

# U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## Locally Led Development ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT (APS)

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### **Introduction**

Pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, the United States government as represented by the U.S Agency for International Development (USAID), Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment (E3), invites concept papers from a wide variety of local actors for assistance awards that advance locally led development. ***Locally led development refers to the extent to which local actors are empowered to lead priority-setting, decision-making, management, measurement, and other processes through which development assistance contributes toward improving systems and outcomes for development.***

This Annual Program Statement (APS), entitled Locally Led Development, offers USAID Operating Units (OUs: Missions, Bureaus, or Independent Offices) an easy-to-use mechanism to support development approaches that are responsive to local priorities and led by local actors while upholding the U.S. foreign policy objectives of promoting national security, advancing American values, and supporting global prosperity and self-reliance. It will support the Journey to Self-Reliance (<https://www.usaid.gov/selfreliance>) by empowering local actors to take the lead in identifying and addressing development challenges in their own communities. Under this APS, USAID intends to fund a wide range of flexible and innovative approaches to locally led development.

This APS does not serve as a general solicitation for locally led development concept papers. Interested Applicants must respond to specific addenda that may be issued throughout the year by OUs related to their specific priorities, objectives, and programs. OUs that are interested in issuing an addendum should contact the Locally Led Development APS Activity Manager as early as possible. These addenda, when added, can be found on Grants.gov under OU Addenda to the Locally Led Development APS. Respondent organizations must be local actors as defined in Section 2 of this APS and cannot have an annual operating budget composed of more than 50 percent USAID funding in any of the past three fiscal years. This cap applies to both prime and sub-grantees. U.S.-based organizations are not eligible as prime awardees under this APS. **The primary intent of this APS is to facilitate awards to local and non-traditional partners for locally led development approaches.**

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## **Section 1: APS Description**

Locally led development is a key tenet of USAID’s vision statement: “Our objective is to support partners to become self-reliant and capable of leading their own development journeys” (<https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/mission-vision-values>). The Locally Led Development APS was created by USAID’s Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment (E3) to expand the Agency’s work to empower local actors to lead priority-setting, decision-making, management, and measurement in their own communities. Furthermore, the APS seeks to build upon Agency policy, guidance, and emerging practice in the areas of systems thinking; collaboration; learning; and contextually-informed and adaptive design and management. It aims to advance USAID’s capability to work with local partners, to learn from these engagements, and to share this learning broadly.

This APS invites local actors to identify a wide range of flexible, innovative, and experimental approaches to address challenges in their communities, countries, or regions. Local actors are not required to propose a fully designed program for this APS - an approach that suggests a process to identify and then act on solutions from the local context is fully within the intent of this APS.

### **Learning Priorities**

This APS is designed to catalyze a process through which local actors can work with USAID to achieve development impact by testing and learning from approaches that incorporate at least one of the following learning priorities:

1. **Feedback Mechanisms** to ensure that information flows in various directions among local actors, partners, and USAID to improve program effectiveness and sustainability.
2. **Systems-and-Networks-Based Analytical Approaches**, which may allow us to better understand the complex environments in which we operate.
3. **Participatory Decision-Making**, which includes locally led priority-setting, collaborative design, and other means of devolving control and ensuring inclusive local leadership.
4. **Strengthening Local Networks** to connect local needs with local resources.
5. **Local Ownership Approaches to Design, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning** that prioritize local definitions of success.
6. **Supporting Strategic Transitions**, which includes strengthening the role of local institutions and actors to sustain outcomes without foreign assistance.

