



**MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION (MCC)  
ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT (APS)  
NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) NO.: 95332419N0001  
PARTNERSHIPS with MCC Program**

**VERSION 19 / Amendment 0018<sup>1</sup>**

Amendment Issued: **December 31, 2024**

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CFDA #: 85.002 MCC Foreign Assistance for Overseas Programs

Pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the authority contained in the Millennium Challenge Act of 2003, as amended, the United States Government (USG), as represented by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (hereinafter referred to as "MCC"), is pleased to launch this Annual Program Statement (APS) No. 95332419N0001 for opportunities to support MCC in advancing our mission via partnership.

The APS facilitates a co-creative process to scope, design, and launch partnerships that leverage the unique capabilities of MCC and external entities. Partnerships enable MCC and external organizations to achieve outcomes that either party working alone could not realize. Through partnership, MCC seeks to increase the impact, scale, innovation, and sustainability of programs that advance our mission of poverty reduction through economic growth.

The purpose of this APS is to disseminate information to prospective applicants so they may develop and submit applications for MCC funding. Through this APS, MCC and external organizations can discuss their respective objectives and goals, determine how those interests align, and jointly identify ways to leverage and combine resources via partnership. This APS: (A) describes the types of activities for which applications will be considered; (B) describes the funding available and the process and requirements for submitting applications; (C) explains the criteria for evaluating applications; and (D) refers prospective applicants to relevant documentation available on the internet.

MCC is seeking concept papers for the following partnership opportunities (see [Section A.6.](#) for details related to each opportunity):

1. Empowering African Women through Data Skills – Due Date: Closed
2. Environmental Economics Partnership – Due Date: Closed
3. Women's Entrepreneurship Partnerships – Due Date: Closed
4. Collaborative for Data Science in Africa – Due Date: Closed
5. Geospatial and Earth-Observation Analyses for Africa – Due Date: Closed

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<sup>1</sup> Any amendments that change the terms of this NOFO or the associated Partnership Opportunity Statements will be **highlighted** in an updated copy of the NOFO as part of the amendment package in grants.gov. It is MCC's intent to ensure that the version of the NOFO posted on Grants.gov at any point in time captures all changes and updates made to date.

6. Strengthening Evidence and Economic Modeling Partnership – Due Date: Closed
7. Fiscal Analysis Partnership – Due Date: Closed
8. Community Engagement to Achieve Social License Agreements with Tourism Investors in the Solomon Islands – Due Date: Closed
9. Increasing Access to Rural Infrastructure – Due Date: Closed
10. Women’s Data Lab and Network (WDLN) project in Côte d’Ivoire – Due Date: Closed
11. Partnership on Integrated Environmental-Economic Modeling – Due Date: Closed
12. Shared learning agenda and multistakeholder collaboration in the areas of financial inclusion for MSMEs and transportation infrastructure in Indonesia – Due Date: Closed
13. Nature-based Solutions Manual of Practice Partnership – Due Date: Closed
14. Tanzania Trade Facilitation Partnership – Due Date: **February 3, 2025 at 12:00pm ET**
15. Urbanization and Growth Constraints Partnership – Due Date: **February 19, 2025 at 12:00pm ET**

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information and be fully responsive to all directions as required under this APS and meet eligibility standards in [Section C. Eligibility Information](#). This funding opportunity is posted on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), and may be amended. Interested applicants should check the website regularly to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this Annual Program Statement.

Issuance of this NOFO neither constitutes a binding commitment on the part of the Government to issue an award nor commits the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of any concept papers, engagement, collaboration, co-creation, or full applications. MCC solely reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted under this APS.

We hope you will consider responding to the partnership opportunity statements contained in this APS.

Sincerely,

Terri N. Tutt Daniel  
Agreement Officer

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**ACRONYMS**

AO	Agreement Officer
APS	Annual Program Statement
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGM	Contracts and Grants Management
DCO	Department of Compact Operations
DPE	Department of Policy and Evaluation
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
SAM	System for Award Management
UEI	Unique Entity Identifier
USG	U.S. Government

## A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### A.1. AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

The authorizing legislation is the Millennium Challenge Act of 2003, as amended. The award will be subject to [2 CFR §200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#) and MCC's Standard Provisions for Assistance Awards (see Annex A).

### A.2. OVERVIEW OF THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION (MCC)

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is a government corporation as defined in section 103 of title 5, United States Code, established by the U.S. Congress in the Millennium Challenge Act of 2003, 22 U.S.C. §7701, et seq. MCC's mission is to provide assistance that will support economic growth and poverty reduction in carefully selected countries that demonstrate a commitment to just and democratic governance, economic freedom, and investments in their citizens.

Eligible countries develop, in coordination with MCC, a program agreement (Compact) that is then implemented in five years. MCC also supports programs to assist countries seeking to attain eligibility for Compacts by supporting targeted policy and institutional reforms ("Threshold Programs"). Our model is defined by core principles of selectivity, country ownership, transparency, and a focus on results.

MCC provides selected well-performing countries with large-scale grants, in the form of compacts, to fund country-led solutions for reducing poverty through sustainable economic growth. MCC compact and threshold programs complement other U.S. and international development programs. Countries that receive MCC assistance are referred to as "MCC Partner Countries."

The accountable entity designated by each country to oversee implementation of its MCC-funded program is often referred to as a Millennium Challenge Account (or "MCA"). During implementation of the MCC-funded program, MCC maintains an oversight role, including a rigorous and transparent program of funds control and monitoring and evaluation. For more information on MCC, please visit [www.mcc.gov](http://www.mcc.gov).

### A.3. INTRODUCTION

Partnering is widely recognized as a powerful multiplier of development impact. MCC pursues a variety of co-created and co-funded partnerships at the global and country levels that align public, private, and civil sector resources and acumen to reduce poverty and drive economic growth. Partnerships with the private sector enable businesses and institutional investors to align public and private sector funding, value chains, ecosystems, activities, and innovations with MCC and country counterpart programs. Partnerships with academic and research institutions enable technological advancement in how MCC designs, monitors, and measures the effectiveness of programs. Partnerships with foundations enable MCC to leverage the financial investments and networks of like-minded funders to reduce risk or extend the impact of programs. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations enable MCC to align efforts to promote inclusive economic growth and strengthen national systems. MCC seeks to partner with organizations that share our goal of achieving poverty reduction through economic growth.

MCC is issuing this APS in order to develop partnerships<sup>2</sup> with organizations that share compact and threshold program and MCC institutional goals and align with the needs of MCC's current portfolio. MCC partnerships take many forms and benefit both MCC and our partner organizations by increasing our respective access to cutting-edge research, knowledge, data, technologies, networks and expertise, as well as co-funding. Partnerships can help open new markets, scale programs, drive innovation, and transform the lives of people around the world. Successful partnerships are expected to involve collaboration between MCC and partner staff and support MCC's ability to achieve its mission and programmatic goals.

Partnerships must concentrate on priority development activities which fall within MCC's mission of poverty reduction through economic growth and align with its core principles of results, good policies, and accountability. MCC funds activities in the public sector where the government role is clear and preeminent, but through partnership hopes to draw more broadly on non-governmental partners to stimulate additional investment and innovative development practices.

MCC recognizes that partnerships offer the possibility of promoting greater effectiveness and sustainability in programming, and thus offer an opportunity to substantially increase the impact of MCC programs. Partnerships may support program priorities and objectives through every stage of the compact and threshold cycle – selection, development, implementation, and closeout – and the organizational effectiveness of the agency.

#### A.4. ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT DESCRIPTION

This Annual Program Statement (APS) is issued to enable MCC to advertise, receive, and consider partnership opportunities and ideas for collaboration; and to make grant and/or cooperative agreement awards in an open, fair and competitive manner for the partnership opportunity statements detailed in this announcement. The APS enables MCC and select prospective partners to co-create partnerships around shared objectives and to align effort, resources, and risk.

With this APS, MCC is soliciting interest in innovative, co-funded partnership opportunities. In determining whether to provide such funding MCC will consider the nature of the concept paper and application, available funding, and the appropriate funding mechanism.

This APS will focus on co-funded partnerships in situations where partners would require funding from MCC to engage in partnership activities. MCC aims to create partnerships via this APS that are co-created during partnership formation and highly collaborative between MCC and partner teams in their implementation. MCC encourages applicants to consider what non-financial contributions (e.g., expertise, innovations, technologies, data, networks, etc.) they would bring to a prospective partnership; as well as what forms of engagement or non-financial contributions they would need from MCC in order to make the partnership successful. Additionally, prospective partners are asked to provide cost share or matching in line with [2 CFR §200.306](#) as part of their application. Additional details regarding cost share requirements are found in [Section C.2](#). Applicants are also encouraged to consider additional sources of leverage in addition to the required cost share.

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<sup>2</sup> MCC's *Policy Regarding MCC Partnerships* defines a partnership as "A collaborative relationship between two or more entities -- governmental or nongovernmental -- in which the partners work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and to share risks, responsibilities, resources, competencies, and benefits, and mutually determine the goals, structure, governance, roles, and responsibilities of their collaboration." As used in this APS, the term "partnership" is not intended to mean or be construed as a partnership as defined by law.

It is important to note that MCC is committed to country ownership, and some partnerships will be subject to concurrence by or engagement with MCC Country Partners. Where appropriate, MCC will support and facilitate this relationship to achieve effective and meaningful partnerships based on mutual interests and objectives. Therefore, applicants are hereby notified that concept papers and complete applications may potentially be shared with MCC Partner Countries during the co-creation and evaluation process.

This APS is designed to facilitate partnerships between MCC and external entities. MCC Partner Countries may also choose to utilize partnerships to facilitate the design or implementation of compact and threshold programs. **Partner Country-led partnerships are facilitated via a *separate* MCA Funded Program Partnership Solicitation (PPS) process and *not* via this APS.** Additional information about MCC and MCA partnering opportunities can be found on the “Partner With Us” page of MCC’s website ([www.mcc.gov/work-with-us/partnerships](http://www.mcc.gov/work-with-us/partnerships)).

The anticipated period for submissions under this annual program statement is **96 months**. At its discretion, MCC may issue addenda or updates to this APS, such as when new partnership opportunities arise, and when existing partnership opportunities close.

#### A.5. OVERVIEW OF THE APS PROCESS

The APS uses a four-stage, competitive application process for partnership formation that fits within the parameters of USG assistance awards:

- Stage I: Concept
- Stage II: Co-Creation
- Stage III: Application
- Stage IV: Award

##### A.5.1. STAGE I: CONCEPT

Organizations are invited to review the Partnership Opportunity Statements in [Section A.6](#) and to submit a Concept Paper in response to any/all opportunities where your organization’s capabilities and resources would align to or advance MCC’s partnership goals.

Each Partnership Opportunity Statement has a unique and defined time window for response, and MCC will review all concept papers received by the respective partnership opportunity statement due date. Concept papers are reviewed by MCC technical teams, which are comprised of subject matter experts from MCC, and potentially other entities, including MCC Partner Country Counterparts. The technical teams will review the concept papers on a pass/fail basis and recommend to the Agreement Officer which applicant(s) should be considered for co-creation discussions (Stage II). Applicants who submit a successful Stage I – Concept Paper and who fall within the criteria set forth in this APS may be invited to participate in the next stage of the APS process. MCC may choose to advance one or more applicants (or *no* applicants) to co-creation for a given partnership opportunity. Details about the required format and content of the concept paper can be found under [D.3. STAGE I – CONCEPT PAPER PRE-APPLICATION SUBMISSION](#).

MCC will publish the **organizational name of , address, point of contact, and point of contact email address for** all organizations that submit a Concept Paper on <https://www.mcc.gov/work-with->



[us/partnerships/annual-program-statement/](#). MCC will not publish the actual Concept Papers. Best efforts will be made to notify applicants of the MCC's decision regarding their Concept Paper within 90 days of receipt.

#### **A.5.2. STAGE II: CO-CREATION**

Successful applicants who pass the Concept stage will receive a notification letter inviting them to participate in the next stage of the process, Co-Creation. Co-Creation is a creative and deliberative stage where relevant teams from MCC and the prospective partner organization(s) work together to mutually shape a partnership project that could meet the objectives outlined in the Partnership Opportunity Statement.

MCC conducts separate partnership co-creation discussions with each organization that successfully moves from the Concept to Co-Creation stage, and may eventually award zero, one, or more than one awards for a given Partnership Opportunity Statement.

During Concept Paper review, MCC may determine that several concepts are worth a co-creation discussion and may contemplate combining multiple concepts. In such case, MCC may request those applicants to form a teaming arrangement (one prime and one or more subrecipients). This is not an obligatory requirement and any of the applicants may opt out of such arrangement at any time before award, at which point MCC will reassess how and whether to proceed with the next steps. Once the team has been formed, MCC will invite the collective team for co-creation. If during the co-creation process, an agreeable project is not reached with the team, MCC may request a re-arrangement of the team and/or may hold individual co-creation sessions with the applicant(s) who individually meet the criteria per subsection *E.2. Merit Review Criteria*. At any time in the process, MCC may also decide to not move forward with either the team arrangement or the individual applicant(s).

During co-creation, MCC and the prospective partner(s) explore the “why,” “what,” “where,” “when,” and “how” aspects of the prospective partnership to gain a clear understanding of the shared goals and resources each party will provide or facilitate. Co-creation provides an open space for brainstorming, idea sharing, innovation, dialogue, and feedback. During the co-creation session(s), MCC and invited prospective partner(s) will map prospective approaches and challenges to addressing the needs outlined in the Partnership Opportunity Statements detailed under [Section A.6](#). MCC and invited prospective partner(s) will discuss scope and implementation strategies, potential capabilities and contributions each partner might bring to a partnership; risks and challenges to successful implementation; funding and cost sharing expectations, and the envisioned benefits of and approaches to a potential partnership. The co-creation process may be completed in a single, day-long (or *multiple* days-long) workshop; or progress over a series of shorter technical conversations between MCC and the prospective partner(s). MCC prefers that co-creation include at least one in-person design session at the MCC Headquarters in Washington, DC, though co-creation may also be conducted at a prospective partner's location, an alternate location, or virtually, as mutually agreeable to the parties.

Following Co-Creation, MCC will decide whether to invite one or more organizations to submit a full technical application as well as a cost application in Stage III: Application. If a mutually agreeable, compelling vision is not arrived at during the Co-Creation stage, MCC will notify the applicant accordingly and the process will end for that applicant.

MCC will publish the **organizational** name, **address**, point of contact, and point of contact email address for all organizations that are invited to Co-Creation on <https://www.mcc.gov/work-with-us/partnerships/annual-program-statement/>. MCC will not publish a summary of, nor information shared during co-creation discussions.

#### **A.5.3. STAGE III: APPLICATION**

Successful applicants who pass the Co-Creation stage will be invited to submit a technical and cost application as part of Stage III. When the Agreement Officer notifies the prospective partner that they are invited to Stage III, if applicable, MCC will clarify pre-award requirements and any additional instructions and criteria for full application submissions, beyond those detailed under [SECTION D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION](#) below. After receipt of the full application package, additional clarifications/negotiations regarding the technical and cost application and/or the terms of the award may be necessary.

Applications are reviewed by MCC technical teams, which are comprised of subject matter experts from MCC, and potentially other entities including MCC Partner Country Counterparts. The technical teams will review the applications and recommend to the Agreement Officer which applicant(s) should be considered for award. The Selection Committee can recommend all, some, or no applications for award. MCC can eventually issue more than one award if funds are available and partnership objectives align; there does not need to be only one winner.

Though co-creation should provide ample insight for both MCC and the prospective partner(s) about the goals, governance, milestones, funding, and implementation plan for a given partnership, MCC reserves the right to invite Applicants to make pre-award oral presentations and teleconferences in support of their applications, and also may request to interview the Applicant's proposed key personnel.

#### **A.5.4. STAGE IV: AWARD**

Once MCC has decided to proceed with the award of a cooperative agreement or grant to an external organization based on the results of the Application stage, MCC will work with counterparts from the prospective partner organization to negotiate any unique terms and conditions, finalize and sign the award agreement, and announce the partnership.

MCC will publish the **organizational** name, **address**, point of contact, and point of contact email address for all organizations that receive awards via the APS process on <https://www.mcc.gov/work-with-us/partnerships/annual-program-statement/>. MCC will not publish the actual applications received from prospective partners. MCC and the awardee(s) may also choose to announce or promote the partnership in other forums besides mcc.gov (e.g., via press releases, events/convening, etc.).

***MCC will not reimburse prospective partners for any costs associated with developing concept papers, participating in co-creation, or submitting technical/cost applications.***

#### **A.6. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENTS**

MCC is currently inviting Concept Papers for the following Partnership Opportunity Statements. ***Additional partnership opportunities may be added over the course of the APS announcement period and partnership opportunities will be closed and removed as MCC's partnering interests are met.***

**A.6.1. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #1**

Empowering African Women through Data Skills  
Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED

**A.6.2. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #2**

Environmental Economics Partnership  
Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED

**A.6.3. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #3**

Women's Entrepreneurship Partnerships  
Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED

**A.6.4. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #4**

Collaborative for Data Science in Africa  
Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED

**A.6.5. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #5**

Geospatial and Earth-Observation Analyses for Africa  
Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED

**A.6.6. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #6**

Strengthening Evidence and Economic Modeling Partnership  
Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED

**A.6.7. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #7**

Fiscal Analysis Partnership  
Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED

**A.6.8. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #8**

Community Engagement to Achieve Social License Agreements with  
Tourism Investors in the Solomon Islands  
Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED

**A.6.9. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #9**

Increasing Access to Rural Infrastructure  
Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED

**A.6.10. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #10**

Women's Data Lab and Network (WDLN) Project in Côte d'Ivoire

**Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED**

**A.6.11 PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #11**

**Partnership on Integrated Environmental-Economic Modeling  
Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED**

**A.6.12 PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #12**

**Shared Learning Agenda and Multistakeholder Collaboration in the Areas of Financial Inclusion for MSMEs and Transportation Infrastructure in Indonesia  
Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED**

**A.6.13 PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #13**

**Nature-Based Solutions Manual of Practice Partnership  
Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED**

**A.6.14 PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #14**

**Tanzania Trade Facilitation Partnership**

**Estimated Budget: \$16 million**

**Concept Paper Due Date: February 3, 2025, 12:00pm ET**

**Background:** The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the Government of Tanzania (GoT) expect to sign a Threshold Program Grant Agreement in 2025 to support a 4-year policy and institutional reform program that leads to a reduction in poverty through economic growth. After completing a Constraints to Growth Assessment in 2024, MCC and the GoT identified the high cost of international trade as the binding constraint on which to focus the threshold program. MCC and the GoT subsequently analyzed the root causes of the constraint and prepared a concept note to address them.

Trade barriers are the main reason for high trade costs. The slow implementation of regional trade agreements also contributes to the high cost of trade. Root causes of these core problems include inefficient trade facilitation and persistent non-tariff barriers (NTBs). Simulations done by the World Bank indicate that the enactment of stronger trade facilitation measures and the removal of NTBs could increase exports, GDP and real income by up to 43 percent, 7.4 percent and 12.2 percent, respectively, from current levels by 2035. Weak trade governance institutions are another root cause. The Trade Facilitation Project aims to address these root causes.

The 4-year timeline for the Threshold program is expected to begin in 2025. Using this Partnership Opportunity Statement, MCC seeks partners with which to collaborate and jointly define and implement the Trade Facilitation Project.

**Primary Goal:** The goal of this partnership is to co-create and implement a project supported by the Millennium Challenge Corporation to alleviate the root causes of the high cost of international trade in Tanzania: inefficient trade facilitation, pervasive non-tariff barriers, and weak trade governance institutions.

**Need:** Tanzania's exports are hampered by low productivity growth and high trade costs. The cost of conducting international trade in Tanzania is high. These costs are especially problematic in agriculture. Firms in this sector make up the highest proportion of exporters.

The potential gains from reducing barriers to trade are significant. Economic modelling done by the World Bank finds that with liberalized tariffs, reduced non-tariff barriers to trade, and improved trade facilitation, including as called for by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), could significantly increase exports, income, and the rate of economic growth.

Efforts to address trade barriers have been underway in Tanzania for some time, but more can be done to impact growth, income, and employment. A coordinated effort across key government, private sector, and donor stakeholders is needed to lower the high costs of trade.

**Opportunity:** Through a partnership, there is a unique opportunity to leverage MCC's 20 years of international development experience with local/regional trade expertise to develop a project that unlocks sustainable trade/export led growth opportunities in Tanzania. The launch of the new trade policy and Tanzania's notable changing attitudes toward private sector-led growth also create an opportune moment for trade policy reform.

The MCC Tanzania Trade Facilitation Project will support implementation of the Government of Tanzania's (GoT's) new trade policy. GoT's new trade policy is a comprehensive framework, covering numerous aspects of trade, and is based on analysis of where the previous policy's implementation fell short. MCC and the GoT intend the Threshold Program to support specific objectives of the new policy such as: improve policy coherence, legal and regulatory framework, and inter-governmental coordination; enhance trade facilitation to reduce the time and cost of moving good across borders; and strengthen e-commerce infrastructure and use of digital technologies.

Trade in Tanzania is complex and requires broad and deep connections across the country and region. A partnership with an organization experienced in trade facilitation in Tanzania would tap knowledge of lessons learned from past and ongoing projects that government and development partners have undertaken.

The ideal partner would have a track record of reducing trade barriers in Tanzania specifically, and strong existing relationships with key implementing partners and other donors working in the trade sector. The partner would be able to continue the work after the MCC Threshold Program ends with support from other development partners, increasing the chances that the MCC-supported work is sustainable. The ideal partner would also incorporate the GoT in the governance and oversight structure of the proposed project.

### **The Tanzania Trade Facilitation Project**

The GoT seeks to develop and implement project activities that support the successful implementation of the National Trade Policy (NTP) in the following ways.

#### Strengthen Inter-Governmental Coordination

The Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT) drives trade policy. It chairs two inter-agency committees that are entry-points for MCC interventions: (i) the *National Trade Facilitation Committee* (NTFC); and (ii) *National Monitoring Committee for Non-Tariff Barriers* (NMC-NTBs). The NTFC is charged with implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) for Tanzania, while the NMC-NTBs is tasked with monitoring and eliminating NTBs under the East Africa Act. MIT has requested support for accelerated implementation of the committees' action plans.

### Digitize the Regulatory Approvals Process for Businesses

The Customs Department of the Tanzania Revenue Authority requests MCC support for the digitization of approvals for certificates, licenses, and permits (CLPs) that firms of all sizes need to move goods across borders. Efforts are already underway, but they may require further assistance to streamline and rationalize regulatory processes before linking the myriad government agencies through a unified, user-centered electronic single window system.

### Improve Conformity Assessment Procedures

Problems with conformity assessments have been identified as one of the main NTBs. The Tanzania Bureau of Standards and the Zanzibar Bureau of Standards request support to improve their capacity and procedures for accreditation and certification, particularly of agricultural exports. They also request support for harmonizing food safety, traceability, and other standards/requirements of international markets.

