Organization	A foreign organization as defined in 2 CFR 200.
Recipient	An organization that receives direct financial assistance (a grant or cooperative agreement) to carry out an assistance program on behalf of USAID, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award and all applicable laws and regulations.
Program	The term “program” as used in 2 CFR 200 and this NOFO is typically considered by USAID to be an Activity supporting one or more Project(s) pursuant to specific Development Objectives. Please see 2 CFR 700 for the USAID specific definitions of the terms “Activity” and “Project” as used in the USAID context for purposes of planning, design, and implementation of USAID development assistance.

List Acronyms

ABE	Activity Budget Estimate
ADS	Automated Directives System
AO	Agreement Officer
APS	Annual Program Statement
CAR	Central Africa Republic
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
C-TIP	Counter Trafficking In Persons
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRG	Democracy Rights and Governance Office
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDU	Education Office
EG	Economic Growth Office
FAA	Foreign Assistance Act
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDRC	Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
LAI	Law on Access to Information
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOFO	Notice Of Funding Opportunity
OAA	Office of Acquisition and Assistance
OMB	Office of Management Bureau
PPE	Pre-Primary Education
PSO	Peace and Security Office
PwD	People with Disabilities
RFA	Request For Applications
SAM	System for Award Management
TIP	Trafficking In Persons
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UEI	Unique Entity Identifier
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

[END OF APPENDIX B]

Appendix C – Key Resources

Key resources to navigate the application process and award administration. USAID administers awards consistently with the following regulations and policies:

- How to Work with USAID: <https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/how-to-work-with-usaid>
- New to USAID: <https://www.workwithusaid.org/>
- Award Solicitation, Award Process and Standard Provisions for U.S. organizations and Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations:
<http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agencypolicy/series-300>
- Intellectual property and related issues: [2 CFR 200.448](#)
- USAID Open Data Policy: <https://data.usaid.gov/stories/s/7nq9-vptc>
- USAID Branding and Marking Policy: <https://www.usaid.gov/branding>
- USAID Graphic Standards Manual and Partner Co-branding Guide:
<https://www.usaid.gov/branding/gsm>
- USAID's Gender Equality Policy:
<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/GenderEqualityPolicy.pdf>
- Section 889 Partner Information:
<https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/resources-forpartners/section-889-partner-information>
- ADS Chapter 303 Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations:
<http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>
- Grant and Contract Process:
<https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/get-grant-or-contract/grant-and-contract-process>
- USAID DRC Special Provisions

[END OF APPENDIX C]