### **Leveraging Local Resources**

A respondent’s concept should leverage local resources in one or both of the following ways:

- The respondent organization or consortium contributes at least a 25 percent match of cash or in-kind resources (or any combination of the two) to the proposed activity
- The activity itself strengthens the capacity of local organizations to generate or leverage local resources beyond those provided by international donors

## **Response Instructions**

The Locally Led Development APS is not a Request for Applications or a Request for Proposals, and this APS does not serve as a general solicitation for locally led development concept papers. Interested Applicants must respond to specific addenda that may be issued throughout the year by OUs. OUs interested in issuing an addendum are also encouraged to contact the Locally Led Development APS Activity Manager as early as possible. The Activity Manager will provide an addendum template that identifies the information and material that a USAID OU must include in the addendum in order for it to be approved by the Activity Manager. USAID's Office of Local Sustainability will review and approve each proposed addendum to ensure it is in the spirit of the Locally Led Development APS. OUs are strongly encouraged to compose addenda in relevant local language(s). These addenda, when added, can be found on Grants.gov under OU Addenda to the Locally Led Development APS.

Addenda issued under the Locally Led Development APS will request concept papers from local actors for locally led development approaches. Based on those concept papers, the USAID OU will determine whether to co-create an activity or set of activities with any Applicant and then request a full application. If an OU decides a full application is warranted, full application instructions and/or templates will be provided to Applicants by the OU. An OU may also review all concept papers and decide to invite selected Applicants to enter a period of co-creation, in which they will collaborate on and refine approach(es) with one another. These groupings of Applicants will then submit new concept papers for consideration by the OU.

The submission of a concept paper under this APS helps USAID determine whether there is potential substantive and resource support for the concept before the prospective Applicant invests significant time and resources in the development of a full application. The co-creation process enables activity design that focuses on local priorities and draws on the knowledge of the people who will carry out the activities.

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to the OU point person listed on the addendum with any questions during this process. Concept papers must conform to the requirements outlined in Attachment A, and be submitted via email to the appropriate OU in accordance with procedures outlined in Section 3. **Do not submit concept papers via grants.gov as they will not be accepted.**

## **Funding**

This APS is not supported by specific funds. Any funding for activities proposed under this APS will be requested from the specific USAID OU with which the Applicant seeks to collaborate and to which the concept paper will be submitted.

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted under this APS. Please note that the determination of potential substantive and resource support DOES NOT constitute a commitment to fund a subsequently submitted full application.

## **Section 2: Eligibility and Award Information**

This APS is global and open to local actors working in all sectors. USAID welcomes concept papers responding to addenda from a wide variety of local actors who bring an understanding of the development challenges facing their communities or who demonstrate a way to determine local priorities in their approach. Respondent organizations should be local actors as described below and cannot have an annual operating budget composed of more than 50 percent USAID funding in any of the past three fiscal years. This cap applies to both prime and sub-grantees. US-based organizations are not eligible as prime awardees under this APS.

**USAID especially encourages applications from local organizations that have not worked with USAID before.** An individual cannot apply.

When determining if an entity is a “local actor” for the purposes of this APS, USAID will consider:

- Whether the entity is legally organized under the laws of the host country;
- Whether the entity has its principal place of business or operations in the host country;
- Whether the entity is majority owned and controlled by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the host country;
- Whether the entity is managed by a governing body, the majority of whom are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the host country;
- How and to what extent the entity is transparent, accountable, and responsive to the people they serve, including how it receives and responds to feedback from local people;
- Whether the entity has projects, offices, and/or registration in other countries, and whether key management decisions are taken by the office located in the host country or elsewhere; and
- What kinds of organizations the entity partners with and the nature of those partnerships.

While not an exhaustive list and provided for illustrative purposes only, the following types of non-U.S. organizations are encouraged to participate:

- Civic groups
- Colleges and universities
- Cooperatives
- Faith-based organizations
- Foundations
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Private businesses
- Trade associations

### **Award Threshold**

Awards issued under this APS may not exceed 25 percent of the prime awardee’s organization’s annual operating budget.

There are no limits on the number of awards that may be made by USAID OUs under this APS to a single organization. However, each organization may respond to each addendum issued by an OU with only one concept note.

### **Section 3: How to Respond**

**Step 1:** Interested Applicants should reflect on their own experience working in the local context and do any additional needed research to understand the topics and challenges set forth in the OU-issued addendum to the Locally Led Development APS. Applicants should also research and understand locally led development approaches, including the learning priorities in Section 1 of this APS. Applicants are encouraged to identify and collaborate with other stakeholders to the development challenge(s) in their community; cross-sector partnerships/consortia are especially encouraged.