### Strengthen Public-Private Dialogue

Business and industry associations have requested support to shape and influence trade policies and business regulations so that they are responsive to the needs of the private sector. The existing public-private dialogue framework has many channels for the private sector to engage with government and hold it accountable for reducing trade barriers.

### Increase women and youth's influence in trade policy

Civil society stakeholders pointed out that, while the private sector is regularly consulted on economic policy, civil society organizations, especially youth organizations and entrepreneurs, have not typically played a role in policy dialogue. Youth organizations that MCC consulted during the root cause analysis asked for more opportunities to provide input on user-facing business regulatory reform and engage with policymakers and learn more about trade policy and regional trade agreements.

### Support implementation of international trade agreements

Tanzania is a signatory to several complex international trade agreements but has had difficulty using these agreements to access preferential markets. The new trade policy proposes to create a national trade negotiation team to enhance compliance with international trade commitments. MIT has requested assistance to establish this team so that Tanzania can fully comply with the requirements of trade agreements.

Prospective partners are encouraged to recommend other areas of activity that could reduce barriers to international trade.

**Budget:** The partnership will be funded up to approximately \$16 million over a four-year period, with partner(s) contributing in accordance with the “Leverage Requirement” section below. MCC’s Board selected Tanzania as eligible for a Threshold Program and MCC is actively developing the program in partnership with the Government of Tanzania. However, the program and associated budget – including for this opportunity – are subject to approval by the MCC Board and the GoT. ***Funding for this opportunity will not be available until the Threshold Program (THP) Grant Agreement between MCC and GoT is signed.*** Once the THP Grant Agreement is signed, MCC may proceed to award a cooperative agreement under this opportunity statement.

**Sub-Awards:** MCC envisions the partner entering into agreements and providing financial and technical assistance to government, private sector, and civil society organizations to further the objectives described above. The concepts above are potential interventions the partnership could support but are not fully developed. These come from MCC consultations with the government, private sector, and civil society stakeholders which were reflected in the GoT's concept note to MCC. These concepts are related to Tanzania's ongoing work to fulfill their existing commitments under international trade agreements and to regional trade communities that Tanzania is a part of. Most can also be found in the country's strategic development documents. These commitments and measures are multifaceted, and other development partners are also providing assistance. MCC plans to further investigate these concepts with a partner in the co-creation phase of this process (see Section A.5, Stage II: Co-Creation for more details about what this process entails).

#### **Notional Award Timeline:**

The following table reflects milestones and anticipated timeframes for the award process related to this opportunity (timeframes are subject to change):

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Estimated Timeframe</b>
MCC issues Opportunity Statement #14	December 13, 2024
<b>Pre-application conference call</b>	<b>January 89, 2025</b>
Questions or clarifications deadline	January 13, 2024
Issuance of responses to questions or clarifications	January 21, 2025
<b>Concept note submission deadline</b>	<b>February 3, 2025</b>
Notification to applicants following MCC review of applications	March 3, 2025
Co-creation	March 2025
Request for full technical and financial application	May/June 2025
Technical and financial application deadline	July 2025
Application clarifications/negotiations	July/August 2025
Selection notification	August 2025
Award notification and signing (after MCC and GoT sign the Threshold Program Grant Agreement)	TBD

#### **Tanzania Threshold Program Timeline:**

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Estimated Timeframe</b>
MCC Board approves threshold agreement	Mid-2025
MCC/GoT sign threshold program grant agreement	TBD
Initiation and Planning: Define project scope, objectives, and key deliverables. Building on technical and financial application, develop a detailed workplan outlining roles, responsibilities, and timelines. Identify stakeholders, and establish communication protocols. Concurrently, develop activities with government, private sector, and civil society implementing partners and negotiate sub-awards. Recruit staff.	Approximately 4 months after signing award
Partner issues sub-awards, if applicable	Approximately 6 months after signing award



Threshold Program ends	4 years after signing threshold agreement
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**Likely Locations/Countries of Operation or Application:** Tanzania is the focus of this partnership and all activities will take place within Tanzania. MCC expects the partner to have an office and staff in Tanzania.

**Leverage Requirement:** Cost share, as defined in Section C.2 of this NOFO, is *not* required for this opportunity. Instead, for this opportunity, MCC requires applicants to propose a minimum *leverage* of 20% of the funding amount. Section C.3, “Leverage Funding,” of the NOFO describes leverage and how it applies.

MCC understands that applicants may need time to mobilize leverage. Applicants should clarify in their Concept Note the proposed amount(s) and source(s) of leverage and whether amount(s) and source(s) are existing or tentative. MCC and applicants will discuss the sources, tracking, and use of leverage funding during Stage 2, Co-Creation, and applicants can finalize their leverage proposal in the Stage 3, Full Application.

Leverage directly contributes to the project or augments its results by making it more sustainable and effective. Drawing in additional financial and technical resources from non-U.S. Government sources in the form of leverage can multiply the impact of the Trade Facilitation Project. Leverage will also increase MCC and the GoT’s confidence that the project has broader support than what MCC can provide, and that project interventions and impact can be sustained beyond the four-year life of the threshold program.

**Pre-Application Clarifications:** A Pre-Application Teleconference will be held on **January 8, 2025 from 2:00pm – 3:30 pm Eastern Time January 9, 2025 from 9:00am-10:30am Eastern Time**. Interested parties should register for the conference no later than **January 6, 2025** by emailing Aster Mekonnen, Agreement Specialist ([mekonnena@mcc.gov](mailto:mekonnena@mcc.gov)), Jacqueline Naranjo, Agreement Officer ([naranjo@mcc.gov](mailto:naranjo@mcc.gov)), and the Office of Strategic Partnerships ([colewp1@mcc.gov](mailto:colewp1@mcc.gov)) with the following information:

- (1) entity name;
- (2) attendee name(s) and title(s);
- (3) attendee email address(es); and
- (4) any questions you’d like MCC to address during the conference.

MCC will send a meeting invite to all registrants containing a link to connect to the virtual conference.

In addition to the conference call, applicants may request clarifications on this opportunity statement by submitting their questions via email to Aster Mekonnen ([mekonnena@mcc.gov](mailto:mekonnena@mcc.gov)) and Jacqueline Naranjo ([naranjo@mcc.gov](mailto:naranjo@mcc.gov)) by **January 13, 2025**. MCC will respond to all questions and clarification requests by means of a Q&A amendment issued on grants.gov.

#### **A.6.15 PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #15**

##### **Urbanization and Growth Constraints Partnership**

Estimated Federal Budget: \$200,000

Concept Paper Due Date: February 19, 2025, 12:00pm ET



**Primary Goal:** The goal of this partnership is to develop practical applications and data to strengthen the capacity of development agencies to assess constraints to economic growth in urban and subnational economic settings in low and middle income countries. Growth diagnostics and specifically constraints analyses are central to MCC's approach. After a country is selected for either a Compact or smaller Threshold program, MCC conducts a detailed analysis to assess which factors are acting as binding constraints to economic growth and poverty reduction, hence where MCC investments would have the largest potential impacts on these outcomes. The main diagnostic tool used by MCC for the constraints analysis is the 'HRV' model developed by Hausmann, Rodrik and Velasco (HRV).<sup>3</sup> Following the identification of and selection of binding constraints and subsequent root cause analysis to uncover the reasons for the constraints, projects in the relevant sectors or areas (e.g., roads, power, finance, regulation, etc.) are developed to address the constraints.

**Need:** Currently, there is a gap in understanding how to incorporate the urbanization process in the constraints to growth diagnostic used by MCC. Filling this gap is important given that the urban population of the developing world is expected to increase by some 2 billion people over the next 40 years.

In general, cities are thought to be fundamental to structural change and economic growth. They allow for clustering of firms and workers, leading to important agglomeration benefits and economies of scale which raise productivity and employment in manufacturing and increasingly, services as well. Except for some resource-rich countries, no economy has developed without productive urban growth.

However, many developing countries have experienced rapid urban growth without the expected gains in productivity and incomes, suggesting that agglomeration benefits are not being realized. Indeed, many cities in the developing world have been described as 'consumption cities' as distinguished from 'production cities' that capture these benefits and hence can drive economic growth. While a large body of research has improved our understanding of these processes, there remain significant gaps regarding how development agencies can diagnose whether urbanization is failing to promote development—and to assess the constraints that prevent it from doing so. These gaps encompass both analytical methodologies and data. There are two broad questions of relevance to MCC (and to other development funders and researchers):

- I. When is urbanization 'failing' and, because of that, acting as a leading constraint on a country's economic growth and poverty reduction (as opposed to say, a situation where unproductive agriculture is the main brake on growth)?
- II. Where it is determined that unproductive urbanization is acting as a key barrier to a country's growth and poverty reduction, what are the causes of this unproductive urbanization? Are the key constraints related to barriers to urban agglomeration benefits (e.g. involving land use, congestion, markets, etc.)? Or is productive, growth-driving urbanization being constrained by more general, i.e., national-level, factors that impinge on both the major cities and other areas (e.g., relating to electrical power, access to credit, or the regulatory environment)? How can the relative importance of these two broad classes of constraints be assessed? (And as well, how can the relative importance of individual factors within each class be assessed?)

As the above implies, there are two main steps to the diagnostic: first, assessing the fundamental question of whether unproductive urbanization is the main (or one of the main) constraints to growth; and second, the question of what is constraining the desired productive urban growth. In both steps what is needed is the identification of appropriate tests, data, and indicators, and the provision of the

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<sup>3</sup> <https://growthlab.hks.harvard.edu/publications/growth-diagnostics-0>

identified data and indicators. Expanding MCC's analysis of constraints to include those relevant to urban settings, this activity will help us to understand the factors that limit the development of growth-enhancing cities and the key investments that can address these constraints.

**Opportunity:** MCC's analytical approach uses the unified growth diagnostic framework and methodology that was developed by Ricardo Hausmann, Dani Rodrik and Andrés Velasco at Harvard's Growth Lab. This framework identifies the binding constraints to growth, which is key to formulating growth enhancing strategies and to implementing critical investments that promote development.<sup>4</sup> For 20 years, MCC has successfully delivered targeted, data-driven investments to expand economic growth and reduce poverty.

At the same time, there are relatively few examples of growth diagnostic studies which assessed both national and urban level specific constraints. In this context, there is an opportunity to more fully develop appropriate growth diagnostics that are both flexible (to allow for country specific contexts) and fit well within MCC's established growth diagnostics processes and timelines.

Against this background, the partnership provides an opportunity to expand the analysis of constraints unique to urban settings and to understand the factors that constrain the development of growth-enhancing cities and the investments that are needed to address these constraints.

The partnership would be able to capitalize on MCC's experience in funding Compacts and Threshold programs in urban areas and assist MCC in refining its strategies and economic analysis tools and techniques. It would also be an opportunity to generate the data to apply them.

Finally, by publishing both data and analytical work, the partnership will benefit development agencies and practitioners more generally by providing tools and data for urban growth analysis and related investments that can be readily applied to many developing country settings.

**Potential Scope:** The partnership will be funded by MCC up to \$200,000 over two (2) years, with partner(s) contributing financially in accordance with the Partner Contribution section below and through their expertise and authorship toward the following:

- **Develop analytical approaches that are compatible with MCC's established processes.** It is envisioned that the methodological approach would take the form of an elaboration or extension of our current diagnostic approach, to address the two basic questions posed above. In particular, the partner would examine how to include these urban-related diagnostics and tests of these constraints within MCC's model framework. The work could build on analysis of urban growth constraints developed by the Brookings's Africa Growth Initiative and Harvard's Center for International Development, among others.
- **Carry out specialized data collection and/or data compilation activities to generate cities-level data for selected MCC partner (or potential partner) low and lower-middle income countries.** Also, as needed, partner(s) would develop and deploy advanced tools using data science and analytic techniques. Regarding data, potential partner organizations may already have compiled cross-country data relevant for urban analysis as part of their core business. In other cases, potential partners may instead develop a plan to obtain the necessary data. The data will help identify issues and constraints related to economic growth as it relates to cities.

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<sup>4</sup> For a description of MCC's growth diagnostics approach and links to country examples, see <https://www.mcc.gov/our-impact/constraints-analysis>. An urban-focused example of constraints analysis is <https://assets.mcc.gov/content/uploads/constraints-analysis-kenya-2021.pdf>.

- **Create city/subnational-level economic dashboard for a sample of up to three (3) MCC partner countries**, which could serve as a model for future MCC country work. In addition to informing the initial diagnostics of urbanization-related growth constraints, it will, through repeated collection, also facilitate assessment of the impacts of urban-focused MCC investments.
- **Publish the analysis and dashboards produced under the partnership as a global public good on the internet.** Findings of the pilot country analyses using the new databases and analytical approaches will be presented as joint products of the partnership in knowledge-sharing events and disseminated through seminars, blog posts, and papers (potentially including journal articles) to a global audience.

#### **Award Timeline:**

The following table reflects milestones and anticipated timeframes for the award process related to this opportunity (timeframes are subject to change):

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Estimated Timeframe</b>
MCC issues Opportunity Statement #15	December 13, 2024
Pre-application conference call	January 17, 2025
Questions or clarifications deadline	January 24, 2025
Issuance of responses to questions or clarifications	February 5, 2025
<b>Concept note submission deadline</b>	<b>February 19, 2025</b>
Notification to applicants following MCC review of applications	March 14, 2025
<b>Co-creation</b>	<b>April/May 2025</b>
Request for full technical and financial application	May 2025
<b>Technical and financial application deadline</b>	<b>June 2025</b>
Application clarifications/negotiations	July/August 2025
Selection notification	August 2025
Award notification and signing	August 2025

#### **Notional Programmatic Timeline:**

The following table shows expected milestones and timeframes for the programmatic activities over the two-year period of the partnership:

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Estimated Timeframe</b>
Develop analytical diagnostics approaches that are compatible with MCC's established processes.	6 months
Carry out specialized data collection and compilation activities to generate cities-level data for the selected (2-3) low and lower-middle income countries, as well as to develop advanced tools using data science and analytic techniques.	6 months
Apply the approaches and data to selected countries (pilot studies).	6 months
Create city/subnational-level economic dashboard for a sample of MCC partner countries, which could serve as a model for future MCC country work.	3 months

Publish a methodological/framework paper, the country studies and dashboards produced under the partnership as a global public good on the web.	3 months
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In addition to the activities and outputs above, it is expected that the partner will present methods and findings in one or more workshops at MCC.

**Likely Locations/Countries of Operation or Application:** The analytical techniques and data will be applied in an estimated two, or possibly three, country cases. Countries are selected for Compact or Threshold programs in December of each year by MCC's Board, with three countries typically selected. Through application of selection criteria, MCC forms Compact or Threshold agreements with developing countries that are committed to good governance, economic freedom and investing in their citizens. MCC will work with the partner(s) on the Urbanization and Growth Constraints Project to assess the suitability of the selected countries for the urban focused analysis. (Note: MCC does not anticipate travel to these countries by the partner(s)). Regarding location, while in absolute population terms most of the increase in urbanization will take place in Asia, the largest proportionate increases will be in Africa. In fact, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2018) projects that, between 2018 and 2050, seven of the world's 10 fastest urbanizing areas will be in Africa.

Africa's urban population will nearly triple by 2050, adding 800 million people, the current urban population of Europe and North America combined. While cities offer the promise of high productivity and job creation, they can fail to deliver these benefits. The recent experiences of East Asia and Africa, for example, feature very different patterns of urban development. East Asian cities have largely succeeded in generating higher productivity, more jobs, and the housing and services that make cities livable, while African cities have left a large majority of their populations without formal sector jobs or adequate housing. African cities have grown more because of population growth and migration due to rural stagnation, rather than pulled by the dynamism of the urban economy. This heightens the urgency of finding the best ways to identify, and address, constraints to productive, growth-enhancing urbanization. These considerations together suggest that the focus of the partnership will be Africa, though it is possible that one of the pilot countries will be from a different region.

**Ways That MCC's Involvement Could Help Partners Achieve Public Benefits:** MCC's contributions and involvement in the urbanization partnership can significantly contribute to achieving public benefits in several ways:

- **Knowledge Dissemination:** MCC's participation involves sharing insights, lessons learned, and technical expertise garnered through years of implementing development projects. This information, when incorporated into MCC programs, becomes publicly accessible knowledge.
- **Capacity Building and Awareness:** The partnership will allow for the incorporation of case studies and practical examples from MCC threshold and compact programs and elsewhere. These real-world examples can serve as educational tools, raising awareness and building the capacity of stakeholders.
- **Open Access to the Data and Analysis:** The data, dashboard, and case studies will be publicly available through online platforms and the MCC website. This open access to methodologies, case studies and data, will benefit a wider audience interested in urbanization and constraints to growth.
- **Influence on Policy and Practice:** MCC compacts and threshold programs have an influence on economic policies and practices in developing countries and in the wider development community. Knowledge of how urbanization-related constraints to growth can be addressed and thus positively impact city, national, and regional prospects—and the development of tools for

carrying out such an analysis—will both be utilized in MCC programs and widely shared in the development community.

**Parameters for How MCC’s Funding Could Be Used:** Given that the work under this partnership has both analytical and data components, it is possible for different organizations to combine in this effort, for example with one focusing on data and the other bringing deep analytical expertise.

**Partner Contribution Requirement:** The total amount available through the partnership from MCC is \$200,000, spread over two years. Non-profit partners are expected to contribute a minimum of 25 percent (\$50,000) in cost share (and for-profit partners are expected to commit a minimum 1:1 match ratio (\$200,000)), as described in Section C.2 of the NOFO, “Cost Share or Matching.” The cost share requirement ensures a collaborative and shared commitment towards achieving the partnership’s objectives, leveraging the strengths and resources of both parties to create impactful and sustainable outcomes.

**Pre-Application Clarifications:** A Pre-Application conference call will be held on **January 17, 2025 from 2:00pm – 3:30pm Eastern Time**. Interested parties should register for the conference call no later than **January 15, 2025** by emailing Aster Mekonnen, Agreement Specialist ([mekonnena@mcc.gov](mailto:mekonnena@mcc.gov)), Jacqueline Naranjo, Agreement Officer ([naranjoj@mcc.gov](mailto:naranjoj@mcc.gov)), and the Office of Strategic Partnerships ([colewp1@mcc.gov](mailto:colewp1@mcc.gov)) with the following information:

- (1) Entity name;
- (2) Attendee name(s) and title(s);
- (3) Attendee email address(es); and
- (4) Any questions you’d like MCC to address during the conference call.

MCC will send a meeting invite to all registrants containing a link to connect to the virtual conference.

In addition to the conference call, applicants may request clarifications on this opportunity statement by submitting their questions via email to Aster Mekonnen ([mekonnena@mcc.gov](mailto:mekonnena@mcc.gov)) and Jacqueline Naranjo ([naranjoj@mcc.gov](mailto:naranjoj@mcc.gov)) by **January 24, 2025**. MCC will respond to all questions and clarification requests by means of a Q&A amendment issued on grants.gov.

## B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

### B.1. ANTICIPATED NUMBER AND TYPE OF AWARDS

MCC expects that it will *primarily* issue cooperative agreements as a result of this NOFO; however, MCC reserves the right to issue grants if appropriate to the specific partnership opportunity. The actual number of assistance awards, if any, issued under this NOFO is subject to the number of partnership opportunities, the availability of funds, as well as the viability of full applications received. There is no predefined minimum or maximum number of awards MCC will issue via this APS. MCC reserves the right to not award *any* cooperative agreements or grants if that is determined to be in the best interest of the USG.

### B.2. ANTICIPATED PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE FOR NEW AWARDS

It is expected that awards resulting from this APS will have a period of performance from 12 to 60+ months. Concept papers must be submitted by the established due date indicated in [Section A.6](#). Complete applications must be submitted by the mutually agreed upon due date identified in Stage III of the APS process.

When feasible, it is MCC's goal to make awards within the same fiscal year an opportunity statement is advertised. Concept papers and/or applications received under this APS, but unable to be negotiated and awarded prior to the end of the fiscal year in which they are received, may be considered for award within the following fiscal year, subject to continued availability of funds.

### B.3. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

Should a cooperative agreement be selected as the appropriate mechanism, MCC's involvement during the implementation of the award will be mutually-defined during the co-creation process. In general, however, MCC's role will be to assist the recipient in achieving the supported objectives of the agreement.

### B.4. ANTICIPATED AWARD BUDGETS

The budget for each award issued under this NOFO will be discussed and negotiated during the co-creation phase based on the nature and scope of the proposed partnership opportunity. During the FY18 APS cycle, MCC made seven (7) awards ranging from approximately \$30,000 to \$1,500,000 in Federal funding (i.e., not including cost share); the *average* amount of Federal funding was approximately \$600,000. See [Section H.1](#) for additional background information on MCC's FY18 APS. MCC may share our initial federal budget for some, but not all, programs. See [Section A.6](#).

## C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### C.1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants that may participate in this NOFO include but are not limited to:

- U.S.-based organizations
- Non-U.S.-based organizations
- For-profit entities
- Non-profit entities

An individual cannot apply as an applicant for MCC funding under this APS.

U.S. Government agencies (Federal, state and local) and host country government entities are **not** eligible to apply for MCC funding under this APS, neither as a prime nor as a consortium member. Furthermore, cost applications may not contain level of effort or other related costs for host country government staff.

All applicants must be legally recognized organizational entities under applicable law. In order to be eligible to receive U.S. Government funding, organizations must meet certain requirements. While these requirements do not have to be met in order to submit a concept paper under the APS, they will need to be met if the applicant is requested to submit a full application. Details of these requirements can be found under [Section D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION](#) below.

Public or government entities of current MCC partner countries, including Millennium Challenge Accounts (MCAs), are not eligible for award consideration under this APS. However, government entities of MCC partner countries may become eligible after their Compact/Threshold Program has been formally closed for at least one year before the Phase I Concept Papers are due.

There is no limitation to the number of concept papers an applicant may submit under this APS.

### C.2. COST SHARE OR MATCHING

Cost sharing or matching refers to the resources a recipient contributes to the total cost of an agreement, the portion of project or program costs not borne by the U.S. Government. Cost share may either be cash or in-kind contributions. Once committed to providing cost share and incorporation into an agreement's approved budget, the recipient is required to provide documentation showing that this obligation is met successfully. Cost Share/Matching funds proposed under this APS are pursuant to the uniform guidance under [2 CFR §200.306 – Cost sharing](#).

Proposed cost sharing shall be used for the accomplishment of program objectives and shall consist of allowable costs under the applicable USG cost principles. Applicants invited to submit a cost application under Stage III – Application must identify in the budget submission, a separate budget category supported by detailed line items for the cost share. Information regarding the proposed cost share should be included in the SF-424 and the Budget and Budget Notes in compliance with the cost application instructions specified under [Section D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION](#).



Cost share contributions will be reviewed as part of the cost review in Stage III – Application. Although technical criteria are paramount, cost considerations may also be a factor for award and applicants that can demonstrate a more significant cost-share contribution above the stated minimum cost share required may be considered more competitive. Applicants are reminded that committed cost share becomes a binding requirement of the award.

In case of a consortium, where two or more applicants come together to form a team, the cost share requirement (non-profit vs. for-profit) will be based on the entity status of the prime recipient, one who shall primarily manage and oversee the project.

**MCC typically requires those non-profit entities applying under this NOFO to commit a *minimum* cost share of 25% of the Federal funding amount proposed in the cost application budget.**

**MCC typically requires those for-profit entities applying under this NOFO to commit a minimum 1:1 match ratio based on the Federal funding amount proposed in the cost application budget (e.g., the for-profit entity must match or exceed the Federal funding amount on a dollar-for-dollar basis).**

**Despite MCC's typical requirements as noted above, the cost share or matching requirement may vary for each Partnership Opportunity Statement. In such event, the specific cost share or matching requirement will be detailed separately in the opportunity statement itself (See [Section A.6](#)).**

*Below are illustrative examples of the cost share and matching eligibility requirements under this APS:*

**Non-Profit Applicants requesting \$100,000 in federal funding must propose a minimum 25% cost share contribution of \$25,000 to meet the eligibility requirement for non-profit entities – resulting in a total Federal and Non-Federal award cost of \$125,000:**

<b>Non-Profit APS Applicants Cost Share Requirement</b>	<b>25%</b>
Federal Share:	\$100,000
Non-Federal Cost Share:	\$25,000
Total Assistance Award Amount:	\$125,000

**For-Profit Applicants requesting \$100,000 in federal funding must propose a minimum 1:1 matching contribution of \$100,000 to meet the eligibility requirement for for-profit applicants – resulting in a total Federal and Non-Federal award cost of \$200,000:**

<b>For-Profit APS Applicants 1:1 Matching Requirement</b>	<b>1:1</b>
Federal Share:	\$100,000
Non-Federal Cost Share:	\$100,000
Total Assistance Award Amount:	\$200,000



### C.3. LEVERAGE FUNDING

MCC also encourages applicants to consider providing leverage contributions in addition to cost share/matching. Leverage contributions are third-party funding or other resources that an applicant identifies during the application process to provide additional support for program implementation under a potential MCC-funded assistance award. Specifically, applicants are encouraged to suggest creative approaches to engaging third-party entities committed to the partnership objectives as a means of securing additional program funding or in-kind contributions. For instance, MCC welcomes any third-party assets, expertise, capabilities and other resources (e.g., equipment, training, licensing fee, etc.) that further the mutually established partnership objectives.

Leverage describes the quantifiable contributions provided by third parties to the program. Given the strategic and programmatic value that leveraged funds/resources provide to the potential assistance award, applicants are expected to identify in their applications the enhanced results expected from any leverage proposed and provide and implement a mechanism for tracking and reporting that contribution.

Any proposed resource leveraging should be accompanied by letters of commitment from sources of third-party leverage as part of the Stage III – Application cost submission. In cases where leveraged funds/resources are not yet fully confirmed, the applicant – in their cost application submission – should speak to its plans for gaining a firm commitment from the third party (or parties) after award of the agreement.

Unlike cost sharing or matching, leverage funds are not binding and are not subject to traditional audit standards, as leverage funds are not intended to be held to the same level of commitment as the required applicant cost share or matching described in [Section C.2](#). Leverage funding can be presented in a variety of forms, including but not limited to measurable non-federal financial cash contributions, third party in-kind contributions such as donated services, labor and tangible or intellectual property.

The entity receiving an award from MCC to implement program activities is responsible for ensuring, tracking and reporting on the mobilization and use of the leverage. MCC expects the award recipient to provide such information on a quarterly basis across the fiscal year, with an annual summary, in the quarterly technical and financial reports. Proposed leverage funding is *encouraged* in order to maximize the effectiveness of the program, but not *required*.

### C.4. PROFIT OR FEE UNDER ASSISTANCE AWARDS

For-profit, or profit-making organizations, are eligible for award under this APS; however, pursuant to [2 CFR §200.400\(g\)](#), profit or fee is unallowable for assistance mechanisms and will not be authorized under any award made under this APS. 2 CFR §200.101 states that, unless specifically excluded, all requirements applying to recipients also apply to subrecipients; therefore, fee/profit under assistance type awards is also prohibited for subrecipients – unless the prime recipient enters into a subcontract with a for-profit organization for the acquisition of goods or services (i.e., if a buyer-seller relationship is created), in which case fee/profit for the subcontractor is authorized. Forgone profit does not qualify as cost-sharing.

## D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### D.1. APS DOCUMENT INFORMATION

All APS-related correspondence and submissions (e.g., questions, Stage I – Concept Papers, Stage III – Applications, etc.) must be sent to the following email address: [apspartnerships@mcc.gov](mailto:apspartnerships@mcc.gov). Individual opportunity statements may identify other MCC points of contact for correspondence and submissions.

MCC distributes all official documents for this NOFO through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Information regarding the identity and status of applicants under each opportunity statement will be published at <https://www.mcc.gov/work-with-us/partnerships/annual-program-statement/>.

### D.2. APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are expected to review, understand and comply with the requirements of this APS and all subsequent amendments. Applications not conforming to the APS requirements may be considered non-responsive and eliminated from further consideration. All application documents shall be submitted in English.

The Applicant must submit all requested documents electronically to the email address and individuals listed above by the deadline noted in [Section A](#) for each partnership opportunity statement; hard copies will not be accepted. **Applications submitted via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) will not be accepted or considered.** MCC reserves the right not to consider late or incomplete/non-responsive applications.

Each Applicant shall furnish only the information specifically requested, and in the format requested, when submitting required documents as described below. Do not submit unsolicited material or additional information not specifically requested as part of this NOFO.

Federal financial assistance no longer references Dun & Bradstreet assigned DUNS numbers. 2 CFR 200 now refers to using Unique Entity Identifiers (UEIs).

### D.3. STAGE I – CONCEPT PAPER PRE-APPLICATION SUBMISSION

As noted above under [Section A.5. OVERVIEW OF THE APS PROCESS](#) this is a four-stage, competitive application process for partnership formation which includes the following four stages:

- Stage I: Concept
- Stage II: Co-Creation
- Stage III: Application
- Stage IV: Award

Following are the formatting and content requirements for Stage I – Concept Paper submissions:

#### D.3.1. STAGE I – CONCEPT PAPER REQUIRED FORMAT

The applicant must submit the following documents at the prescribed page limits for the Stage I – Concept Paper Submission:

- Cover Page – (1 Page Limit);
- Organization Overview – (2 Page Limit);
- Concept Paper – (6 Page Limit); and
- Appendix – (3-5 Page Limit – see below).

A full detailed cost application is **NOT** required with the Stage I – Concept Paper submission.

The concept paper should be in 11-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced and not in excess of the page limits as stated above for each section. Applicants may submit both the Microsoft Word (required) and PDF (optional) files. **All concept papers MUST be in English and submitted electronically via email.**

*Note: If any sections of the submitted concept paper exceed the designated page limit, MCC reserves the right in its sole discretion to take any appropriate action, including, but not limited to, excluding the pages in excess of the limit and/or eliminating the applicant from consideration.*

### **D.3.2. STAGE I – CONCEPT PAPER REQUIRED CONTENT**

COVER PAGE (1 page limit) must contain the following information:

- i. Name and full address of applicant organization;
- ii. Project Title;
- iii. NOFO number (95332419N0001);
- iv. Partnership Opportunity Statement number and name (ref: [Section A.6](#));
- v. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number for the Prime;
- vi. Type of organization (e.g., for-profit, non-profit, etc.);
- vii. Point of Contact (name, position title, phone number, e-mail address);
- viii. Proposed place and period of performance;
- ix. Total budget estimate (direct and indirect), with breakdown of estimated Federal contribution and applicant cost share/matching contribution (*Note: Budget figures are only preliminary estimates at this stage*);
- x. List of proposed partners/consortium members including the contact person's name, address, phone and email; and
- xi. Signature, name and title of applicant's authorized representative.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW (no more than two (2) pages):

The Organization Overview should succinctly provide the following information about the Applicant:

- i. Introduction to the organization, its mission, structure, summary of relevant organizational experience, and qualifications of the Applicant (Prime) and proposed consortium partners (if any).
- ii. The organizational capacity, roles and responsibilities of the Applicant (Prime) and its partners to adequately manage and implement the Project with high quality and credibility; and
- iii. Applicant's consortium strategy, if applicable; and
- iv. Adherence to project local content requirements, if applicable to the specific opportunity statement.

CONCEPT PAPER (no more than six (6) pages):

The Applicant's vision for the project should be clearly described in the Concept Paper to enable MCC to distinguish the Applicant's suitability for this opportunity. The Concept Paper should therefore describe what would be done, expected target areas, and demonstrate that the Applicant has assembled a team well-suited to achieve the project outcomes within the envisioned timeline.

The Concept Paper must include:

- i. Concise title and objectives of proposed project, including the identification of country or countries of focus (if applicable).
- ii. Discussion of method of approach, amount of effort to be employed, and types of resources to be contributed by the respondent. If the Partnership Opportunity Statement has identified a compact-specific issue, then the concept paper should include a distinction between the components of the partnership that can be accomplished during the design and development stage of a compact and the components that relate or extend to the compact implementation stage.
- iii. Brief discussion of how the proposed partnership activities will contribute to enhancing MCC's ability to design, oversee, and/or measure compact programs in light of MCC's mission of poverty reduction through economic growth; this should include options for how the partnership or its results will be sustained, incorporated or scaled upon termination of MCC co-funding.
- iv. Brief discussion of why the respondent considers the proposed partnership to be particularly appropriate to meet the objectives of MCC's partnership opportunity statement.
- v. Brief discussion of any elements of the partnership concept which the respondent considers to be unique, innovative, or unusual.
- vi. Discussion of the envisioned division of roles, level of effort, responsibilities and contributions between MCC and the prospective partner organization(s); this should also cover how risk within the partnership will be divided. Please identify particular roles or non-monetary contributions expected of MCC to meet the partnership objectives.
- vii. Proposed estimated budget, including anticipated cost share and potential leverage resources.
- viii. Proposed "public purpose" to be carried out by the recipient as a result of the partnership (ref: [2 CFR 200.1 "Cooperative agreement"](#))
- ix. Any other support being requested by the respondent (e.g., funds, facilities, equipment, materials, personnel resources, etc.), based on the preliminary description of the project.

APPENDIX for STAGE I (no more than three (3) pages for an applicant *without* proposed subrecipients and five (5) pages for applications *with* subrecipients):

**Relevant past performance and past experience information (for Prime and key sub-partner organizations).** Applicants should provide at least three (3) past performance references for work over the last five (5) years on awards similar in nature or relevant to this award, preferably with U.S. government agencies, international development or donor institutions, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or the private sector.

The Government reserves the right to obtain information for use in the evaluation of past performance from any and all sources inside or outside the Government, including the references provided by the applicant.

The past performance information shall include the following matrix for each project submitted:

Award Number	Period of Performance (base and options)	Award Value
Technical POC		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Tel. Number</b>
Contractual POC		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Tel. Number</b>
Project Description:		
Relevant experience to partnership opportunity statement:		

*\*Note: **Stage II – Co-Creation** does not require the submission of any formal application documents. Therefore, the following sections continue with the formatting and content requirements for **Stage III – Application** submissions.*

#### D.4. STAGE III – TECHNICAL APPLICATION SUBMISSION FORMAT AND CONTENT (only for applicants specifically invited by MCC)

If the selection committee's review of the applicant's concept paper, and the ensuing co-creation discussions, result in a decision to request a full application, the Agreement Officer will inform the selected applicant. The technical application should reflect the scope for the partnership as discussed and agreed upon during co-creation sessions between the applicant and MCC.

If MCC requests a full application, the Applicant shall furnish the information described in this section. Stage III – Application shall be submitted in two separate parts: (a) Technical Application, including past performance, and (b) Cost/Business Application. All Stage III – Application documents must be in English and submitted electronically via email as instructed in Sections D.1 and D.2 above.

During Stage III, MCC may request that an applicant provide an oral presentation of its Technical and Business/Cost Applications to better understand the project. Details shared during the oral presentation can be used as a part of the Stage III Application Evaluation.

**DO NOT SUBMIT A FULL APPLICATION UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED TO DO SO BY THE MCC AGREEMENT OFFICER.**

##### D.4.1. STAGE III – TECHNICAL APPLICATION SUBMISSION FORMAT

The following are page limits associated with the technical application.

- Cover Page – (1 Page Limit).
- Executive Summary – (2 Page Limit).
- Technical Application – (10 Page Limit).
- Appendix (including past performance) – (30 Page Limit).

Any charts or tables included within the technical application sections will be considered against the page limits of those sections. The requirements for the technical application sections as described below are minimum requirements that must be included with the applicant's submission.

The Application should be in 11 point/Times New Roman font, single-spaced and not exceed the page limits as stated above for each application section. All required technical application documents must be submitted in both Microsoft Word (required) and PDF (optional) format.

**DO NOT SUBMIT:** Promotional literature and/or other materials regarding the Applicant as part of the technical appendices.

#### ***D.4.2. STAGE III – TECHNICAL APPLICATION REQUIRED SUBMISSION CONTENT***

STAGE III – TECHNICAL APPLICATION COVER PAGE (1 Page Limit) must contain the following information:

- i. Name and full address of applicant organization;
- ii. Project Title;
- iii. NOFO Reference Number (95332419N0001);
- iv. Name and number of applicable Partnership Opportunity Statement (ref: Section A.6);
- v. Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) (for U.S.-based Primes and sub-partners, if applicable);
- vi. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number for the Prime;<sup>5</sup>
- vii. Type of organization (e.g., for-profit, non-profit, etc.);
- viii. Point of Contact (name, position title, phone number, e-mail address);
- ix. Proposed place and period of performance;
- x. Total proposed budget (including direct and indirect expenses), with breakdown of proposed Federal contribution and applicant cost share/matching contribution;
- xi. List of proposed partners/consortium members including the contact person's name, address, phone and email; and
- xii. Signature, name and title of applicant's authorized representative.

#### **STAGE III – TECHNICAL APPLICATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2 Page Limit)**

The executive summary must summarize the applicant's final proposed vision and technical approach to achieve project outcomes; list proposed target areas; highlight work plan milestones; and convey why the Applicant's proposed team is optimally suited to lead this innovative project.

#### **STAGE III – TECHNICAL APPLICATION (10 Page Limit)**

The technical application will be the most important factor for consideration in selection of the proposed Award. The technical application should be clear, complete and concise. The application should demonstrate the Applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to the proposed Project and describe how the team proposes to achieve the Project's outcomes.

At a minimum, the application should include the components listed below:

1. Background/problem statement with expected impact
2. Explanation of partners and their expected roles, including financial and non-financial resources that will be brought to bear

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<sup>5</sup> Note that the Prime applicant must be registered and active in the System for Award Management (SAM) at the time of application submission; SAM registration can be a lengthy process and applicants are advised to allow sufficient lead time. SAM can be accessed at: <https://sam.gov/SAM/>.

3. Duration of activity and implementation schedule
4. Post-agreement phase out and/or sustainability plan
5. Proposed role of MCC and/or the in-country MCA (e.g., facilities, equipment, material, information, or personnel resources)
6. Key personnel and their contribution to the project
7. Anticipated risks and proposed mitigation strategies
8. Proposed financial management controls and systems

*LIST OF APPENDICES – STAGE III (Not included in the Technical Application page limit, but all appendix documents **when combined** are limited to a maximum of 30 pages.)*

1. Résumés for key personnel – not to exceed 3 pages for each résumé

Résumés must be in chronological order starting with most recent experience. Each résumé for the proposed Key Personnel positions (which should be clearly identified by the applicant) must be accompanied by a signed Letter of Commitment from the candidate (additional 1 page not included in 3 page limit) indicating his/her: (a) availability to serve in the stated position; (b) intention to serve for the full term of service (complete period of performance for the cooperative agreement); and (c) agreement to the compensation levels which correspond to the levels set forth in the cost application.

2. Staffing Plan

The applicant must submit an integrated staffing plan that lists all proposed positions and personnel under the Project; whether the position is full-time or part-time; and the planned person-months, days or hours each position will devote to the Project. In addition, the staffing plan must include an organizational chart that shows the structure and the relationships between positions.

While it is understood that the team may include personnel from both the Prime applicant organization and sub-partner organizations, the Applicant should demonstrate that the team is operationally integrated and works as *one* team, leveraging the respective organizational strengths and areas of expertise. The degree to which consortia have had prior opportunities to work together will be viewed favorably.

3. Organizational Qualifications and Management Plan

Management strategies and administrative approaches (e.g., plan, structure, policies and practices) proposed to accomplish the project requirements – including: (i) personnel, financial, and logistical support; (ii) the role and level of effort for staff supporting these functions; and (iii) a realistic plan for monitoring the technical and financial activities and reporting on results. The merit of the management and administrative plan will also be reviewed to ensure cost-effectiveness and timely completion of planned activities.

4. Subrecipient Information and Letters of Commitment (if applicable)

The applicant should list all proposed technical subrecipients and what role the partners have in relation to the program objectives. In addition, the consortium plan must include an organizational

chart that shows the structure, governance and the relationships between prime and sub recipients.

Each subrecipient organization must provide a signed Letter of Commitment indicating the following information for each organization: (a) availability to participate in the potential program; (b) the length of participation as it relates to the program; and (c) agreement to the budget associated with each subrecipient set forth in the cost application. The letters need to briefly state the sub-awardee's role in the project.

5. Proposed initial approach to monitoring and evaluation (2-3 pages)
6. Final Team Relevant Past Performance and Past Experience Information (Applicant and Key Partner Organizations)

Applicants should provide at least three (3) past performance references for work over the last five (5) years on awards similar in nature or relevant to the proposed award, preferably with U.S. government agencies, international development or donor institutions, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or the private sector.

If subrecipients are proposed, the applications should also include at least two (2) past performances for the sub-awardees including references, per subrecipient, performed in the last five (5) years detailing work similar in nature to that which would be envisioned for this subrecipient under the technical application.

The Applicant must include the name, recent telephone number and email address of knowledgeable customer contacts. References from institutions that have characteristics similar to MCC are preferred.

The past performance information shall be provided in the following format:

Award Number	Period of Performance (base and options)	Award Value
Technical POC		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>Tel. Number</i>
Contractual POC		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>Tel. Number</i>
Project Description:		
Relevant experience to partnership opportunity statement:		

MCC may contact references and use the past performance data regarding the organization, along with other information to evaluate the applicant's past performance. The Government reserves the right to obtain information for use in the evaluation of past performance from any and all sources inside or outside the Government.



#### D.5. STAGE III – BUSINESS/COST APPLICATION AND OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION (only for applicants invited by MCC)

The cost or business application is to be submitted under a separate cover from the Technical application. While there is no page limit for this portion, applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible. While technical criteria are paramount, cost considerations may also be a determining factor for award.

The business/cost application must include a detailed budget with major line items and an accompanying detailed budget narrative with descriptions of what the major line item resources will be used for. Cost-share resources should be distinguished from other resource contributions, including leverage resource contributions.

Applicants will have the option to request oral presentations of final technical applications in Stage III, prior to final negotiation and award.

##### **D.5.1. STAGE III – BUSINESS/COST APPLICATION REQUIRED FORMAT**

The required business/cost application documents must be submitted in PDF, Microsoft Excel and Word format as detailed below.

The following business/cost application documents are required as part of the full application submission:

- a. Standard Forms (SF-424 series) (PDF format);
- b. Detailed Line Item Budget (Microsoft Excel);
- c. Detailed Budget Narrative (Word);
- d. Information on Third-Party Leverage Funds/Resources, if applicable (Word);
- e. Other documentation as required and requested by the MCC AO.

##### **D.5.2. STAGE III – BUSINESS/COST APPLICATION CONTENT**

- a. Standard Forms (SF-424 series) (PDF format)

The business/cost application must include the following Standard Forms (SF-424 series):

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance;
- SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs; and
- SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs.

These forms can be downloaded from the following website: <https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family>.

- b. Detailed Line Item Budget (Microsoft Excel)

An overall budget for the entire proposed award period of performance should be included in the cost/business application. This budget should provide, in detail to the individual line item, a breakdown of the costs anticipated, as well as a breakdown of the overall funding between the prime and any

subrecipients (if applicable). The detailed budget must be submitted electronically as an unprotected Microsoft Excel document with open and linked formulas.

The Applicant is requested to submit an overall budget summary detailing costs by the main budget elements as well as linked detailed line item budget tabs broken out by project year. **The budget summary and yearly breakdowns must include the proposed cost share information in addition to the amounts anticipated to be funded by MCC;** additional information regarding the required Cost Share Contribution details can be found below.

c. Detailed Budget Narrative (Word)

The Applicant must submit a detailed narrative by line item which explains in detail the basis for how the individual budget line item costs were derived. The budget narrative should provide information regarding the basis of estimate for each line item, including reference to sources used to substantiate the cost estimate. The narrative must be detailed enough to identify the purpose of every cost item proposed, as well as understanding the basis for the costs, to enable MCC to determine the cost as fair and reasonable.

**Cost Share/Matching Contribution Details (information to be incorporated within items a-c)**

Cost share contributions will be reviewed as part of MCC's cost review. Information regarding the proposed cost sharing resources must be included in the SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-construction Programs submission as well as the detailed line item budget and budget narrative.

The Applicant must indicate the amount and percentage of cost-sharing resources which they are proposing to mobilize over the life of the agreement and specify the sources of such resources, and the basis of calculation in the budget narrative. In the detailed line item budget, applicants must also provide a breakdown of the cost share (financial and in-kind contributions) from the prime applicant and any proposed subrecipients. The Applicant shall provide a detailed breakout of the sources of cost share/matching contributions. This is to ensure compliance to [2 CFR 200.306\(b\)](#). Sufficient information should be provided to verify this regulatory requirement. Ultimately, the Prime Recipient is responsible for tracking and satisfying the appropriate cost share/matching requirement in accordance with type of organization noted in the paragraph below.

Applicants must identify separate detailed line items related to the applicant's portion of cost share included in the budget submission.

The accompanying budget narrative shall also include sufficient details about the cost share resources contributed to the total cost of the agreement to the extent necessary to demonstrate the feasibility and applicability of the proposed contributions to the program.

To be accepted and allowable, all cost share contributions must be:

- Verifiable in the Recipient's records;
- Incurred or earned during the period of the award;
- Not used to meet cost share requirements of any other U.S. federal program;
- Necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of the program;
- Allowable under the applicable cost principles; and

- Non-U.S. federal funds.

d. Information on Third-Party Leverage Funds/Resources, if applicable (Word)

In accordance with [Section C.3. Leverage Funding](#), MCC encourages applicants to consider providing leverage *in addition to* cost share/matching. If an Applicant proposes leverage funds/resources as part of their application, they must submit a breakdown reflecting the composition and estimated value of the resources, as well as an explanation of how the resources are expected to contribute to the program objectives. To the extent that the third-party agreements have been confirmed/solidified at the time of application submission, this section must also include letters of commitment from the proposed third-party leverage sources.

e. Other documentation as required and requested by the Agreement Officer

The cost/business application for Stage III should also include **evidence of responsibility** that the MCC Agreement Officer can use to determine that the Applicant:

1. Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the Agreement;
2. Has the ability to comply with the agreement conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the applicant, non-governmental and governmental;
3. Has a satisfactory record of performance (only a brief discussion of this issue is required in the cost/business application since past performance is an evaluation factor – the applicant may wish to discuss any notable issues regarding its record of performance that were not discussed in the technical application);
4. Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics; and
5. Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive an assistance award under applicable laws and regulations.