**Step 2:** The Applicant submits a concept paper, no more than 5-pages in length, via email to the OU POC, following the guidance in Attachment A. Concept papers may either be in English or in a local language.

The OU responds with a confirmation receipt within one week of submission. All concept papers are reviewed based upon the criteria outlined in Section 4 of this APS.

**Step 3:** If selected to participate in the full application process, the Applicant is contacted by an Agreement Officer (AO) from the relevant OU and given a due date and template/instructions for the full application. Applicants will also be notified if not selected.

An OU may also review all concept papers and decide to invite selected Applicants to enter a period of co-creation (beginning on a date not limited to 90 days from the submission deadline), in which they will collaborate on and refine approach(es) with one another. These groupings of Applicants will then submit new concept papers for consideration by the OU.

**Step 4:** The Applicant collaborates with the OU and drafts the full application. Applicants are encouraged to ensure that any technical assistance/support for capacity development proposed as part of the application is sourced from organizations/individuals registered in the country. If in-country support is not available, Applicants are encouraged to look at possibilities in their region.

**Step 5:** The Applicant submits the full application via email by the due date specified in Step 3. Should the Applicant experience technical difficulties in the submission process, the Applicant should consult the OU POC for instructions.

**Step 6:** The full application is reviewed by a Selection Committee.

**Step 7:** The Applicant is informed by the AO of the Selection Committee's determination, which may include an "apparently successful" designation. The AO will also convey all other pre-award requirements. Additional negotiations regarding any technical and cost applications may be necessary.

All first-time Applicants for USAID funding that are deemed apparently successful are subject to a pre-award survey to verify that the Applicant has proper procedures in place to receive USAID funding. Please see ADS 303.3.8 and ADS 303.3.9.

**Step 8:** The AO sends an email to the Applicant containing the award document.

**Step 9:** The awardee's representative signs the award and returns it to the AO for their signature.

For general questions about this APS, please contact the Locally Led Development APS Activity Manager in the Office of Local Sustainability at [LLD-APS@usaid.gov](mailto:LLD-APS@usaid.gov).

USAID OUs issuing addenda must share the following items with the Locally Led Development APS Activity Manager:

- The proposed addendum (for approval)
- All submitted full applications (for information)
- Any monitoring, evaluation, and learning reporting from awardees (for information)
- Any knowledge products from awardees (for information)

## **Section 4: Concept Paper Review Criteria**

Any concept paper and thus any associated full application submitted under this APS should propose an approach that:

- Responds to a specific addendum issued by an OU under this APS
- Is locally owned, led, and responsive to local priorities
- Incorporates an approach(es) that reflect at least one of the learning priorities set forth in Section 1 of this APS
- Includes at least one of the approaches to leveraging local resources set forth in Section 1 of this APS

Concept papers and full applications that do not meet or exceed these requirements will not be considered. While merit criteria are paramount, cost considerations may also be a factor for award. Applicants are reminded that the U.S. Government is not obligated to make an award on the basis of lowest proposed cost or to the Applicant with the highest merit evaluation score.

### **Merit Review Criteria**

The merit review criteria below will be used by the relevant OU to review and evaluate concept papers and full applications submitted under this APS.

#### **A. Local Ownership, Leadership, and Relevance to Local Priorities**

The Applicant demonstrates a strong understanding of the local context.

The Applicant is a local actor, as defined in Section 2 of this APS.

The proposed approach substantively responds to local priorities or demonstrates a way to determine local priorities before beginning implementation.

The proposed approach effectively shifts the locus of development priority setting and response to local actors.

The Applicant demonstrates evidence of connection to broad, community-based networks.

The proposed approach substantively integrates cross-sector local partners in informing its design.

The approach itself strengthens a local system within a country or region to sustain a development result over time.

Technical assistance to carry out the approach or support organizational capacity development is sourced from organizations/individuals registered in the country or region.