After submission of applications, additional evidence of responsibility documents considered necessary in order for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility may be requested. Please note that a positive responsibility determination is a requirement for award, and all organizations may be subject to a pre-award survey to verify the information provided in their application and to substantiate the determination.

#### D.6. UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER (UEI) AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (SAM)

At the time of Stage III – Application submission, each applicant is required to:

- Be registered in the U.S. Government's System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting its Stage III application (**Please allow several weeks for processing through SAM.GOV.**);
- Provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number in the full application and in the cost application (SF-424); and
- Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. To obtain information regarding the preceding, see the respective links: <https://sam.gov/SAM/> and <http://www.dnb.com>.

MCC will not make an award to an applicant that does not comply with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make an award, the agency may determine the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

**All applicants must be registered in SAM at the time of the Stage III – Application submission.**

#### D.7. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

All reasonable, allocable and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the agreement and are in accordance with applicable cost principles under [2 CFR 200 Subpart E. Cost Principles](#) may be paid under the anticipated award. Funding approved under this agreement shall be strictly used for the implementation of the agreement as approved. Award recipients will be reimbursed only for costs that benefit the program description and which are allocable, allowable and reasonable.

## E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

### E.1. APPLICATION EVALUATION REVIEW PROCESS

As noted above under [Section D. Application and Submission Information](#), applications received under this NOFO will be evaluated in a multi-stage application review process:

- Stage I: Concept Paper Submission;
- Stage II: Co-Creation Discussions;
- Stage III: Complete Application; and
- Stage IV: Award

Applicants will first submit a concept paper (Stage I). If the concept paper passes the initial merit evaluation, applicants will be notified in writing to participate in co-creation discussions (Stage II). After co-creation discussions are concluded, the applicants may be invited by MCC to submit a full application under Stage III, which may result in an award (Stage IV) after receipt, review, evaluation and negotiation of the submitted application documents. A decision not to fund an application may occur at any phase of the evaluation process.

### E.2. MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

Each Application submitted in response to this NOFO for Phases I and III will be evaluated in accordance with the merit review criteria described in this section.

#### **E.2.1. STAGE I – CONCEPT PAPER MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA:**

For the Stage I – Concept Paper review process, concept paper submissions will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis based on the merit review criteria provided below. Additional merit review criteria may be included in the Opportunity Statement ([Section A.6](#)):

##### **Factor #1: Strategic Fit**

- a) Demonstrated strategic fit and consistency with MCC Compact, Threshold, or agency objectives and goals as described in the opportunity statement.
- b) Does the proposed concept describe an activity that is likely to yield benefits to the public in the proposed country or countries of focus, or across all of MCC's program portfolio (i.e., does the proposed concept serve a public purpose)?

##### **Factor #2: Technical Approach**

- a) The degree to which the proposed technical approach and methodology can reasonably be expected to produce the intended outcomes.
- b) Level of innovation and creativity in the proposed program design and implementation.

##### **Factor #3 Organizational Capacity/Past Performance**

- a) Past experience relevant to the proposed Partnership Opportunity Statement.
- b) The applicant and subrecipients/partners have demonstrated organizational experience, and bring resources and expertise to successfully conduct and manage the project.

After the MCC selection committee reviews the Stage I – Concept Paper submissions, a pass/fail determination will be made on each Concept Paper. Best efforts will be made to notify applicants of the MCC’s decision regarding their Concept Paper within 90 days of receipt.

### ***E.2.2. STAGE III – FULL APPLICATION (BY MCC INVITATION ONLY) MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA:***

Technical applications will be evaluated on an adjectival rating scale based on the following merit review criteria:

#### ***Factor #1: Professional qualifications and experience of the proposed integrated team***

- a) Soundness and adequacy of the overall integrated staffing plan and allocation of responsibilities for key personnel to effectively and efficiently achieve partnership objectives. Visual organogram presents clear, lean and responsive organizational/partnership staffing structures to support the approach. The roles, responsibilities, forms of collaboration and lines of authority on the project team and between any sub-partners are clearly articulated.
- b) Proposed personnel qualifications and experience are clearly identified and demonstrate an ability to effectively manage the project and provide an adequate level of quality control. The proposed Key Personnel have the experience, expertise and skill sets to effectively execute their roles and responsibilities, which are relevant and appropriate for the proposed partnership approach.

#### ***Factor #2: Strategy and Technical Approach***

- a) Level of innovation and creativity in the proposed program design and implementation approach.
- b) Extent to which the proposed strategy and technical approach maximizes potential outcomes related to the objectives of MCC’s Partnership Opportunity Statement.
- c) Effectiveness of proposed timeline and approach to ensuring sustainability beyond the project end date.
- d) Feasibility of proposed MCC/MCA involvement in project implementation.
- e) Adequacy of proposed mitigation strategies for identified risks.

#### ***Factor #3: Past Performance of Proposed Team***

Demonstrated track record of high-quality performance, cost control, timeliness, and customer/donor/partner satisfaction on relevant previous projects.

### ***E.3. COST EVALUATION (STAGE III ONLY)***

While cost is generally less important than technical and is not a weighted evaluation factor, the cost applications of apparently successful applicants will be evaluated for cost effectiveness and cost realism, including the level of proposed cost share. Other considerations are the completeness of the application, adequacy of budget detail and consistency with elements of the technical application. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate adequate financial and management capability to be eligible for a responsibility determination.

**All technical merit criteria being substantially equal, an applicant that offers greater cost share and/or leverage resources will be preferred for award.**

**E.3.1 EVALUATION FOR COST EFFECTIVENESS AND COST REALISM**

MCC will review the cost/business application(s) of apparently successful Applicant(s) for Stage III for cost effectiveness (e.g., proposed budget versus proposed scope; proposed Federal versus non-Federal resources; etc.) and cost realism, as well as the following factors:

1. Allowability of Costs ([2 CFR §200.403](#))
2. Reasonable Costs ([2 CFR §200.404](#))
3. Allocable Costs ([2 CFR §200.405](#))
4. Demonstration of financial and management capability to meet a responsibility determination.

**E.4. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR AWARD (STAGES I AND III)**

During Stages I Concept Paper Merit Review and III Full Application Merit Review, the MCC Selection Committee will make recommendations to the Agreement Officer based on the merit review criteria at Section E.2 and the associated technical rankings. The Agreement Officer shall award in accordance with the rank technical order unless the application is justified to be selected out of rank order based on one or more of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding;
2. The amount/level of resource contributed by the recipient;
3. Duplicity of effort under a different program, contract, or assistance award;
4. Sustainability; and/or
5. Other program policy factors:
  - a. Alignment with MCC Compact, Threshold, or agency objectives;
  - b. Impact on beneficiaries, e.g. the public, MCC, MCA, etc.;
  - c. Timing of the award performance;
  - d. Ability of the applicant to meet the applicable requirements; and/or
  - e. Logistical concerns.

## F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### F.1. AWARD NOTICES

MCC will publish the names of and points of contact for all organizations that submit Concept Papers in the APS section of the “Partner With Us” page of [mcc.gov](https://www.mcc.gov/work-with-us/partnerships/annual-program-statement/) (<https://www.mcc.gov/work-with-us/partnerships/annual-program-statement/>). MCC will also publish the names and points of contact for all organizations that are invited to Stage II: Co-Creation.

Best efforts will be made to notify applicants of MCC’s go/no-go decision within 90 days of receipt and evaluation of compliantly submitted *Stage I – Concept Papers*. Likewise, best efforts will be made to notify applicants under *Stage III – Application* of MCC’s decision within 90 days of receipt and review of their application submission.

### F.2. QUESTION SUBMISSIONS

E-mails with questions must reference: 1) the organization’s name; and 2) the NOFO number and Opportunity Statement in the subject line of the e-mail. The submitting organization’s name, address and phone number must be included in the body of the e-mail.

Questions regarding this NOFO must be submitted in writing as outlined in [Section D.1](#) **within two weeks (14 days) of posting of each opportunity statement, unless otherwise specified in the opportunity statement** (e.g., **unless otherwise specified**, if an opportunity statement is posted on April 2, 2021, questions related to that project are due by 11:59pm on April 16, 2021). MCC will not pre-screen concept ideas or engage in pre-application discussions regarding whether a project might be a good fit; instead, applicants may ask general questions about MCC’s vision for a particular opportunity statement to help the applicant determine whether to submit a concept paper.

### F.3. PRE-AWARD RESPONSIBILITY DETERMINATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT

For organizations that are new to working with the USG and MCC and/or for organizations with outstanding audit findings, MCC may perform a pre-award survey (for Stage III only) to assess the applicant’s management and financial capabilities. In addition, MCC will conduct a risk assessment of apparently successful applicants in accordance with **2 CFR §200.206 Federal agency review of risk posed by applicants**.

Upon consideration for award or during the discussions leading to an award, applicants may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to make an affirmative or negative determination of responsibility.

Pursuant to **2 CFR §200.206 – Federal Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants** the following pre-award risk factors will be considered:

- Financial stability
- Quality of management systems
- History of performance
- Audit findings
- Ability to effectively implement the statutory, regulatory, and other requirements of federal awards



In accordance with [2 CFR §180.335](#) and [2 CFR §180.350](#), before entering into an agreement with the USG (and at any time *after* entering into an agreement, if circumstances change), the applicant must notify MCC if they know that they or any of their principals under the agreement:

- (a) Are presently excluded or disqualified [from doing business with the USG];
- (b) Have been convicted within the preceding three years of any of the offenses listed in [§180.800\(a\)](#) or had a civil judgment rendered against you for one of those offenses within that time period;
- (c) Are presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or local) with commission of any of the offenses listed in [§180.800\(a\)](#); or
- (d) Have had one or more public transactions (Federal, State, or local) terminated within the preceding three years for cause or default.

#### F.4. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

This NOFO includes in full text MCC's Standard Assistance Provisions, which will be applicable to awards issued under this announcement, as an annex for potential applicants to review prior to submitting applications for award. All awards under this NOFO will be administered by the cognizant AO for MCC and MCC's Standard Assistance Provisions will apply, unless otherwise negotiated prior to award.

In addition to the award Schedule and Program Description drafted and negotiated based on the Stage III technical and cost applications, all awards resulting from this APS will incorporate MCC's Standard Assistance Provisions (negotiated as applicable). Some awards may also incorporate specific requirements that recipients will need to comply with. These additional award-specific requirements will be identified in the award as "special award conditions."

#### F.5. PROGRAM INCOME

Program Income, per [2 CFR §200.1](#), is gross income earned by the recipient or subrecipient that is directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the Federal award during the period of performance. Program income requirements will be subject to [2 CFR §200.307](#).

#### F.6. BRANDING AND MARKING

All awards issued under this NOFO will be held to MCC's "**Provision on Public Communications and Publications under MCC-Funded Agreements**," as detailed in MCC's Standard Assistance Provisions found under Annex A of this NOFO.

#### F.7. REPORTING

Award recipients will be required to submit reporting documents in accordance with the program description and award outcomes discussed during co-creation and finalized during award negotiations. Financial reporting will be in accordance with the requirements stated in the award document.

The required reports may include, but are not limited to the following:

- An annual work plan inclusive of a monitoring and evaluation plan (M&E);
- Quarterly progress-to-date reports;
- Required federal quarterly financial reports;
- Detailed annual reports; and
- A final end-of-program report.

The work plan should be aligned with the goals of the recipient's program description and clearly map to the expected results. The recipient must submit the required reports in accordance with the requirements set forth in the final negotiated award. The timing, format and other instructions for any applicable award reports will be codified in the award document and reviewed with the recipient at the time of award.

Any federal award issued under this NOFO with a Federal share over \$500,000 over the period of performance is required to adhere to the post award reporting requirements detailed under [2 CFR 200 Appendix XII – Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters](#).

## G. FEDERAL AGENCY POINTS OF CONTACT

### G.1. EMAIL ADDRESS FOR QUESTIONS AND APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

All questions, concept papers, applications, and other related documents under this NOFO must be submitted electronically to the following email address: [apspartnerships@mcc.gov](mailto:apspartnerships@mcc.gov). Individual opportunity statements may also identify other MCC points of contact for correspondence and submissions.

### G.2. MCC APS POINTS OF CONTACT (POCs)

#### G.2.1. AGREEMENT OFFICERS (AO) FOR AWARDS RESULTING FROM THIS APS:

Jacqueline Naranjo  
Agreement Officer  
1099 14th Street NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20005  
Email: [naranjoj@mcc.gov](mailto:naranjoj@mcc.gov)  
(202) 521-2692

Taylor J. Wolf  
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Terri Tutt Daniel  
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#### G.2.2. AGREEMENT SPECIALIST POCs FOR ALL SUBMISSIONS FOR THIS NOFO:

Aster Mekonnen  
Agreement Specialist  
1099 14th Street NW, Suite 700  
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This list is subject to change.

## H. OTHER INFORMATION

### H.1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION REGARDING ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENTS AT MCC

On November 9, 2017 MCC issued an Annual Program Statement (APS) on Grants.gov under Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) No. 95332418N0002 for a period of one-year. This initial APS closed on November 8, 2018. It included six partnership opportunity statements in the original announcement, with the addition of three more added over the course of the year. The initial APS was intended to be utilized to award grants or cooperative agreements in each of the technical areas to organizations that offered promising partnership opportunities.

The APS partnership program is sponsored by MCC's Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP) and managed/facilitated by MCC's Contracts and Grants Management (CGM) division. To date, MCC has received over 50+ Concept Papers from external organizations and launched eight (8) partnerships via assistance awards issued under NOFO No. 95332418N0002. In total, over \$4.5 million of Federal funds have been awarded under the previous NOFO.

### H.2. KEY WEBSITES, APPLICABLE REFERENCES AND REGULATIONS

MCC Partner With Us Page – MCC Cooperative Agreement Opportunities:  
<https://www.mcc.gov/work-with-us/partnerships/cooperative-agreements/>

US Assistance Regulation:  
[2 CFR §200 UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS](#) is a set of authoritative rules and regulations about federal grants and cooperative agreements from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Grants.gov SF-424 Forms Page:  
<https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-family>

SF-270 *Request for Advance or Reimbursement* and SF-425 *Federal Financial Report* downloads:  
<https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/post-award-reporting-forms>

System for Award Management (SAM):  
<https://www.sam.gov/>

### H.3. REVIEW OF APPLICATION MATERIALS BY EXTERNAL PARTIES

Based on the nature of the applicable opportunity statement, it may become necessary/appropriate during the course of the evaluation process to share an applicant's concept paper and/or full application with MCC's country-level counterparts (i.e., MCA employees and/or contractors). It should be noted that these individuals are neither USG employees, nor personal services contractors (PSCs) contracted by MCC. As such, MCC does not request/require these external parties to sign confidentiality agreements given that MCC cannot enforce them.

Applicants must clearly note **on the cover page of their concept papers and/or applications** if they object to MCC's sharing of their application materials with these outside parties. In the absence of such

a statement on the cover page of the submission, MCC will assume that the applicant has no objection to the sharing of their application materials with MCC's in-country counterparts on a need-to-know basis.

#### H.4. DISCLAIMERS TO APPLICANTS

- a. The MCC Agreement Officer is the only authorized individual to obligate USG funds.
- b. The issuance of this APS does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of MCC, nor does it commit MCC to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a concept paper or application, or to participate in co-creation discussions. MCC reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.
- c. It is the applicant's responsibility to identify proprietary information included in their application submission which requires protection.

#### H.5. CLOSED PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENTS (*not currently open for applications*)

##### **H.5.1 PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #1**

#### **Empowering African Women through Data Skills Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED**

A key priority for MCC is to advance the standing, inclusion and economic prospects for women in partner countries. Because of historical and cultural inequities, however, technology and its benefits skew away from providing opportunities for women. In alignment with MCC's priority, the MCC-PEPFAR Partnership (working as Data Collaboratives for Local Impact, DCLI) has focused on methods to spur the development of technical and practical capabilities of women to analyze and use data, as well as advocating for the availability of better data about women, their circumstances, and their economic contributions.

As seen in the recently-published letter by Bill and Melinda Gates, for the world's marginalized women, digital connectivity, access to, and use of information can transform women's lives. In addition, by 2040, it is estimated that 90 percent of jobs globally will require some level of data use and there are at least 30 percent fewer women with such skills in the world. There is therefore a growing interest from private-sector firms, NGOs and multi-lateral organizations to cultivate greater participation of women in data analytics, visualization and data science. Data use can help empower women economically by enabling them to make better decisions – and by preparing them with skills that are increasingly needed in the global digital economy.

MCC is looking for co-funders and consortia to blend resources and work jointly on the enabling the use of data by and for women's empowerment in partner countries, and initially in Côte d'Ivoire and Lesotho. The "use of data" in this context pertains to a broad spectrum of activities from simple numeracy and data literacy to data preparation, visualization, and complex data analytics and data science, irrespective of sectors since the tools and methods to process and analyze data at each level are transferable. Examples of constraints that need to be addressed for more women to join the data revolution include: insufficient access by women to digital tools and platforms (cell phones, computers, internet), insufficient access to different categories of training, certification program and/or specialized degree-granting programs to mainstream data and tech use – and last but not least, concerted efforts to

support female role models at every level so that young girls take an interest in numeracy, coding, programming, statistics, and data science.

While different ideas are welcome, this opportunity statement is a mechanism by which MCC and the DCLI program can contribute to or match resources to augment women's economic empowerment through access to and use of data. One specific need is in Côte d'Ivoire, where DCLI's partner, Sejen-Cl, is working on extending the use of data science to women and youth with whom to design and launch an annual convening ("Women in Data Science" conference) of female practitioners engaged in data analytics and data science. It is intended as means to spur interest in this field, enable networking and encourage youth to pursue degrees and training in data analytics, statistics and data science. Another area of need is in Lesotho, where MCC is in the process of developing a compact and where there is an interest in partners who can contribute to testing approaches to women's economic empowerment through digital financial inclusion.

Partnerships would be based upon mutual contribution and benefit, while also seeking to leverage third-party funds and/or capabilities. In particular, partners that can contribute the following will be of interest:

- Funders (foundations, governments, or other development organizations) that have an interest in building the skills that women will need to access jobs or to use data generally or in specific sectors; and which may be willing to contribute technical expertise or scaling grants toward this effort.
- Private-sector companies or academic / research institutions which have resources or capabilities to contribute to expanding opportunities for women in Africa through data, and tech skills - and which are willing to support the development of these capabilities through contributions of grants, equipment and/or tools.
- Governments, private-sector companies, NGOs, or consortia which can make available significant data sets, or which have innovative or advanced processing or analytical capabilities.

MCC, as a partner, has the potential to provide seed funding, to be augmented or matched by partner organizations; to share innovations and small scale efforts that are in need of scaling; to provide expertise in gender-related analyses; and to manage political and cultural connections with partner countries. MCC will be interested to evaluate and launch partnerships for the empowerment of women in the 2019 calendar year and beyond.

## ***H.5.2. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #2***

### ***Environmental Economics Partnership Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED***

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is seeking a partnership to enhance analytical capabilities in various subfields of environmental and natural resource economics, including water resources, natural resource accounting, and climate change. The wide array of research findings, experiential knowledge, and analytical and empirical tools in these subject matter areas has expanded dramatically in recent years. Such resources include geospatial data, analytical frameworks and models, computing and communications technologies, and algorithms.

MCC's investments in its partner countries have included infrastructure, water resource development, sanitation, and agricultural enhancement projects. In addition to such investments, MCC also supports

its partners with institutional and policy reforms to achieve more efficient resource use. Given the types of projects and reforms in which MCC commonly invests, MCC wishes to partner to more effectively access cross-disciplinary advances in modeling climate impacts and ecosystems services benefits. MCC seeks, moreover, to more systematically integrate these considerations in the agency's project assessment methods and economic analyses while contributing to the broader advancement of environmental economics in international development.

Illustrative areas in which MCC seeks a technical partner or set of partners include the following:

- Approaches to incorporating climate change and variability into cost-benefit analysis (CBA), including modeling of potential changes in both mean conditions and extreme events, conceptualizing and quantifying country-level co-benefits of climate change mitigation measures, economic valuation of resilience-enhancing investments, and the use of sensitivity analysis to characterize and assess outcomes of extreme events;
- Frameworks and data to integrate alternative approaches to environmental accounting into project design and cost-benefit analysis (CBA), potentially including cost and benefit flows from impacts on natural capital and ecosystem services; the underlying natural science phenomena and biogeophysical data that underlie many social science questions in these subject areas may also be of interest in the context of integrated and cross-disciplinary modeling frameworks;
- Frameworks for valuing and weighing tradeoffs among alternative uses of water for productive and household uses; and
- Economic analysis to support decision making under uncertainty and risk, including insights from the behavioral sciences on conceptualizing, communicating, and managing risks.

MCC seeks partners having social and natural science expertise that may be tailored and applied to problems such as those above. We are particularly interested in working with nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, development assistance agencies, or firms working on similar international development challenges who can bring to the challenges expertise and knowledge in aspects of environmental economics and convene a range of other actors to develop viable tools.

A partnership is best-suited as a foundation for this collaboration for the following reasons:

- Typical problems in this area present a high level of complexity and ambiguity; the causal logic connecting these problems with their root causes tends to only gradually become apparent in the course of MCC's engagement with the partners and the shared project context.
- The volatile and unpredictable environments in which MCC works require flexibility in approach and action, including the ability to draw on diverse types of expertise.
- Environmental economics is a relatively young and evolving field in which diverse actors possess specialized expertise and modeling experience; significant advances might be achieved through cross-learning and collaboration on shared projects.

These features necessitate an agile approach to the collaboration offered by a partnership, under which various actors bring diverse resources and expertise and co-design and co-implement a shared effort. MCC would bring to such partnership use cases for designing and implementing cost-effective projects using evidence-based approaches; complementary skills, knowledge, and expertise in planning and implementing development assistance; access to project sites, implementing partners, other relevant contacts, data, and co-funding. MCC's roles may include participation in problem identification and analysis, research design, planning and execution of fieldwork (including data collection), data analysis, and drafting and presenting results for target countries and other development actors.

In the context of a particular problem or issue, MCC would collaborate with potential partner(s) to develop work plans and identify specific outputs for use by MCC and its country partners or for the broader development community. Such outputs may primarily inform selection, design, or implementation of a particular project within a partner country or, alternatively, aim to develop or

adapt more broadly-applicable analytical frameworks, models, and methods for application to a range of current and future MCC investments.