## **B. Alignment with Addendum and Achievement of Development Impact**

The extent to which the proposed approach aligns with topics or challenges set forth in the OU-issued addendum

The extent to which the proposed approach may lead to any anticipated outputs, outcomes, results, and impacts articulated in an OU-issued addendum

The extent to which the proposed approach will integrate issues of gender equality and female empowerment through program design, implementation, and staffing in accordance with USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy.

## **C. Incorporation of Learning Priorities**

The proposed approach incorporates at least one of the research areas included in the learning priorities set forth in Section 1 of this APS.

The Applicant demonstrates an understanding of the proposed research area(s) and how utilizing learning related to the research area(s) will advance the overall goals of their approach.

The Applicant demonstrates a commitment to flexibility, learning, and adaptive management in response to shifting realities as they carry out the proposed approach.

## **D. Leveraging Local Resources & Sustainability of Results**

The proposed approach includes at least one of the approaches to leveraging local resources set forth in Section 1 of this APS.

The Applicant clearly articulates how they will manage the commitment of local resources over the duration of their activity.

The extent to which the outcomes, results, and impacts, as well as any activities that need to continue beyond the duration of a USAID award, will be sustainable without continued USAID funding or involvement after the award ends.

The extent to which USAID's investment in this work is expected to contribute to greater country self-reliance.

## **Attachment A: Concept Paper Format and Instructions**

The concept paper and supporting information should be submitted to the POC at the USAID OU from which the Applicant seeks to have an award. Concept notes may be submitted in a variety of electronic formats but should not exceed five pages in total length. Applicants may submit a concept note in English or in an approved local language.

Applicants should use their concept paper to propose an approach that:

- Responds to a specific addendum issued by an OU under this APS
- Is locally owned, led, and responsive to local priorities
- Incorporates an approach(es) that reflects at least one of the learning priorities set forth in Section 1 of this APS
- Includes at least one of the approaches to leveraging local resources set forth in Section 1 of this APS

### **SECTION 1 - SUMMARY INFORMATION**

A. Name and contact information of Applicant

B. Organization type and country of legal registration

C. Certification that the Applicant does not have an annual operating budget composed of more than 50 percent USAID funding in each of the past three fiscal years

D. Title of proposed activity

E. Overall objective of activity (1-2 sentences)

F. Name, contact information, and country of legal registration for other partner organizations collaborating on concept note (if any)

G. Name of the USAID OU to which this application is submitted

H. Amount of funding requested from USAID \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### **SECTION 2 – NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

Successful narrative descriptions will include a discussion of the components below:

1. **Local Ownership, Leadership, and Relevance:** Describe the goal of the proposed activity or set of activities. In what way will the proposed approach advance locally led development? How does the approach consider the broader system surrounding the development challenge it addresses?

*Selection Criteria:* Local Ownership, Leadership, and Relevance to Local Priorities

2. **Alignment:** Describe how the proposed approach aligns with the topics or challenges set forth in the addendum to this APS. How might the proposed approach and activities lead to the anticipated outputs, outcomes, results, and impacts articulated in the addendum? Remember that local actors are not required to propose a fully designed program for this APS - an approach that suggests a process to identify and then act on solutions from the local context is fully within the intent of this APS.

*Selection Criteria:* Alignment with Addendum and Achievement of Development Impact

3. **Learning:** Describe how the proposed approach incorporates at least one of the learning priorities set forth in Section 1 of this APS. How will focusing on the priority(ies) advance the overall goals of their approach? How does the Applicant demonstrate a commitment to flexibility, learning, and adaptive management in response to shifting realities as they carry out the proposed approach?

*Selection Criterion:* Incorporation of Learning Priorities

4. **Leveraging Local Resources:** How does the proposed approach include one or both of the approaches to leveraging local resources set forth in Section 3 of this APS? How will USAID's investment in this work contribute to greater country self-reliance?

*Selection Criteria:* Leveraging Local Resources and Sustainability of Results

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