The following MCC partner countries are of particular interest as potential settings in which to develop, test, and apply frameworks and models:

- In **Tunisia**, MCC is seeking to refine its approaches to incorporating climate change into cost-benefit analysis (CBA), conceptualizing and quantifying country-level co-benefits of climate change mitigation measures, and using sensitivity analysis to characterize and assess outcomes of extreme events. Additionally, MCC is aiming to quantify the economic benefits of reducing groundwater overexploitation. Beyond country-level insights, this work may also advance understanding and practice in select subfields of environmental and natural resource economics.
- **Lesotho** is in the early stages of developing a compact with MCC, including an Integrated Land and Catchment Management Project. This Project includes quantifying benefit streams associated with maintaining ecosystem services in the catchments, evaluating trade-offs with different development scenarios in the catchment given the projected impact of climate change, and ultimately, evaluating the potential for ecosystems services payments to be self-sustaining.
- In **Mongolia**, the potential for climate change to increase water scarcity is likely to affect groundwater recharge rates and surface water flows. MCC wishes to better understand the implications of these changes for the operation and sustainability of its planned investments in wells and a wastewater recycling facility.
- **Nepal** is using geospatial information systems to identify and analyze the land-use trade-offs entailed in planning rights-of-way for power transmission lines. The investment analysis needs to balance costs and benefits, appropriately accounting for environmental/ecosystem impacts and potentially sensitive social needs.

The anticipated timeframe for the partnership(s) is three years with the potential for extension up to a maximum of five years total.

### ***H.5.3. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #3***

#### **Women's Entrepreneurship Partnerships Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED**

Women's economic empowerment leads to healthier economies, increased household incomes, and a more dynamic business environment. MCC's Gender Policy, first adopted in 2006, recognizes the contributions that gender equality can make to achieving MCC's mission to reduce poverty through economic growth. MCC has a corporate priority around women's economic empowerment, which includes a focus on entrepreneurship and financial inclusion. MCC is currently developing compacts in Lesotho, Tunisia and Timor-Leste. All three have identified barriers to women's economic empowerment and seek to promote sustainable women's entrepreneurship as part of their approach to promoting economic growth and poverty reduction.

Women face multiple, inter-related constraints in starting and growing businesses, and successful interventions may need to address barriers ranging from human capital and financial capital, to laws and markets, to socio-cultural and psycho-social factors. Evaluations have shown how different factors are of greater or lesser importance or interact in different ways in different countries. They have also shown that approaches to promoting entrepreneurship and financial inclusion have succeeded or failed depending upon components and contexts.



MCC seeks partners interested in working with us to help MCC successfully and sustainably address the barriers to women's (and ideally youth) entrepreneurship and sustainable business growth in compact countries, starting with Lesotho, Tunisia and Timor-Leste. In these countries, MCC has or will have initial analysis on barriers to women's (and ideally youth) entrepreneurship, and some additional analytical work could be needed. In Lesotho and Timor-Leste, the focus is on micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), including existing enterprises and start-ups with potential. In Tunisia, the focus is on helping growth-oriented entrepreneurs scale their businesses.

MCC would like to work in partnership to adapt and test models and tools in Lesotho, Timor-Leste and potentially Tunisia, contributing to MCC's due diligence in the development of interventions. MCC is interested in testing options for interventions that could, through subsequent activity, be scaled up and evaluated at a later stage of the compact. Ideally, impact evaluation planning would also be part of this due diligence work so that the work can contribute to a broader learning agenda. This might include economic analysis to estimate ex-ante and ex-poste the benefits to individuals and households from interventions. MCC would then be interested in using this experience to refine the framework, tools, etc. for countries beyond the three included here.

Interventions of interest to be considered by partners and MCC may include training, mentoring, coaching, and acceleration programs, financial inclusion, and other approaches that respond to the contexts and address policy and institutional constraints to women's entrepreneurship. MCC is looking for partners with a strong record of clearly demonstrated, rigorous experience in this field, including not only analytical work but also strong business tools and models and demonstrated successful project development and implementation experience.

MCC is interested in partners who can bring an evidence-based framework, strategies, operational tools, proven implementation tools and approaches and methodologies and work with MCC to apply or adapt them to the MCC model and context, resulting in strong programmatic approaches and evaluations. For partners, this is an opportunity to apply approaches and ideas to address critical issues in MCC countries.

MCC expects to work collaboratively and co-creatively with qualified applicants to co-design partnership activities that leverage the unique capabilities of each organization and that achieve outcomes around aligned goals. Applicants may address one or more of the themes cited above in their applications. The partnership duration will be determined in co-creation but is anticipated for a period of one year.

#### ***H.5.4. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #4***

##### **Collaborative for Data Science in Africa Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED**

MCC program experience (in Côte d'Ivoire, Lesotho, and Togo, amongst others) and our partnership with PEPFAR (working as Data Collaboratives for Local Impact, DCLI) continue to show that there are insufficient data skills and an insufficient data culture to support a healthy data ecosystem in many of our partner countries. This constraint limits the potential for greater country participation in decision-making in the development, implementation and sustainability of our investments. Nonetheless, there are signs of progress:

- In Côte d'Ivoire, the local National Statistics School (ENSEA), ORANGE and the Ivorian Polytechnic Institute (INPHB) developed a Master's degree in Data Science and an MCC-

PEPFAR DCLI Investment in data fellows with our partners Sejen CI and Des Chiffres et des Jeunes are creating a center of capacity building in data science.

- In Tanzania, DCLI investments have led to the establishment the Tanzania Data Lab, a Tanzanian NGO that is building the capacity to analyze, visualize and use data for development; the Lab has also partnered with the University of Dar es Salaam and the University of Virginia Data Science Institute to launch a Master's in Data Science.
- In Kenya, efforts are underway to launch a hub for virtual data use training.

There is an urgent need to connect these emerging efforts to empower country-based stakeholders to become greater protagonists in their own development through the use of data for decision-making at all levels. At the same time, these efforts could greatly benefit from financial, technical and organizational contributions of organizations, companies or academic institutions involved in building data cultures and data science skills in the United States and/or globally.

MCC is looking for partners that would be interested in enabling greater collaboration among emerging data science training efforts and centers in Africa, such as the Tanzania Data Lab, the Sejen Virtual Lab in Côte d'Ivoire, a similar such center being considered in Lesotho, and the Kenyan data hub amongst others. Specifically, the partnership would seek to leverage third-party funds, resources of intangible value and/or capabilities to support collaboration amongst these centers of data skill-building, standardize the technology (systems, telepresence capabilities) approaches and/or curriculum to help optimize cost and efficiency of training, scale these efforts by supporting or seeding additional locations of data skill-building in strategic locations, and ensure social inclusion. As data supply, technology, mobile assets continue to increase, this partnership would provide a much needed coordination and scaling of efforts to build a data culture and data science skills in Africa. Specifically, the following kinds of partners would be of greater interest:

- 1) Academic institution with significant data science programs and seeking to support (in-kind, expertise and/or funding) the establishment of data science training in Africa.
- 2) Private sector IT and/or technology companies seeking to expand business in Africa as part of longer term strategy; and therefore willing to support (through funding, equipment and/or technical expertise) efforts to build country-based or regional data culture and skills.
- 3) Foundations or NGOs interested in contributing grants to connect and scale ongoing efforts to empower youth through education in data science as a means of preparing them for opportunities of the future.

Ideally, MCC would want to launch this partnership in the 2019 calendar year. This partnership is one of the several sustainability strategies of the DCLI program – but would also (through its regional effort to build data science skills among key stakeholders in Africa) contribute to sustaining MCC program efforts in partner countries in the region, particularly where those involve building greater use of data for decision making (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire, Lesotho, Togo).

The partnership duration will be determined in co-creation but is anticipated for a period of year.

#### **H.5.5. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #5**

**Geospatial and Earth-Observation Analyses for Africa  
Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED**

Rapidly improving capabilities to process and analyze geospatial and earth-observation data, coupled with opening of significant data sets, have set the stage for important advancements in the use of this data for making better development decisions and driving economic outcomes. MCC has the opportunity to participate in these advancements and to use them to enhance its work by being open to partnering with those already working in this space, and to providing some co-funding for these opportunities.

Time-series earth-observation analyses are most beneficial to environmental and readily-observable situations. For MCC, this includes areas such as agriculture, land management, roads and other transportation networks, and water and integrated catchment management. Compact development and project implementation decisions, as well as monitoring and evaluation of these activities, could all be well-served, and potentially revolutionized, through use of these new data sets and processing methods. Working with partner country counterparts to understand the results of data analyses, and the related environmental and social impacts, presents the potential for greater participation in decision making. Executing on a priority of improving data use in partner countries, and informed by its already-established connections through the MCC-PEPFAR Partnership (working as Data Collaboratives for Local Impact, DCLI), MCC would like to establish one or more partnerships to improve innovative use of earth-observation and geospatial data to support priorities in African partner countries such as Côte d'Ivoire or Lesotho.

MCC is interested in collaborating with partners to put to use earth-observation and geospatial data sets, as a way to innovate the methods used by the agency and its partner countries. These partnerships would be based upon mutual contribution and benefit. In particular, partners that can contribute the following will be of interest:

- Governments, private-sector companies, NGOs, or consortia which can make available significant data sets, or which have innovative or advanced processing or analytical capabilities.
- Private-sector companies or academic / research institutions which may be interested to expand their reach in Africa as part of a longer-term strategy, and which are therefore willing to support the development of partner-country capabilities in earth-observation or geospatial analysis.
- Foundations, governments, or other development organizations which have an interest in either the greater use of geospatial or earth-observation data; or in potentially-affected development sectors; and which may be willing to contribute facilitation or scaling grants toward this effort.

MCC, as a partner, has the potential to provide some funding, to be augmented or matched by partner organizations; to put new technologies or methods to use in decision-making for development projects; and to manage political and cultural connections with partner countries.

MCC will be interested to evaluate and launch geospatial and earth-observation partnerships in the 2019 calendar year. These partnerships can contribute to enhancing the way MCC partner countries develop, implement, monitor and evaluate projects, based on improved analytical information.

#### ***H.5.6. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #6***

##### **Strengthening Evidence and Economic Modeling Partnership**

**Concept Paper Due Date: CLOSED**

MCC faces a demanding, yet opportune challenge: In order to effectively implement its core methodology – evidence-driven decision making – it must continually absorb and apply a burgeoning body of external evaluation and scientific evidence to inform and improve its investment decisions. MCC is recognized for its analytic rigor and the quality and adaptability of its program development around the use of rigorous evidence-driven design and decision making. This has been a key factor in generating bipartisan political support and in building a strong reputation among other development agencies and think tanks engaged in international development. The question ‘What works in economic development’ is a constant quest of the agency. MCC allocates 3% to 5% of compact funding to M&E and is committed to remaining current and innovative in the field.

However, since MCC’s founding, the global practice of rigorous program evaluation has expanded dramatically, both in terms of enhanced evaluation methods and data collection modalities, and in terms of the generalizable evidence that can and should inform MCC’s investment decisions. Since MCC’s small size limits its internal capacity to keep abreast of and internalize these rapidly evolving external developments, it must continually partner with organizations that are actively expanding the frontiers of the practical knowledge and the professional literature and use these partnerships to take stock of cross-cutting work drawn from evaluations, research and contexts well beyond MCC’s immediate field of focus. Partnering with one or more leading institutions to provide real-time engagement on available evidence and expertise (such as systematic reviews, compilation of relevant literature, application of new, but proven analytic tools and evidence, as well as ongoing engagement with thought leaders in the field) and drawing on such a partnership to gain access to an international network of experts in evaluation and applied development economics, will serve to raise the quality and quantity of evidence used to inform MCC’s evaluation and investment practices in a low cost effective manner. Such a partnership with these experts is critical to ensure that economic modelling, project design, and evaluation approaches remain at the cutting edge of development science and help to sustain MCC’s strong reputation for high quality, evidence-driven decision making.

The partnership has multiple aims, corresponding to the multiple uses of evidence in MCC:

- Develop a low-cost and demand-driven pathway for evaluators and economists to access available repositories of rigorous impact evaluation and related scientific evidence.
- Potentially support development of new, systematic reviews (synthesis of existing rigorous, attributable evidence on impact) of interventions for which MCC is considering or implementing development interventions.
- Support for specific initiative to compile systematic review evidence (impact evaluation and non-impact evaluation) on topics of special interest to MCC, including but not limited to women’s economic empowerment –especially women’s access to finance, women in the workforce (formal and informal), women in the productive use of energy/electricity -- for use in MCC operations and policy & evaluation departments.
- Facilitate MCC’s development of an external peer review network for MCC evaluation designs and economic modelling practices for MCC interventions under compact preparation, implementation, and close-out.
- Develop an external network for access to ‘just in time’ technical expertise on survey design, evaluation design, and economic modelling to support greater evidence driven practices in MCC.

- Upstream assistance on program logic and evidential underpinnings for upstream assessment of evaluability during compact and threshold program development.
- Support MCC's ability to engage with and learn from cutting-edge or new (to MCC) evaluation methodologies (e.g. big data applications for geo-spatial geographic information system [GIS] analysis, analysis of telephony and info impact analysis, etc.).

This partnership would offer a range of opportunities for MCC and partner agencies to jointly engage in applied learning and influence practice in real-time, drawing on the cumulative experience in applied development economics that has grown dramatically over the past decade. MCC's expanding portfolio of operations, soon to include regional integration initiatives, offers a rich opportunity set to test economic logic, measure impact, and to innovate for results. We envision the partnership to include direct engagement with economists early in program development, and with evaluators through the Evaluation Management Committees (EMCs), as these are constituted along the compact development path, to bring external expertise into program design, drawing on a rich network of global expertise relevant to the countries and interventions MCC supports.

Partnering agencies would be committed to expanding the use and learning from rigorous evaluation evidence, and to find additional partners in innovation, including in directions that MCC is pushing, to integration policy and institutional reform into program logic and evaluation more systematically.

The partnership is envisioned to be for two years in this initial phase and ideally launched toward the end of 2019 as new compacts and threshold programs approved in 2018 gain sufficient clarity to constitute EMCs and draw on such expertise and weigh design alternatives. This partnership opportunity is expected to be most relevant for the following countries: Indonesia, Ethiopia and Malawi.

#### ***H.5.7. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #7***

##### **Fiscal Analysis Partnership Concept Paper Due Date: Closed**

MCC's mission is "Poverty Reduction through Growth." The analytic tools that MCC deploys to advance its mission focus on relaxing the binding constraints on growth, promoting efficiency through rigorous cost-benefit analysis, and achieving a required minimum rate of return. However, absent from MCC's standard analysis is a thorough understanding of how public policy helps to translate growth through fiscal policy mechanisms into poverty reduction.

Fiscal policy is the most powerful tool democratic governments have to reduce poverty through growth. Through this tool, governments determine how much firms and households contribute to revenue; how to allocate expenditures to support public services such as education, health or infrastructure; and how to support transfer programs to achieve social objectives, research and development and the stimulation of private investment. Historically, MCC has not incorporated distributional impact into early analysis and decision making as compacts are designed. However, MCC recognizes that distributional outcomes at the household level are important to addressing both poverty reduction and growth objectives. Increased capacity to model fiscal performance, measure how progressive or regressive it is, and understand which policy levers improve distribution and reduce poverty without creating costly distortions would better inform project design to contribute to MCC's mission of poverty reduction through growth.

Through partnership, MCC's Economic Analysis division aims to (1) analyze the effects of public expenditure and revenue mobilization across income levels so that consideration of inclusiveness and poverty reduction potential can be better integrated into early project development; (2) investigate opportunities to further disaggregate analysis of effects by region, gender, and other population characteristics to better inform decision making in project design and policy choice; (3) incorporate these analyses during the project development process to ensure economic growth driven by investments is pro-poor, inclusive, and promotes gender equity; and (4) expand learning opportunities across the development community regarding incidence analysis and the impact of policy design on development outcomes.

To achieve this, MCC seeks to partner with non-governmental or academic institutions that have specialized capacity and expertise with developing and deploying advanced tools for fiscal analysis in low and lower-middle income countries. MCC would bring to the partnership the presence, funding, and business model for application of innovative fiscal incidence analysis to inform rigorous design of development investments in lower and lower-middle income partner countries. MCC would expect partners to bring to the partnership cost share, capacity to support fiscal monitoring and apply state of the art modelling on fiscal incidence analysis, and the ability to facilitate peer review, to provide 'just in time' expertise needs, and to undertake new technical review support for application of the fiscal modelling tools.

Together, MCC and the selected partner(s) would develop fiscal analysis models for new selected countries MCC is currently working with and potentially for countries where the program design is still in early stages and where fiscal analysis could prove to be a valuable instrument for compact design. Some of these countries may already have 'off the shelf' fiscal models available for use, while others may require more bottom-up design and build out together with the identified partner. Given that MCC selects new partner countries each December, it would be valuable to have capacity in place to support MCC's Constraints to Growth Analysis (typically performed during the first 4 months after country selection) and Root Cause Analysis (typically performed 3 to 4 months thereafter) for newly selected countries in 2021. MCC partner countries with analysis underway (e.g., Kenya, Mozambique, Indonesia) can be more flexibly approached with more targeted fiscal analysis appropriate to later stages of analysis. The types of analysis expected may include analysis of the distributional impact of specific tariffs, taxes, or policy changes planned in compact design (e.g. power sector, water and sanitation, business environment reform, etc.).

MCC has a strong reputation for rigor, staff skilled in economic analysis and applied evaluation management, diverse geographical presence, and deployment of survey instruments and economic modelling that requires strong evidence to underpin its credibility. The partnership will bring this international expertise in fiscal analysis together with the deep analysis MCC does in newly selected countries to model fiscal performance, measure how progressive or regressive it is, and understand which policy levers improve distribution and reduce poverty without creating costly distortions to contribute to MCC's mission to reduce poverty through economic growth.

#### ***H.5.8. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #8***

**Community Engagement to Achieve Social License  
Agreements with Tourism Investors in the Solomon Islands  
Concept Paper Due Date: Closed**



The Government of the United States of America, via the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), and the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) expect to sign a Threshold Program Grant Agreement in 2021 totaling US \$23 million to support a 4-year policy and institutional reform program that leads to a reduction in poverty through economic growth. The 4-year timeline for the Threshold program is expected to begin in 2021. Using this Partnership Opportunity Statement, MCC seeks partners (henceforth referred to as the “Community Engagement Partner”) with which to collaborate and jointly define and implement an approach to achieve the Community Engagement objectives of the Solomon Islands Threshold Program, Accessing Land for Tourism Investment Facilitation (ALTIF) Project, Land Identification and Establishment of Social License Activity, as described herein.

### ***Background and Context***

After completing a Constraints to Growth Assessment in 2019, SIG and MCC identified two sectors as vital to economic growth in Solomon Islands: the tourism sector and the forestry sector. The Solomon Islands Threshold Program consists of projects in these two key sectors: The Accessing Land for Tourism Investment Facilitation (ALTIF) Project and the Forest Value Enhancement Project (FoVEP). Organizations interested in this Community Engagement Partner opportunity are encouraged to review materials from [MCC’s Solomon Islands Threshold Program Industry Day](#), which was held virtually on February 24, 2021. The Industry Day materials include more information about these two projects and the roles of other implementing partners that will support these projects.

The ALTIF project seeks to improve access to land to stimulate new investments and develop government capacity to solve related problems. ALTIF has three activities: 1) Land Identification and Establishment of Social License; 2) Investment Facilitation; and 3) Facilitated Governance Reform. The expected results and public goods created by ALTIF include the conclusion of at least one new tourism investment (3-to-4-star accommodation/resort), new employment opportunities for community members nearby tourism investment sites, and increased capacity of SIG officials to attract investment and resolve problems that slow the investment flow into Solomon Islands.

Access to land for investment is a constraint to economic growth in Solomon Islands. Investors require the certainty afforded by registered (non-customary) land to realize an investment. Currently, only 13 percent of land in Solomon Islands is registered; the vast majority of land is held informally under a customary tenure regime resulting in few parcels being available to investors. Even registered land that might be available often has poor tenure security. While title to registered land may seem clear on its face, historical interests in land by local communities often causes disputes over land and frequent court challenges to titles. The resulting uncertainty over land tenure discourages investment in land and stifles economic activity.

**Social License** is an indigenous community's acceptance of an investor using nearby land as legitimate. Often social license includes sharing of benefits from the investment with the community members.

To ensure successful and lasting investment outcomes, an investor and the local community must reach an understanding that an investor’s occupation of nearby land is legitimate and can provide the community and its members with certain benefits that encourage support for and cooperation with the investor. This win/win scenario is the essence of social license and, despite the presence of a formal title for a registered land parcel, is needed to establish the land tenure security required for an investor to occupy and invest in land in Solomon Islands.

The ALTIF project seeks to address the land constraint by focusing the Land Identification Activity on identifying registered land parcels whose title holders are interested in leasing land to tourism investors and then working with the investors to secure access to that land through long-term lease and social license agreement with the nearby community.

A Public International Organization (PIO), with whom MCC seeks to work as an implementing partner of ALTIF via a process outside the scope of this APS opportunity, has completed the initial land identification work in Solomon Islands. By the start of the ALTIF, a number of registered land parcels in the Western Province should be screened and ready for marketing to potential investors. This will require various ALTIF implementing partners, including the Community Engagement Partner (see “Program Activities and Implementation & Evaluation Partners” diagram below) to coordinate engagement with the investor, title holder, and community to secure a lease agreement for the land between the investor and the title holder and an agreement on social license between the investor and the community, along with other agreements necessary to realize any investment. The PIO will work with the investor (and land title holder) on social license. The Community Engagement Partner will work with the community to secure social license. MCC and SIG will work with both the PIO and Community Engagement Partner to ensure that the outreach and messaging to the investor, title holder, and community related to social license is consistent and aligned. Finally, as needed the Community Engagement Partner will be expected to conduct proactive communications relevant to the project activities and to cooperate with other implementing partners to deliver a uniform message to the public and target audiences on key issues.

MCC will consider expanding this work to other geographic areas contingent on SIG providing MCC with a business case and economic justification that a new tourism investment in areas outside of Western Province can be economically viable and stimulate tourism investment, economic growth, and jobs for the community.

### ***Partnership Scope***

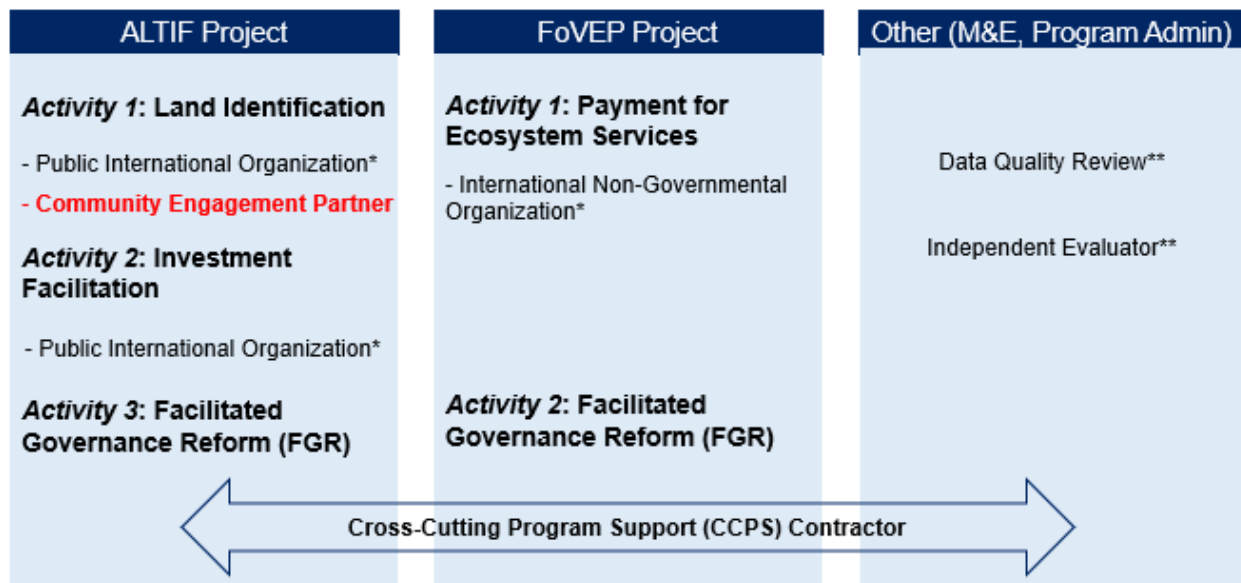
Achieving and maintaining agreements between an investor and community around social license is critical to the viability of any tourism investment in Solomon Islands; without agreement on social license that is long lasting and built on trust, no tourism investment will be viable. Social license cannot be considered a one-off agreement between the parties, rather it is an ongoing relationship of trust and support between the parties that must be nurtured for it to last. For this reason, the Community Engagement Partner must develop a detailed understanding of each community with which it works and use that understanding to set appropriate expectations with the community leadership and members for the benefits that may come from long-term cooperation with a tourism investor/operator. The Community Engagement Partner should expect to provide initial information and preliminary consultations to one or more communities around each of the 10-15 parcels targeted for investment promotion by the SIG. The Community Engagement partner will more deeply engage with a community(ies) once a tourism investor(s) expresses interest in a specific land parcel(s). MCC expects that several tourism investors will investigate opportunities around targeted land parcels and that ALTIF will conclude at least one tourism investment agreement resulting in a new 3- to 4-star accommodation. The Community Engagement Partner is expected to support the community throughout the process of reaching an agreement on social license with a potential investor, helping the community to document any agreements (e.g., meeting minutes, Memorandum of Understanding, or other forms) and to put in place appropriate monitoring structures to ensure the investor and community follow the agreement and any benefits agreed upon are shared with the community and its members. This work should include a focus on gender and social inclusion and community governance such that decisions around social license



are made inclusively and any benefits from social license agreements are shared equitably among community members. The Community Engagement Partner will also work directly with SIG officials (Ministry of Culture and Tourism) when engaging with communities, partly to provide the Community Engagement Partner with legitimacy and partly to build capacity of the SIG to social license with tourism investors.

Cooperation between the Community Engagement Partner and other ALTIF implementing partners will be important. The chart below (first column) shows the three ALTIF implementing partners: a Public International Organization (PIO); the Community Engagement Partner; and the Cross-Cutting Support Services Contractor. These three organizations must cooperate closely with each other, MCC, and the Solomon Islands Government to achieve the objectives of the ALTIF project. For the Community Engagement Partner, cooperation and coordination with the PIO is of primary importance, as the PIO will handle the investor-facing aspects related to the land identification activity while the Community Engagement Partner will handle the community-facing aspects of that activity, requiring close coordination on work plans and messages delivered to the investors and communities. The Community Engagement Partner will cooperate with the CCPS Contractor on Facilitated Governance Reform activities by reporting to the Tourism Investment Task Force on progress on social license agreements and providing inputs as the Task Force identifies problems related to community engagement and establishment of social license that need resolution.

#### Program Activities and Implementation & Evaluation Partners



Using a partnership to design and implement the Community Engagement sub-activity, MCC seeks to:

- 1) Provide information to communities in Solomon Islands that are located nearby registered land parcels targeted for tourism investment about opportunities for cooperation with tourism investors and reaching agreements on social license for use of land;
- 2) Help set reasonable expectations and advise communities as they engage in discussions around social license with potential tourism investors;

- 3) Build the capacity of community members to engage in participative and inclusive ways with potential investors, and
- 4) With prior MCC written approval, in limited cases, facilitate and assist a community to formalize its rights to land held under a customary regime such that an investor and community can reach agreement on social license.

The Community Engagement Partner should bring to the partnership the local knowledge and experience in dealing with indigenous communities to achieve social license agreements and MCC will bring funding and material resources to support social license arrangements between an investor and community around at least one targeted investment site. MCC will also facilitate coordination with SIG entities. Together the Community Engagement Partner and MCC will collaborate in documenting lessons learned around the importance of social license and successful approaches to achieve and maintain social license. MCC recognizes that to reach an agreement on social license around one site, the Community Engagement Partner may have to work with several communities at varying levels of engagement around the estimated 10-15 parcels targeted for investment promotion and in which tourism investors express interest.

The Concept Paper submitted in response to this Opportunity Statement should address the following issues:

- 1) The Applicant's approach to working with communities to reach agreement around social license with a tourism investor. The Applicant should describe how its team will develop a detailed understanding of each community, as community dynamics, social relations, and governance structures vary greatly depending on location. MCC prioritizes the need for a locally driven approach to reaching agreement around social license. Furthermore, the Applicant should describe how its approach will assess gender dynamics in local communities, including risks related to gender based violence and trafficking in persons, and how it will facilitate ways to mitigate those risks.
- 2) The Applicant should describe how it proposes to cooperate and coordinate with the SIG and MCC, as well as the implementing partners -- the PIO which will handle investor facing aspects of the land identification activity, and the Cross Cutting Program Support Contractor, which is responsible for the Facilitated Governance Reform Activity -- to achieve the objectives of the Project, including building SIG capacity to replicate the social license related tasks in the future.
- 3) The Applicant should describe its team's experience with social license issues and how it's team will use this experience to achieve the stated objectives. The Applicant should demonstrate successful past performance in development contexts similar to the Solomon Islands.

The period of performance for this partnership is expected to be approximately October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2025.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

THE FOLLOWING STAGE 1 CONCEPT NOTE REVIEW CRITERIA WILL BE UTILIZED FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY IN ADDITION TO THE STANDARD APS CONCEPT NOTE REVIEW CRITERIA FOUND UNDER [SUBSECTION E.2.1 – STAGE I – CONCEPT PAPER MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA](#) STATED BELOW UNDER [SECTION E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION](#).

For the Stage I – Concept Paper review process, Concept Paper submissions will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis based on the merit review criteria provided below:

Factor #1: Strategic Fit: a) Demonstrated strategic fit and consistency with MCC Threshold Program ALTIF Project organizational and project objectives as described in the opportunity statement and b) Proposed concept that describes activities that are likely to yield benefits to Solomon Islands communities over the long term through agreements on social license with a tourism investor(s).

Factor #2: Technical Approach: a) The degree to which the proposed technical approach and methodology can reasonably be expected to produce the intended outcomes. MCC will place a premium on locally oriented approaches that describe a detailed understanding of the environment and common community social structures and an ability to navigate these structures to build trust and develop strong working relationships with each community that lead to agreements on social license and b) The degree to which the proposed approach describes an effective cooperation and coordination structure with SIG, to build capacity of officials to replicate community engagement work in the future, and other implementing partners, specifically the CCPS contractor, which will be responsible for the Communications and Facilitate Governance Reform sub-activities, and a PIO, which will be responsible for the investor facing land identification activities.

Factor #3 Organizational Capacity/Past Performance: a) Past experience relevant to the proposed Partnership Opportunity Statement and b) The applicant and subrecipients/partners have demonstrated organizational experience and bring expertise to successfully conduct and manage the project.

After the MCC selection committee reviews the Stage I – Concept Paper submissions, a pass/fail determination will be made on each Concept Paper. Best efforts will be made to notify applicants of the MCC's decision regarding their Concept Paper within 90 days of receipt.

Please note that the Selection Committee evaluating the concept paper submissions may include individuals from the SIG and PIO working on the Solomon Islands THP.

### **Availability of Funding**

The availability of funding for Partnership Opportunity Statement No. 8 Community Engagement to Achieve Social License Agreements with Tourism Investors in the Solomon Islands is **contingent** on the signature of the threshold program (THP) agreement signed between MCC and the Solomon Islands Government (SIG).

Due to ongoing negotiations to finalize this agreement, at this time concept papers will be evaluated and reviewed but please be aware that *Stage II: Co-creation* for this partnership opportunity statement will not be initiated until the THP agreement between MCC and the SIG is finalized.

### ***COST SHARE REQUIREMENT***

None. Applicants may offer cost share or matching, but it is not required for the Community Engagement Partner opportunity.

### ***H.5.9. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #9***

#### **Increasing Access to Rural Infrastructure**

**Estimated Federal Budget: \$335,000**  
**Concept Paper Due Date: Closed**

The primary goal of this partnership is to increase access to infrastructure by rural communities, specifically secondary schools in the San Pedro and Gbeke regions of Côte d'Ivoire, through last-mile pedestrian paths and bridges.

MCC seeks partners with which to collaborate and jointly explore needs and solutions for increased pedestrian access by future students (i.e., compact beneficiaries) of the New Secondary Schools for Equitable Access Sub-Activity of the compact with Côte d'Ivoire. The scope of this compact sub-activity includes the design, construction and equipping of between 74 and 84 new secondary schools, many of which are expected to be located in rural areas within the San Pedro and Gbeke regions of Côte d'Ivoire. Isolation caused by lack of transportation infrastructure affects almost every facet of life for the rural poor. The World Bank estimates that nearly a billion people worldwide lack access to an all-season road within two kilometers and suffer from limited "last mile" access. In some isolated rural communities, rainfall induced flooding can cause increased seasonal uncertainty. Without adequate local transportation infrastructure, families cannot access employment, schools, health care, or local markets to sell and buy goods.

In collaborating with a partner in an activity adjacent to MCC's existing investments, aims to increase and retain educational benefits and reduce risks to sustainable results achieved through compact-funded investments under the Increase Access to New Secondary Schools for Equitable Access sub-activity of the compact with Côte d'Ivoire. In addition, findings and methodologies on pedestrian access to essential infrastructure such as schools may increase economic growth in past, current and future compact programs. Evaluation of the recently completed trail-bridges in rural areas of Nicaragua, Rwanda and Liberia indicates local impacts include a 25% to 30% increase in household income, 12% increase in school enrolment and 18% increase in health clinic patient visits. MCC believes that comparable increases may be achievable in providing reliable, year-round pedestrian access to compact-funded secondary schools, some of which may be difficult to access or may be vulnerable seasonal weather hazards such as riverine flooding.

While this partnership opportunity does not include MCC funding pedestrian transport infrastructure itself, the compact with Côte d'Ivoire provides an opportunity for a partner to access data and information obtained through compact and threshold programs and engage with stakeholders in ways that could help partner(s) fulfill their mission(s) related to access to infrastructure and services by the rural poor.

The scope of the proposed partnership is to identify and develop complimentary opportunities to increase access by rural poor to essential infrastructure and services. Potential partnership achievements include co-creation of novel tools that synthesize geospatial information systems with cost-benefit analyses and standardization of rural access infrastructure interventions. MCC envisions this partnership to identify approximately five (5) access problems between homes of students and a new schools that may warrant pedestrian infrastructure investments external to the compact. Options for solutions to access problems as identified through the partnership may be discussed with Côte d'Ivoirian government partners, stakeholders, other donors and philanthropists. The partnership may encourage other funders to contribute to "last-mile" pedestrian infrastructure complementary to MCC's investment in new schools in Côte d'Ivoire. Furthermore, MCC envisions learning more generally methods to design, construct, monitor and evaluate increased pedestrian access to infrastructure and services by the rural poor to inform the development of future compacts.

The potential timeline for this partnership is a period of six to twelve months to explore pedestrian access needs in the San Pedro and Gbeke regions starting in the fall of 2021. MCC will then invite prospective partner(s) to propose an appropriate duration for the partnership in its entirety.

MCC envisions providing data and information pertaining to potential pedestrian sites in the San Pedro and Gbeke regions, access to stakeholders within Côte d'Ivoire, funding for engineering designs and field investigations, and funding for monitoring and evaluation of rural infrastructure that may increase student enrollment, retention and graduation. MCC envisions potential partner(s) to provide expertise and leverage existing or new, external funding sources to fund the construction of rural infrastructure including but not limited to pedestrian trailbridges. MCC hopes that partner(s) will leverage funding from external sources for the construction of approximately five (5) pedestrian bridges that are expected to increase access to new secondary schools funded under the compact with Côte d'Ivoire.

MCC intends on funding our contribution under the partnership with due diligence funding, which may be used for MCC discovery, assessment, monitoring or evaluation of program needs and methods. MCC envisions this level of funding would equate to approximately 20% of the total construction cost of trailbridges funded by external sources.

#### ***COST SHARE REQUIREMENT***

In order to be eligible for award, non-profit entities applying under this NOFO must commit to a *minimum* cost share of 25% of the Federal funding amount proposed in the cost application budget.

In order to be eligible for award, for-profit entities applying under this NOFO must commit to a minimum 1:1 match ratio (100%) based on the Federal funding amount proposed in the cost application budget (i.e., the for-profit entity must match or exceed the Federal funding amount on a dollar-for-dollar basis).

#### ***H.5.10. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #10***

##### ***Women's Data Lab and Network (WDLN) Project in Côte d'Ivoire***

**Estimated Federal Budget: \$2,500,000**

**Concept Paper Due Date: Closed**

MCC is seeking support of an international, West African regional or local Ivorian organization (the "Applicant"), or multiple organizations which come together to form a consortium (the "Applicant Team"), to finalize the design and implement the "Women's Data Lab and Network" (WDLN) Project.

Applicants are encouraged to independently apply or develop a consortium of regional, international, and local partners with different capabilities, to provide a comprehensive strategy and team that can successfully address the project outcomes with the opportunity to generate program income resulting from this project.

One or more Ivorian-native organizations must be involved and 70% of funding under this project must be allocated to Ivorian-native (or Ivorian-based) organizations, for expenditure inside Côte d'Ivoire.

This project seeks to leverage the Applicant / Applicant Team's collective experience, creativity, and know-how, and, in collaboration with MCC, develop a strategy, identify targeted geographic areas and the right mix of interventions to achieve specific outcomes and optimize impact within a period of approximately three years.

## Purpose

MCC invites organizations that work with small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) – particularly women-owned or women-led SMEs (W-SMEs) and female innovators and entrepreneurs – to contribute to the design and implement a program with MCC in Côte d’Ivoire. The program aims to empower women entrepreneurs and W-SMEs with digital and data skills to effectively participate in the digital economy and grow their businesses. The program will provide tailored resources, access to business information and mentors, and encourage the creation of W-SME networks. The Applicant / Applicant Team will be expected to develop a strategy that is impactful and sustainable.

Informed by their experience, market information and foundational studies, the Applicant will propose project activities and services to achieve specific outcomes described in this Partnership Opportunity Statement within the period of performance. MCC also expects the Applicant to build in mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the WDLN program beyond the period of performance.

## Problem and Need

Globally, women-owned and led businesses are smaller and less profitable than those owned by men. They face many hurdles: lower literacy and numeracy rates, exclusion from male-dominated business networks, insufficient access to market information, lower digital literacy and data analysis skills, insufficient digital access – and, importantly, fewer opportunities to access training, resources, and the mentors they need to help them succeed.

At the same time, the global gender digital divide detailed in the 2019 McKinsey report on the [Future of Women at Work](#) will only further expand if women are not equipped to use data and technology. As e-services, data, and digital tools, and increasingly complex data analytics like machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) permeate every sector – and amidst a volatile post-COVID-19 market environment – women entrepreneurs and owners of W-SMEs require digital and data science skills and tools to access market information, training, business development support, and capital to help them to build resilience, be competitive and further scale their businesses.

## W-SME Context in Côte d'Ivoire

In Côte d’Ivoire, W-SMEs represent approximately 20% of SMEs created in 2016<sup>6</sup>. 21.7% of business owners, and 28% of sole proprietors, are women. Overall, the informal sector is the largest provider of employment with 91.8% of jobs<sup>7</sup>. Women are overrepresented in the informal sector, running 62% of unregistered businesses<sup>8</sup>. SMEs are often classified as agricultural or non-agricultural, and women entrepreneurs are also overrepresented in non-agricultural self-employment<sup>9</sup>. According to the Agence Côte d’Ivoire PME (CI-PME), Ivorian W-SMEs operate most heavily in trade, services, and agro-business.

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<sup>6</sup> Promotion of Female Entrepreneurship in Côte d’Ivoire: State of Premises and Prospects, International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies, September 2018.

<sup>7</sup> [Promotion of Women's Entrepreneurship in Côte d'Ivoire: State of play and perspectives](#)

<sup>8</sup> Promotion of Female Entrepreneurship in Côte d’Ivoire: State of Premises and Prospects, International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies, September 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Snapshot women SMEs in CIV and ecosystem, MCC.

Digital skills and data – either the SME’s own or from external sources – are important for SMEs to increase competitiveness and capture opportunities in the growing global digital economy. The [Broadband Commission report](#) provides broad definitions of digital skills and competencies, which can be applied to business operations, optimization, marketing, products, accounting, etc. Data for W-SMEs could come from different sources, including: satellite data; government data, such as Côte d’Ivoire’s [Open Data Portal](#) and [National Statistics Office](#); [citizen-generated data](#); and data that can be generated and digitized by W-SMEs themselves, such as revenue, banking, customer lists, expenses, supplies, and scheduling information. Additionally, the availability of skilled data analysts and/or data scientists in Côte d’Ivoire is limited (as is the case in other emerging economies), resulting in a human resource gap that may challenge many W-SMEs. Recent initiatives, such as the [Des Chiffres et Des Jeunes](#)<sup>10</sup> (DCDJ) project have invested in building data science skills through a [Data Fellows program](#), with a particular emphasis on reaching young Ivorian women. DCDJ has shown that there is both significant interest in these skills; and that with training and an opportunity to apply new skills, fellows began to make an immediate impact on the organizations where they were placed – and on their own career prospects.

Annex I includes results of a survey that formed part of a recent (2021) study commissioned by MCC to better understand the W-SME landscape in Côte d’Ivoire. The data and insights were collected over a series of interviews with key government and private sectors actors, as well as through a web-based survey that included over 800 Ivorian W-SME respondents. Through the survey MCC aimed to gain a better understanding of the profile, technical capacity and data, digital and business-related pain points faced by Ivorian W-SMEs in growing the business.

Key findings from the survey results build an “initial” profile of at least a subset<sup>11</sup> of W-SMEs in Côte d’Ivoire. Of the survey respondents:

- 87% have businesses based in Abidjan.
- 93% are at the level of owner or managing CEO.
- 67% are under 35 years of age.
- 78% hold a bachelor’s degree or higher.
- 57.7% operate in the informal sector as unregistered businesses.
- 79% identify their enterprise as individually owned.
- 71% have been active for less than 3 years.
- 95% have fewer than nine employees.
- 55.5% operate from out of their home.
- 66% reported using external data for their business decisions.
- 40% reported using data from business networks or professional groups in their commercial decision-making.

The report also describes existing stakeholders that work with and support W-SMEs, including government, non-government organizations, and 30+ innovation/business hubs. There are also initiatives currently underway by UN Women (Yamoussoukro) – and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); however, there are few efforts specifically dedicated to addressing the growing data literacy, digital and technology skill needs of W-SMEs. The report further affirms the need for a

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.dcdj.ci/>

<sup>11</sup> The methodology relied on digital means to distribute the survey and collect responses, thereby skewing the data to W-SMEs that already have some level of digital skills (e.g., access to the internet, smartphones and network) - and to those that were in Abidjan, which is where most of the organizations that agreed to share the survey are located.



program that leverages the capabilities of a physical presence, e-learning platform, and e-community model explicitly dedicated to the needs of women entrepreneurs.

### **WDLN Program Vision and Expected Outcomes**

The vision of the WDLN is to create an effective and sustained program to provide data and digital skills to a targeted group of women entrepreneurs and leaders of W-SMEs in Côte d'Ivoire. The WDLN will empower W-SMEs through access to information and data and digital skills to innovate, solve business challenges and meet their evolving needs as they navigate through successive stages of business maturity (see Annex II).

The WDLN intends to achieve this vision with and through one or more locally-rooted organizations, developing a program that is self-sustaining – agile and continuing beyond the approximate 3 years of funding. Through WDLN, MCC is seeking to achieve the following outcomes, shown on an initial program logic (Annex III) and further described below:

1. W-SMEs gain digital and data literacy skills and tools and use them to manage and grow their businesses.
2. W-SMEs grow and advance to the next stages of business maturity.
3. New W-SMEs emerge from a pipeline of female entrepreneurs.
4. A subset of W-SMEs benefit from Microsoft 4Afrika engagement and/or other regional programs.
5. The WDLN continues to support W-SMEs after the program ends.

#### **Outcome 1: Women entrepreneurs gain digital and data literacy skills and tools and use them to manage and grow their businesses.**

Results of the initial W-SME study suggest that there are data, digital, technology, and other needs across all levels of business maturity. The Applicant will develop a needs-based training and capacity building program to strengthen and augment the capabilities of W-SMEs and stakeholders (associations, chambers, other partners) in basic data literacy and skills, data analytics, visualization, machine learning, and other data science skills. This includes capacity assessment and training on business intelligence<sup>12</sup> and entrepreneurial education to enable women to use and generate market data to navigate evolving market opportunities. W-SMEs will improve digital and data skills in conjunction with business skill training and tools, using these skills to solve business challenges and meet evolving needs as their businesses grow and mature.

#### **Outcome 2: Women entrepreneurs grow and advance to next stages of business maturity.**

WDLN will make available to W-SMEs and female entrepreneurs expanded networks through which they can establish connections with one another and engage with mentors and strategic partners in order to reach new markets. This WDLN W-SME-centered e-community network may work with W-SME stakeholders (such as associations, chambers, other partners) to extend its network reach and services to their members. Together with new digital, data, and business skills, the network will enable WDLN to help a greater number of W-SMEs to grow their businesses as they proceed to the next level of maturity.

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<sup>12</sup> Business intelligence includes market research (addressable market, market segmentation, local, national and international competition), market information (costs of inputs, sales pricing) and business environment (transportation and distribution pathways and costs, export restrictions, and other supply chain factors).



**Outcome 3: New W-SMEs emerge from a pipeline of female entrepreneurs.**

The WDLN will strengthen the Ivorian W-SME entrepreneurial ecosystem and create a pipeline of market-ready products and services through data-driven innovation challenges. Aspiring women entrepreneurs require an added level of hands-on support to turn their business ideas into reality - these include customized skills training, mentorship, and access to micro-grants or other resources to support them through the ideation stage of their business as they test out their product and refine their concept. Currently, Côte d'Ivoire has over 30 innovation hubs, but few with programs dedicated specifically to supporting aspiring women entrepreneurs with scalable data-driven solutions. The WDLN aims to be a catalyst for Ivorian innovation by supporting aspiring women entrepreneurs to drive their ideas from proof-of-concept to prototypes ready for implementation either directly or in coordination with other Ivorian innovation hubs through innovation challenges, incubation or acceleration programs.

**Outcome 4: A subset of W-SMEs benefit from Microsoft 4Afrika engagement.**

The WDLN expects to include activities and efforts focused on W-SMEs that are in varying stages of maturity, with a significant fraction in the incubation and acceleration stages. This outcome will create a set of activities focused on a subset of promising, more-mature businesses to prepare, coach and strengthen their capabilities so that they may be connected to and benefit from specialized programs like the Microsoft 4Afrika Program<sup>13</sup>, and/or regional networks that can help these W-SMEs scale. The desired outcome here is to identify Ivorian W-SMEs with highly scalable business models, support them to achieve investor readiness, and ultimately successful placement with Africa-focused institutional investors that can enable them to scale.

**Outcome 5: The WDLN continues to support W-SMEs after the program ends.**

W-SMEs will continue to receive support through WDLN (i.e., the local, branded, visible, and accessible program led by visionary local team) beyond the period of the Cooperative Agreement. The Applicant's WDLN program will have demonstrated a high level of demand for its services – and impact – and it will be able to capture other sources of revenues to ensure sustainability.

For this to happen, over the period of performance, MCC anticipates that a stellar team, local presence, brand, space or network of spaces (if appropriate), web presence, and an e-community targeting W-SMEs in the agreed-upon geographic areas of focus (Section 5.5) will have been put in place by the Applicant. This presence and team would track and document the positive impact of the program on W-SMEs (Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4) to attract other funders. In addition, the Applicant will explore how elements of WDLN (for example an Accelerator activity in furtherance of Outcomes 3 or 4) can generate revenue that can be reinvested in the program; and/or propose ancillary services or elements that generate revenue outside of the W-SME programming and/or attract additional funding from other organizations and stakeholders. Higher-value training and services may be developed, while continuing to support W-SMEs that are the focus of this project.

**Geographic and W-SME Focus**


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<sup>13</sup> MCC is tentatively planning to enter into a collaboration with Microsoft, which could enable select W-SMEs involved in the WDLN program to access resources on the [Microsoft 4Afrika platform](#).

It is estimated that there are on the order of 15,000 registered W-SMEs in Côte d'Ivoire – and nearly as many unregistered ones. Given the relatively short period of time (3 years) and limited federal budget, MCC requests that the Applicants focus on one or two geographic areas – and a particular type of W-SME -- to enable the WDLN program achieve the measurable outcomes listed in Section 5.4. Additional guidance is provided below:

- **Geographic Focus:** While the geographic focus of WDLN activities will ultimately consider several factors like opportunities to meaningfully impact W-SMEs, the Applicants' local experience base, its local network and other programmatic and logistical considerations, **MCC would like the Applicants to consider San Pedro and Abidjan.**
- **Necessity / Subsistence vs. Growth Opportunity W-SME Focus.** While MCC acknowledges that different kinds of W-SMEs would benefit from assistance in Côte d'Ivoire, for the purpose of the WDLN program, MCC requests that Applicants focus their strategy and programming on "Growth / Opportunity" W-SMEs, and not, or less so, on Necessity / Subsistence W-SMEs<sup>14</sup>. Growth / Opportunity W-SMEs can be broadly described as entrepreneurs / businesses that aim to create a vibrant business that grows beyond the scope of the individual entrepreneurs' subsistence needs and eventually provides jobs and income for others.

#### **Guidance to Applicants:**

Applications should reflect how the work will contribute to addressing constraints faced by Ivorian W-SMEs while achieving the desired outcomes. Applicants should demonstrate how and to what extent their proposal is likely to accomplish the outcomes included in this Partnership Opportunity Statement.

Innovation and creativity in applications will be appreciated. Proposals, however, must be reasonable in scope and feasible given time (about 3 years), the federal budget – and the realities of the Ivorian context.

Coordination with other projects and actors in the targeted areas will be important to the success of the project. Applicants will work with MCC to ensure that key activities or interventions complement and build on (and are not duplicative) of those of other US Government funders and international government and organizational donors in support of W-SMEs.

Synergies of impact are also possible between the WDLN project and other MCC investments in Côte d'Ivoire, including other existing partnerships and the MCC Côte d'Ivoire Compact. A summary of these activities is provided in Annex IV.

The Applicant should carefully consider in the project design that proposed interventions are specifically targeted toward women entrepreneurs, including both registered and non-registered W-SMEs, firms of different size and maturity, W-SMEs from different geographic areas, and women SME owners and managers with different levels of business knowledge and data and digital skills.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Necessity / Subsistence W-SMEs, on the other hand are those who engage in entrepreneurial activity chiefly as a means of providing subsistence income to herself. Subsistence entrepreneurs typically do not—and do not aspire to—grow the business to the point of creating employment opportunities for workers outside of their immediate families (definitions adapted from [An Operational Guide to Women's Entrepreneurship Programs at the World Bank, July 2018](#)).

<sup>15</sup> [OECD. Bridging the Digital Gender Divide: Include, Upskill, Innovate](#)

MCC intends on funding our contribution under the partnership with USAID Women's Data Lab and Network funds.

## Annex I

Survey Results: Understanding W-SME Data and Digital Needs in Côte d'Ivoire, Development Gateway, 2021

Refer to NOFO Attachment *Opportunity Statement #10 Annex I MCC CIV Stats*.

## Annex II

### Business Maturity/Life Stages/Growth Models

Businesses progress through various life stages: An entrepreneur's focus today may not be what's important tomorrow, and challenges will change and require different approaches to be successful. We also understand that progression is not necessarily sequential, nor is it confined to a specific set of defined stages. However, as ideas germinate and grow to become successful ventures, they will inevitably progress through a series of maturity, or life stages.

There are many maturity/life stages/growth frameworks that have been developed over the past decades, and they are often tailored for different types of firms in different contexts. A few examples of these different models are Harvard Business Review's [five stages of growth](#), the [Global Entrepreneurship Monitor](#)'s typology, and ThinkRoom's life stage model, which is described in the Foundational Assessment in Annex I. The business maturity/life stage/growth models shown below are meant only as a starting point. Applicants are strongly encouraged to leverage their experience and explore and incorporate other models.

Figure 1: Life Stages of Business Growth. Source: ThinkRoom 2021

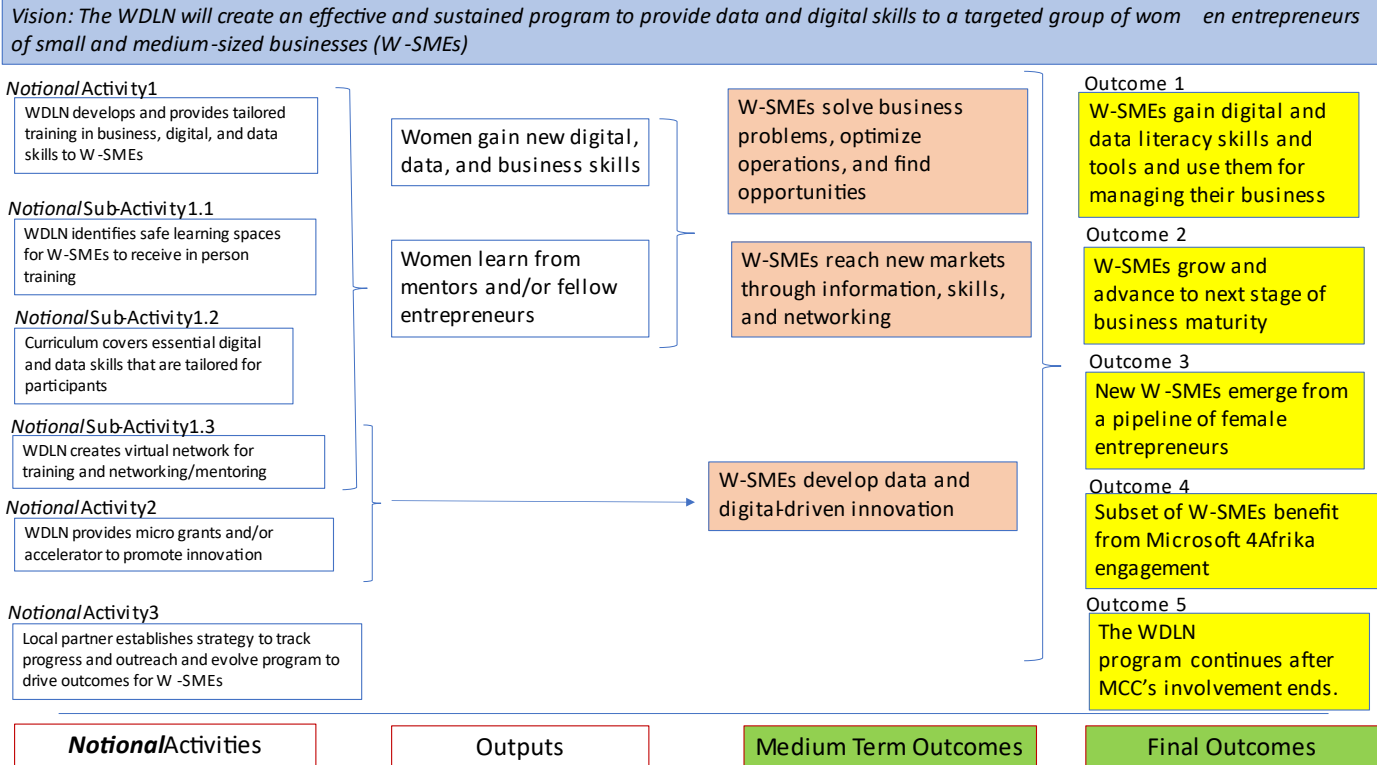


As defined by ThinkRoom, the successive stages of business maturity, also called “life stages” of a company, can be broken down as follows:

1. **Ideation:** Business idea not validated; product or service has not been developed.
2. **Validation/Incubation:** Some market validation/research; product or service in proof-of-concept (POC) development; pre-revenue
3. **Acceleration:** POC developed; expression of interest from potential client; generated first revenue; clear business model; registered company
4. **Commercialization:** Minimum viable product (MVP) developed; secured clients; strong business model; technology tested; revenue generating
5. **Scale:** Client customization; revenue generation; captured client base; fully operational and tested product

## Annex III

Program logic with vision and outcomes. Please note that the Activities listed below are notional; applicants are encouraged to propose activities consistent with their strategy and experience; and which they believe will best meet the vision and yield the expected outcomes.



## Annex IV

### Overview of MCC Complementary Investments in Cote d'Ivoire

Through its programs, engagement with governments, policies, and partnerships, MCC seeks to advance women's economic participation and to contribute to the U.S. government's ability to change the landscape of women's economic empowerment around the world. In Côte d'Ivoire, MCC has three independent investments that complement each other, contribute to sustained economic growth, and offer opportunities for women's economic empowerment.

2017-2024

#### MCC Compact with the Government of Cote d'Ivoire

- The Compact addresses key binding constraints to growth through investments in the education and transportation sectors.
- In July 2019, the Ivorian Government passed a marriage law supporting women's equal rights to the management of household assets, an important step in bringing attention to gender equality in the home. The passage of this critical law also supported the government's ongoing efforts to improve the country's performance on MCC's scorecard.
- MCC's Côte d'Ivoire Compact includes a Skills for Employability and Productivity Project, under which the Ivorian Ministry of National Education launched a Gender Unit in April 2019. The unit will focus on improving education and training for girls and women, providing them with skills to

participate actively in the workforce and meet the needs of the Ivorian private and public sectors. Côte d'Ivoire's educational data information system is being developed and operationalized as part of this project.

2019-2021

**MCC/PEPFAR Data Collaboratives for Local Impact (DCLI)**

- In Côte d'Ivoire, DCLI strengthened data policies and practices – and built local data skills – while achieving 46% women participation.
- DCLI trained 86 data fellows & fueled the data ecosystem through systems that empower women & youth.
- DCLI assisted the Ministry of Education in selecting optimal locations for MCC-funded secondary schools in two regions, based on data for current and future student populations in line with the objectives of gender equality expressed in the new gender policy in education.
- In September 2019, organized the Abidjan Women in Data Science (WiDS) event, in partnership with the Stanford WiDS initiative. More than 220 women participated in inspiring trainings, roundtables and a hackathon led 100% by women data scientists, entrepreneurs, development practitioners and business leaders.

2020-2024

**MCC/USAID Women's Data Lab & Network (WDLN)**

- The WDLN will empower W-SMEs through greater access to business information, digital tools and the data skills that they need to make better business decisions in a growing global digital economy – while providing them with a “safe space” and a network through which to access resources, connect with each other, and inspire other women to start their own businesses.

***COST SHARE REQUIREMENT***

In order to be eligible for award, non-profit entities applying under this NOFO must commit to a *minimum* cost share of 10% of the Federal funding amount proposed in the cost application budget.

In order to be eligible for award, for-profit entities applying under this NOFO must commit to a minimum 1:1 match ratio (100%) based on the Federal funding amount proposed in the cost application budget (i.e., the for-profit entity must match or exceed the Federal funding amount on a dollar-for-dollar basis).

***PRE-CONCEPT CONFERENCE***

For this WDLN opportunity, MCC plans to host a virtual conference prior to the Phase I Concept Papers are due. This conference will occur on April 20, 2021 (Tuesday), 11:00am to 12:00pm ET. All applicants are encouraged to attend. Interested applicants shall email Mohammad K. Ayub, Agreement Specialist (contractor representing MCC), ([ayubmk@mcc.gov](mailto:ayubmk@mcc.gov)) and Andrew E. Lee, Agreement Officer, ([leeae@mcc.gov](mailto:leeae@mcc.gov)) by April 16, 2021, 11:59pm ET with the following information:

- Entity name;
- Attendee(s) name(s) and title(s);
- Attendee(s) email address(es); and
- Any questions you would like MCC to address during the conference.

MCC will send a meeting invite on April 19, 2021 (Monday) to those interested applicants.

**H.5.11. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #11**

**Partnership on Integrated Environmental-Economic Modeling**

Estimated Federal Budget: \$750,000

Concept Paper Due Date: Closed

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is seeking a Partnership on Integrated Environmental-Economic Modeling (hereinafter “Partnership”) to advance the analytical frontier for integrated quantitative environmental and economic modeling in support of development planning. The aim of such modeling is to support a rigorous scenario-based characterization and order-of-magnitude quantification of (especially climate-related) environmental costs and benefits. These quantitative estimates are intended, in turn, to inform the prioritization of promising sectors or programmatic areas for investments by the donor community in *sustainable economic development*. The modeling effort should emphasize the following issue areas, which in recent decades have seen considerable advances through collaborative research efforts across the development and scientific communities:

- Interactions between ecosystem services and economic activity
- Improved management and use of natural capital and
- Benefits of increased resilience to the impacts of climate change

Building on those efforts, the partnership will itself expand learning opportunities across the development community regarding integrated quantitative environmental and economic modeling.

The overarching public purpose of this Partnership is to create an integrated modeling framework in the public domain that is relevant to the needs of the global development community. In broad terms, the Partnership will proceed in two stages:

1. To establish an initial proof of concept, the first stage is to develop case-based applications for this integrated model in the context of the MCC program cycle.
2. Based on these cases, the Partnership will develop tools and frameworks that will be generalizable to development planning approaches worldwide.

MCC expects that this Partnership’s public purpose will be supported and amplified by the Agency’s existing external engagements. For example, MCC currently participates in several fora featuring connections to a range of domestic and international technical experts across relevant social and natural science disciplines. Examples of these fora include the following:

- The [Country Diagnostics Platform](#) (CDP). Last June, MCC conceived and convened a virtual Technical Workshop including numerous bi- and multilateral donor organizations worldwide, “Climate and Environmental Factors in Country Analytics and Programmatic Implications.”<sup>3</sup> At this Workshop, MCC received positive and encouraging feedback on a high-level conceptual sketch of the motivation for this Partnership.
- MCC’s [Economic Advisory Council](#) is a forum with international membership for exchanging and discussing analytical methods and innovations that bear on development effectiveness at MCC and globally. (According to the guidelines set forth in the Federal Advisory Committee Act, all meetings are open to the public, and meeting minutes are posted on MCC’s public website.)
- As an active participant in the US Government interagency process, MCC is recently or currently engaged on a number of White House interagency initiatives and dialogs:

- Build Back Better World (B3W), aimed at helping to narrow the \$40+ trillion infrastructure need in the developing world
- Implementation of Executive Order 14008 on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad
- National Security Council-led dialog on global development and climate change.

While naturally focused on US Government equities and initiatives, the missions of many agencies comprising the interagency—e.g., the Departments of Energy, Treasury, and State; the Environmental Protection Agency; and the Agency for International Development; among others—have deep connections to the global public community.

To develop an initial proof of concept in advance of public domain applications, MCC seeks a technical partner to collaborate with MCC economists and other technical staff<sup>4</sup> in undertaking the following anticipated activities:<sup>5</sup>

1. Identifying an existing modeling framework or platform offering the essential functionalities on which this Partnership can build;
2. Articulating enhancements to the modeling framework's specifications and capabilities that tailor its applicability to national-level analyses of constraints to growth as an element of development planning;
3. Refining, adapting, and augmenting the modeling framework to deliver outputs and insights addressing key questions arising in identifying and prioritizing constraints to growth; and
4. Developing a practical deployment plan.

These activities are discussed in more detail below after a brief overview of the approach that MCC brings to development planning.

Adapted from the growth diagnostics framework<sup>6</sup> that has been widely applied across the global development community, MCC's [Constraints Analysis \(CA\)](#) is the first analytical step in the Agency's evidence-based approach to developing compact and threshold programs. Through the CA, MCC works with its partner countries to identify the constraints that, if addressed, have the most potential to promote poverty-reducing sustainable economic growth. The CA brings to bear a wide range of evidence to identify and characterize a select few *binding constraints to growth* that provide potential areas of focus for the development of an MCC program. Building on the CA, the next step in MCC's program development is *Root Cause Analysis (RCA)*, aimed at identifying *key underlying causes* of the binding constraints. The output of the RCA is a *core problem* around which MCC works collaboratively with partner countries to identify and develop solutions via an MCC-financed program.

MCC's most recent CAs have typically taken stock of climate-related constraints by (i) using simple scalar indices or ordinal rankings to benchmark country performance against that of comparator countries, and (ii) using research surveys and syntheses of country-specific climate-related impacts.<sup>7</sup> While these relatively rudimentary and static approaches offer general insights on climate-related development challenges with a minimum of effort, they suffer from a number of limitations as they

- Do not allow modeling or quantitative assessment of impacts (even of an order-of-magnitude nature) of user-specified policy or investment scenarios;
- Largely abstract from subnational detail;



- Do not incorporate feedbacks between economic conditions and public investments and policies on the one hand, and ecosystem services flows on the other; and
- Lack an explicit treatment of uncertainty related to environment- or climate-related factors and economic variables, and associated interactions.

Absent such functionalities, it is difficult to assess quantitatively and robustly the relative severity of various potential environment- and climate-related constraints to growth—in terms of, say, economic activity foregone—and to compare these to other potential constraints to growth. Given the breadth and level of ambition in MCC’s [Climate Change Strategy](#) and associated [Climate Action Plan](#), MCC is seeking through this Partnership to augment and expand its existing analytical approaches in the climate and environmental domain.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike many donors, MCC typically does not have a pre-existing in-country presence or history of engagement with many of its country partners. As a consequence, MCC typically lacks established relationships with officials of partner country governments as well as a detailed understanding of government entities’ jurisdictions, portfolios, and processes for economic management and environmental protection. An implication for this Partnership is that MCC is unlikely to already possess non-public country data relevant for modeling efforts under such Partnership; securing any such required data would thus remain a task for the Partnership in the course of a given country-specific model application.

The four high-level activities that MCC envisions under this Partnership are set forth in greater detail below. MCC encourages potential applicants to outline in their Concept Notes how they would work with MCC to co-create an enhanced modeling framework to achieve the Partnership’s purposes set forth here:

1. Identifying an existing modeling framework or platform offering the following essential functionalities:
  - a. Integration of economic and environmental interactions in an internally-consistent framework;
  - b. The *potential* to represent additional structural relationships involving key economic and environmental parameters and variables;
  - c. The *potential* for spatially explicit representation of national- and potentially (large area) subnational-level policies and associated outcomes; and
  - d. The *potential* for explicit treatment of uncertainty in the environmental and economic domains, including visualization and decision support tools.

MCC is open to modeling frameworks relying on either optimization or simulation modeling tools.

2. Articulating desired enhancements to the identified modeling framework’s specifications and capabilities to better capture (especially climate-related) environmental costs and benefits. MCC invites potential partners to address questions such as the following regarding potential modeling enhancements:
  - a. How can the potential functionalities noted in paragraphs 1.b. through 1.d above be realized?



- b. What would be the approach and associated level of effort required to update baseline country-level parameter sets and databases for a variety of countries?
  - c. Would it be feasible to disaggregate impacts of interest (e.g., on household incomes or key environmental outcomes) across population subgroups? If so, what would be entailed in doing so?
3. Using the setting of an MCC CA and RCA as a country-specific proof of concept, refining, adapting, and augmenting the modeling framework—including data, coding, workflows, and reporting and visualizing outputs—to deliver outputs and insights that can directly inform key analytical and empirical questions in growth diagnostics. In this connection, MCC invites potential partners to address the following questions:
  - a. How could the capability to articulate structured country-level (and potentially large area subnational) investment and policy reform scenarios and related model refinements be introduced or refined to shed light on the following:
    - i. Estimated direct effects (and, where possible, indirect and induced effects) of key investment and policy reform scenarios on economic output, suggesting *shadow prices* associated with the interventions characterized in the scenarios;
    - ii. Characterization and prioritization of key causal factors that drive the constraints and distortions addressed by the aforementioned policy scenarios;
  - b. How could the modeling framework be applied to quantitatively address key valuation questions, including
    - i. Valuing changes in natural capital stocks, and
    - ii. Representing and valuing measures to adapt to climate shocks?
  - c. In what ways could the modeling framework be refined and model outputs be used to address high-level design questions related to the economic viability of investments in key development sectors, e.g., various types of infrastructure, agriculture, land and property rights, and finance?
4. Based on the MCC-specific application and with a view towards generalization, developing a practical public outreach and dissemination plan to make available to the international development community (including MCC staff) tools and outputs associated with this enhanced framework. Such plan could include (without limitation) conferences; workshops; webinars; web-based documentation, tutorials, open-source code repositories; and so forth.

MCC seeks partners with social and natural science and computer modeling expertise relevant for the activities and outcomes outlined above. The agency is open to partnering with academic institutions, government research laboratories, nongovernmental research organizations, development assistance agencies, or firms having expertise and experience in integrated quantitative environmental and economic modeling. MCC seeks partner organizations that can demonstrate experience convening a range of actors having strengths in both theoretical and applied areas of expertise, and in collaborating to develop practically useful and flexible tools.

MCC expects to contribute various inputs to this Partnership, including (as applicable):

- Co-funding;
- Use cases for CAs and RCAs within the program cycle for MCC partner countries;
- Skills, knowledge, and expertise in planning and implementing development assistance interventions;

- Guidance on enhancements to the modeling framework’s specifications;
- Access to host country government officials, implementing partners, and other relevant country contacts; and
- Relevant data.

Specific MCC partner countries to which the integrated environmental-economic model will be applied will be chosen from among those countries newly selected by the MCC Board of Directors as eligible for MCC assistance, typically in December each year.

The anticipated timeframe for the partnership(s) is three years. The total estimated budget from MCC for this effort is up to \$750,000.

#### ***H.5.12. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #12***

##### ***Shared Learning Agenda and Multistakeholder Collaboration in the Areas of Financial Inclusion for MSMEs and Transportation Infrastructure in Indonesia***

Estimated Federal Budget: \$500,000.00

Concept Paper Due Date: Closed

In December 2018, MCC’s Board of Directors selected Indonesia as eligible to develop a second compact. The selection reflected the progress Indonesia has made on its policy performance and the strong partnership MCC and Indonesia built [during the first compact](#). MCC is presently working with the Government of Indonesia (GOI) to develop a compact including the following two projects in the priority provinces of North Sulawesi, South Sumatra, Bali, Riau Islands and Riau: (i) access to finance for infrastructure, particularly transport and logistics infrastructure, and (ii) access to finance for micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (“MSMEs”), particularly those owned by women. MCC and the GOI hope to announce a compact program in late 2022 and sign an agreement shortly thereafter. The compact should then be able to Enter-Into-Force in early 2024. Using this Partnership Opportunity Statement, MCC seeks partners (henceforth referred to as the “Learning Collaboration Partner”) with which to collaborate and jointly define and implement a shared learning agenda for collaboration that engages multiple stakeholders in Indonesia in the areas of financial inclusion for MSMEs and transportation planning, as described herein. Partnership proposals that address one of these two areas will be considered, but MCC has a preference for partners that have interest in both.

#### ***Background and Context***

The **Primary Goal** of this partnership is to establish a shared learning agenda and platform for collaboration that engages multiple stakeholders in Indonesia in the areas of financial inclusion for MSMEs and transportation infrastructure planning and implementation. The stakeholders are intended to be both relevant government ministries and agencies, as well as academic institutions and other non-government entities such as business associations and NGOs. The collaboration and learning can be used both to improve ongoing policy reform and program design questions in Indonesia, as well as serve as a common platform for sharing knowledge and evidence generated by the compact. This shared learning agenda will benefit the projects in the compact by helping MCA and its partners focus in on the interventions which are most likely to achieve the desired results, including understanding the implications of different policies and programs for under-served populations such as women or the poor. It will also increase the Government of Indonesia’s ability to engage with academia on a credible and transparent basis and learn from relevant evidence. This will in turn lead to increased sustainability,

credibility, and acceptance of compact projects as well as broader positive impacts in development policy making. While MCC has relationships with many of the stakeholders that could be included in such a partnership, MCC prefers partners that have existing relationships of their own within Indonesia.

Both proposed projects in MCC's Indonesia II compact are focused on **the need to improve government policies around financial access for MSMEs, particularly those owned by women, and around better infrastructure planning for transportation at the local level** while delivering positive economic impacts during the five-year compact term.

Although transport infrastructure projects are subject to review by central ministries, there is not a system of creating defined pipelines of projects which have been derived from a rational analysis of need or demand. In fact, project identification is not standardized, and projects are identified by a variety of actors and processes. In the transport sector, there is almost no rational multi-modal planning which considers how all transport modes work together across the transport network, especially at sub-national level, and therefore project identification tends to be piecemeal and uncoordinated, with resulting project 'wish lists' rather than a coordinated network transport plan. When a project need is identified, there is very little balanced consideration of all options, with appraisals generally based upon a single pre-selected project option. The MCC compact is aiming to address this issue with some components of the proposed project in infrastructure finance, but there will be a continuing need to re-establish the role of usage and demand data in the infrastructure planning process, which falls somewhat outside the scope of the proposed project and thus would benefit from the proposed partnership. Additionally, the Indonesia II compact is being designed with a particular focus on ensuring that the transportation planning processes that are established are inclusive of the needs of women, the poor and other marginalized communities. Traditional programming in these areas has not typically succeeded in achieving these results so understanding the evidence from past programming in similar contexts will be critical.

Similarly, Indonesia has a rich history of designing innovative credit schemes for small businesses, and there are positive experiences with group lending in rural areas. Regional development banks have also played an important role in channeling funds to micro entrepreneurs especially in rural areas. However, approximately 65 million MSMEs in Indonesia are not able to access formal financial services, including a group of growing businesses and women-led SMEs that the proposed compact aims to target. The group is somewhat larger businesses that need individual credit and tend to have more varied credit needs. These are not the businesses that government programs have typically reached in the past. Alternative financial service providers are interested in serving this client base, in part because it is a huge potential market, but they are constrained in providing credit because:

- Fintech lending companies cannot use the existing credit registry (because they are not financial institutions);
- Fraud detection system of the fintech industry is still under-developed;
- Value chain finance (VCF) or supply chain finance (SCF) models which would be suitable for MSMEs are limited because of a lack of a critical mass of e-procurement, and the businesses often operate just on a cash basis;
- Credit scoring and risk assessment models are based on a limited amount of proprietary data.

MSME constraints to accessing finance additionally include:

- a. Lack of business skills and financial literacy;

- b. Lack of connections to value chains or other ecosystems that could help generate transaction data to accommodate risk assessment;
- c. Discrimination against female borrowers.

Constraints for WMSMEs are amplified because:

- a. Less likely to own acceptable conventional collateral;
- b. Less access to networks and associations;
- c. More demands on time due to family matters which may limit time that can be devoted to the business.

Evidence-based policymaking is reliant on generating and disseminating credible, relevant evidence, which the GOI does not typically budget for. While a great deal of evidence exists from research and practice in many countries in the areas outlined above, including Indonesia, a future MCA-Indonesia (the implementing unit for the compact program in Indonesia) will not have the scope or ability to diligently examine all the evidence and engage with academia to develop and advance an evidence-based learning agenda in these two areas. The inability to analyze and synthesize the abundant global and Indonesia-based evidence will reduce the impact of not only MCC/MCA programs but also other donor- and GOI-funded programs and impact the credibility and acceptance of all policy implications that may arise from compact activities.

By partnering with the Learning Collaboration Partner – likely to be an established research or policy analysis institution - MCC can support a more holistic and independent approach to learning in these subjects, both of which are critical to Indonesia's future development efforts, that will outlast the compact and be responsive to the needs of all engaged stakeholders while at the same time including MCC's own learning efforts as part of a networked approach. By supporting this independent platform, MCC may also be able to influence any research and analysis towards areas of MCC's current institutional priorities in particular women's economic empowerment and climate change. For the Learning Collaboration Partner, an **opportunity** exists in partnering with MCC to receive not only additional funding for their work to conduct research and influence policy development, but to benefit from the momentum of a new program in Indonesia that can convene the disparate work in these areas and benefit from a high degree of GOI engagement in compact implementation.

### ***Partnership Scope and Activities***

The **scope** of the partnership can be modified to meet the needs of the Learning Collaboration Partner and MCC but would be expected to include at a minimum one research effort involving data collection, analysis and presentation, organizing quarterly meetings of the stakeholder forum in Indonesia and one effort to convene policy discussions on a specific policy recommendation arising from existing or planned research, all over a 2-year period. General, the scope is expected to include the following two components that would apply to both of the topic areas (MSME access to finance, transport planning):

#### **Research component**

- Synthesizing existing research
- Enumerating stakeholder lists and gauging interest in continued participation
- Conducting new qualitative and or quantitative data collection efforts, particularly if additional funding sources become available to the partnership

**Collaboration component**

- Consistent, routine convening and presentation of evidence to stakeholders
- Periodic “conferences” or larger dissemination events of some sort
- Specific, focused advocacy efforts around particular policy priorities based on evidence and in collaboration with specific groups in the GOI and civil society.

The indicative **timeline** for this work would be approximately two years, beginning at the time of grant award (likely Fall 2022) and continuing until Fall 2024, which is intended to be about 6 months after the Indonesia compact enters-into-force (EIF). The proposed funding stream from MCC would be using project preparation funds that are required to be used for preparatory activities, and cannot be used for implementation of compact projects, so the bulk of the work should take place during this preparatory, pre-EIF phase. This partnership is meant to focus on **Indonesia** and not on any other MCC countries.

It is important to bear in mind that while this partnership would be between MCC and the Learning Collaboration Partner, **the funding used is meant to benefit the GOI and to assist the GOI and MCC with project preparation and development**, so the Learning Collaboration Partner can expect to have a close, consultative and collegial relationship with relevant GOI ministries and interlocutors. The funding provided through this partnership could not be used to implement compact activities per se, rather the results of any research, stakeholder collaboration and / or pilot project activities are meant to inform implementation of these compact activities in the form of refinements to the project design or theory of change.

Similarly, the prospective Learning Collaboration Partner should have a public service and / or academic orientation, with an insatiable appetite for transparency and public sharing of information, as well as a desire to see evidence-based policy approaches turned into practice. As described above, a primary motivation for engaging in this partnership is to break down some of the more siloed efforts that development partners are engaged in with respect to MSMEs and infrastructure finance in Indonesia. Prospective Learning Collaboration Partners may be research and policy analysis institutions, particularly if they already possess existing networks and reputation in Indonesia. Prospective partners should have a background in research including primary data collection, published academic papers and a demonstrated record of disseminating and promoting evidence-based assessments of policies and recommendations for reform.

**H.5.13 PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT #13*****Nature-based Solutions Manual of Practice Partnership***

Estimated Federal Budget: \$750,000

Concept Paper Due Date: Closed

**Primary Goal:** The goal of the partnership is to increase the benefits, resilience, and sustainability of infrastructure by strategically integrating engineered and natural solutions, with a particular focus on opportunities for nature-based solutions (NbS) in Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) partner country and developing country contexts. This can be best achieved through the creation of a comprehensive manual of practice (MoP) for NbS in civil engineering. By collaborating with strategic partners, including leading accrediting or standards agencies in civil engineering, MCC aims to foster a standardized, science-based approach that promotes the integration of nature-based features into infrastructure planning, design, implementation, and sustainability. The objective is to use NbS to

enhance infrastructure resilience, mitigate risks associated with climate change, and improve socio-economic and environmental outcomes within engineering projects.

**Need:** Currently, there exists a gap in comprehensively quantifying the resilience of complex systems within civil engineering using NbS. The lack of standardized, comprehensive, and transparent processes and consistent performance metrics inhibits the effective design and measurement of the capacity to of physical infrastructure to withstand and adapt to future changes sustainably. Challenges persist in integrating nature-based features into infrastructure projects across diverse environmental and sectoral contexts.

While existing handbooks and guidance offer valuable insights into NbS (see below), there remains a significant gap in the availability of a comprehensive and quantifiable manual. The absence of an industry-recognized manual can create challenges for policy makers and practitioners seeking standardized approaches. A MoP would consolidate proven frameworks, methodologies, tools and techniques, offering a structured framework for engineers and program managers to follow.

Current and Existing Guidelines for Nature-based Solutions include but are not limited to:

1. The Nature Conservancy's Nature4Climate Handbook: This handbook provides an overview of NbS for climate change mitigation and adaptation. It covers topics such as reforestation, sustainable agriculture, coastal restoration, and urban green infrastructure.
2. IUCN Global Standard for NbS: The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has developed a Global Standard for NbS, which provides a framework for designing, implementing, and measuring the success of NbS projects. The standard provides an opportunity to create a global user community that helps guide implementation on the ground, accelerate policy development, and create conservation science on NbS.
3. The World Bank's Catalogue of Nature-Based Solutions for Urban Resilience: The catalogue of NbS for urban resilience has been developed as a guidance document to support the growing demand for NbS by enabling an initial identification of potential investments in nature-based solutions.
4. The International Guidelines on Natural and Nature-Based Features (NNBF) for Flood Risk Management: The international guidelines on NNBF provides practitioners with the best available information concerning the conceptualization, planning, design, engineering, construction, and maintenance of NNBF to support resilience and flood risk reduction for coastlines, bays, and estuaries, as well as river and freshwater systems.

This partnership strives to provide a standardized and science-based framework grounded in quantifiable methodologies for the engineering community by co-creating a Manual of Practice (MoP). It aims to bridge the gap by offering practical guidelines, standardized methodologies, and performance-driven engineering approaches essential for enhancing infrastructure resilience and sustainability.

Without standardized methodologies or practical guidelines, infrastructure projects often lack the incorporation of nature-based features crucial for enhancing resilience against climate change impacts, natural disasters, and environmental degradation. Constraints arise due to the absence of a unified approach, inhibiting consistent and effective implementation of NbS across diverse engineering projects and settings. Consequently, the need for a comprehensive MoP that provides clear guidelines, standardized methodologies, and performance-driven engineering approaches is necessary to bridge these gaps and drive sustainable infrastructure development forward.

**Opportunity:** MCC has expertise and experience fostering infrastructure development, which accounts for over 70% of the agency's development investments. This experience, the planning and implementation of ongoing investments, and expertise within MCC's Infrastructure, Environment and Private Sector (IEPS) division provides a strong foundation for this partnership. Leveraging MCC's existing knowledge base and initiatives provides a foundation to study and integrate real-world experiences, including from developing countries, and evidence-based practices into the development of the MoP.

Through the partnership, there is potential to foster widespread adoption and implementation of NbS within engineering projects. By engaging strategic partners, MCC seeks to create a MoP that sets a benchmark for standardized, science-based approaches in the field. This collaboration aims to enable engineers, planners, and key stakeholders to effectively integrate nature-based features into infrastructure projects, thereby enhancing resilience and sustainability outcomes. The anticipated impact includes improved infrastructure resilience against climate change impacts, enhanced environmental sustainability, and cost-effective solutions with evidence-based methodologies resulting from MCC's extensive international development project insights and industry experience. This effort should yield the following:

- Decision-making frameworks tailored to incorporate NbS considerations in the identification, design, and implementation phases of MCC infrastructure projects.
- Educational resources and training modules to build the capacity of MCC staff and stakeholders in understanding, implementing, and monitoring NbS in infrastructure projects.
- Improved MCC business processes by integrating NbS considerations into project identification, design, and implementation, ensuring alignment with global sustainability goals.
- Informed decision-making of MCC staff and stakeholders that integrates NbS in infrastructure development where appropriate.

This partnership will also provide a broader opportunity for enhancing NbS practice across other USG agencies and facilitate MCC's partner country opportunities to adopt NbS as part of their own sustainable development. The published MoP would facilitate knowledge sharing among engineers, planners, policymakers, economists, environmental practitioners, and other key stakeholders. It would also promote capacity building, enabling professionals to adopt best practices, leading to informed decision-making and implementation of NbS. Lastly, the MoP would enable the economic valuation of NbS, aiding in informed decision-making across the lifecycle of projects, which could lead to more cost-effective engineering solutions with positive social impacts.

**Potential Scope:** MCC currently has up to \$250,000 per year for up to three years allocated for this partnership, with partner(s) contributing in accordance with the cost share requirements noted in the APS solicitation through expertise, authorship, and committee co-chairing in developing the MoP for NbS in civil engineering encompassing:

1. **Development of Comprehensive Manual:** The primary focus will be on collaboratively developing a comprehensive Manual of Practice (MoP) that consolidates science-based methodologies, standardized guidelines, and best practices for integrating NbS into engineering projects. This MoP will serve as a centralized resource for engineers, planners, and stakeholders involved in infrastructure planning, design, and implementation.



2. **Technical Expertise and Guidance:** Leveraging specialized expertise, the partnership aims to identify, develop, and provide technical guidance, methodologies, and standardized approaches, culminating in the production of the MoP. This involves outlining performance-driven engineering methods, reliability engineering, risk analysis, resilience measurement, and decision-making frameworks embedded in sustainability metrics.
3. **Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing:** The partnership intends to facilitate capacity building among MCC and stakeholders, including engineers, environmental practitioners and policymakers, through knowledge-sharing platforms and dissemination of the manual's outcomes through publishing and digital availability on websites, inclusion in libraries, distribution through book retailers. This initiative targets enhanced awareness, understanding, and adoption of NbS in diverse environmental settings.
4. **Real-world Case Studies:** Incorporating real-world case studies and lessons learned from MCC's threshold and compact programs, potentially from Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Zambia, and others, will improve the manual with practical applications and examples. Case studies, including from MCC partner countries, will demonstrate successful NbS design and implementation, offering insights and guidance for future civil engineering projects.
5. **Stakeholder Engagement and Dissemination:** A key aspect involves engaging a wide network of engineers, practitioners, policymakers, and stakeholders to ensure the manual's relevance and applicability. Engagement and dissemination efforts will aim to reach key MCC stakeholders and a wider global audience through digital platforms and MCC's established networks, advocating for the adoption of NbS in infrastructure development.

As discussed during co-creation, work products that should be in-scope for the existing budget include:

- Broad literature review
- MCC Business Practice Tool
- Stakeholder and Systems mapping
- Products:
  - Checklist, questions, and how to specify NBS in projects
  - Catalogue of case studies
  - Training
  - Workshop series of technical experts / peer review process
  - Manual of Practice
  - M&E tools
  - Mechanism (e.g., portal) for information dissemination

As discussed during the co-creation workshop, the current approved budget ceiling of MCC's funding as stated above is 250,000 USD per year for up to three years. The proposal budget should be developed up to that amount excluding the cost share. However, as discussed during co-creation, MCC would welcome partners' recommendations for scaling up activities if there is additional budget and/or time. MCC makes no commitments at this time that additional budget will be available, but a good case for additional financial resources will be taken into consideration. Similarly, MCC mentioned being open to extending the agreement timeframe if there is good programmatic justification.

**Likely Locations/Countries of Operation or Application:** MCC and partners will work together to determine appropriate country case studies during co-creation during early-stage implementation. The potential choice of countries, such as Zambia, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone are strategic in terms of projects that offer diverse range of environmental and infrastructural contexts and sectors and are still



in the development phase. MCC already has active threshold and compact programs in these countries, focusing on infrastructure development, water resource management, and climate resilience and there is increasing recognition of the importance of NbS in addressing development challenges and enhancing infrastructure resilience and sustainability. This can include projects or sub-projects focused on NbS as well as incorporating grey/green design criteria as part of project design. There may also be new countries selected in December for compact or threshold development. For purposes of budgeting, MCC recommends planning for the engagement of two country programs (compact/THPs tbc) in the partnership's work.

These countries encompass diverse environmental contexts, including coastal regions, inland watersheds, and urban areas. These programs may provide tangible, real-world projects that can serve as valuable case studies for the MoP. This diversity allows for the creation of a comprehensive MoP that can be applicable across various engineering projects and sectors, maximizing the manual's impact and applicability. However, the final decision on the specific countries of operation will be made in consultation with MCC country teams, MCAs, and relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment with local needs and priorities.

**Ways That MCC's Contributions/Involvement Could Help Partners Achieve Public Benefits:** MCC's contributions and involvement in the partnership for developing the Manual of Practice (MoP) for NbS in civil engineering can significantly contribute to achieving public benefits in several ways:

1. **Knowledge Dissemination:** MCC's participation involves sharing insights, lessons learned, and technical expertise garnered through years of implementing development projects featuring infrastructure. This information, when incorporated into the MoP, becomes publicly accessible knowledge that benefits engineers, planners, policymakers, and other stakeholders working in civil engineering globally.
2. **Capacity Building and Awareness:** The partnership will allow for the incorporation of case studies and practical examples from MCC threshold and compact programs and elsewhere. These real-world examples, integrated into the MoP, serve as educational tools, raising awareness and building the capacity of stakeholders in applying NbS across various engineering projects.
3. **Open Access to Guidelines:** MCC's commitment to disseminating the MoP can include making the manual publicly available through online platforms, libraries, and book retailers. This ensures open access to guidelines and methodologies, benefiting a wider audience interested in implementing nature-based solutions, thus democratizing knowledge, and fostering wider adoption.
4. **Influence on Policy and Practice:** Through MCC's involvement, the MoP can influence policies, regulations, and best practices related to NbS in engineering. By advocating and demonstrating successful implementation through its projects, MCC can encourage the adoption of sustainable infrastructure practices at local, national, and international levels.
5. **Promoting Sustainable Infrastructure:** The MoP's focused on NbS aligns with MCC's goals of promoting sustainable infrastructure. By supporting the integration of these solutions into engineering practices, MCC's contributions assist in achieving broader public benefits, including enhanced environmental resilience, more sustainable infrastructure, and greater socio-economic well-being within the communities where such projects are implemented.

Further, MCC expects to be substantially involved in the partnership through approval of workplans, key personnel, and milestones; involvement in the development and/or refinement of the MoP and other

products of the partnership; and convening the United States Government interagency and others to promote the MoP and encourage the adoption of its principles.

#### **Parameters for How MCC's Funding Could Be Used:**

1. **Due Diligence and Manual Development:** MCC's funding will primarily support due diligence activities, research, and the development of the Manual of Practice (MoP) for NbS in engineering. This includes costs associated with gathering data, conducting studies, assembling case studies, consulting with MCC staff and country teams, convening technical committees, drafting, reviewing, editing, and producing the MoP.
2. **Dissemination and Access:** MCC's funds can also cover expenses related to publishing, dissemination, and accessibility of the MoP. This involves formatting the MoP for online accessibility through MCC's website, libraries, and book retailers. Partner accrediting and standards agencies could disseminate through their networks.
3. **Capacity Building and Stakeholder Engagement:** A portion of the funding will be allocated towards capacity building initiatives, training, and stakeholder engagement activities to ensure effective utilization and understanding of the MoP's content.
4. **Leveraging Partner Expertise:** The partner will provide in-kind support in the form of expertise, time consulting with MCC staff and country teams, authorship, and committee contributions for developing the MoP. These resources will contribute to the development and validation of methodologies outlined in the MoP as well as dissemination of learnings and manual itself.
5. **Excluded from Implementation Competition:** This stage does not involve the implementation of projects; hence, the partner's role in the due diligence or compact development stage will not necessarily lead to a subsequent implementation competition. This initial phase is focused on knowledge generation and sharing rather than the direct execution of projects. Any future steps for implementation will be determined based on the outcomes of the MoP's development phase.

**Cost Share Requirement:** Cost share requirements are outlined in the APS solicitation. This cost-share can be fulfilled through the partner's own resources, expertise, time consulting with MCC staff and country teams, authorship, and co-chairing committees involved in developing the Manual of Practice (MoP) for NbS in engineering. The in-kind contributions from the partner, as agreed upon, will be considered as a valuable contribution towards the development, review, and refinement of the MoP. The cost-share requirement ensures a collaborative and shared commitment towards achieving the partnership's objectives, leveraging the strengths and resources of both parties to create impactful and sustainable outcomes.

#### *COST SHARE REQUIREMENT*

To be eligible for award, non-profit entities applying under this NOFO Opportunity must commit a minimum 25% Cost Share of the total Federal funding amount.

To be eligible for award, for-profit entities applying under this NOFO Opportunity must commit a 1:1 match ratio (100% Cost Share) based on the total Federal funding amount (i.e., the for-profit entity must match or exceed the Federal funding amount on a dollar-for-dollar basis).

#### **H.6. LIST OF ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT ANNEXES**

##### ***Annex A – MCC Assistance Award Standard Provisions***