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Conservation of Biodiversity and Management of Natural Resources Annual Program Statement for FY 2009

The Mission of the United States Agency for International Development invites applications from U.S. or non-U.S. organizations non-profit or for profit entities to implement “Conservation of Biodiversity and Management of Natural Resources” activities as described in this Annual Program Statement (APS) under grants or cooperative agreements.

The authority for this APS is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. Awards shall be made in accordance with 22 CFR 226, OMB Circulars A-21 (for universities) or A-122 (for non-profit organizations), ADS-303, and USAID Standard Provisions.

Subject to availability of funding, USAID anticipates awarding a limited number of grants in response to this APS. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, beginning March 31, 2009. However, USAID reserves the right to close this APS during this timeframe if it chooses to do so at any time before the closing date. Any/all awards under this APS will be issued by December 31, 2009.

Funding requests may be up for up to \$2 million for expenditure within two years. Applicants may submit additional requests for funding to support follow-on activities of original activities after year two. Applicants may be U.S. and non-U.S. non-profit or for-profit entities; however, no fee or profit will be paid to the grant or cooperative agreement recipient.

Applicants may submit their applications through any of the following means:

E-mail: someone@usaid.gov

By delivery: Ms. Jane Doe
Acquisition Specialist
Office of Regional Procurement
Box 1
Capital City, Country

Through Grants.gov website: Applications will also be accepted through www.grants.gov.
Visit Grants.gov website for application instructions.

Applicants are requested to submit both technical and cost portions of their applications in separate volumes and in electronic format (CD or email). If the application is sent via e-mail or submitted through www.grants.gov, a CD submission is not required. Award(s) will be made to the responsible applicant(s) whose application(s) offers the greatest value to the government.

This APS is issued as a public notice to ensure that all interested parties have a fair opportunity to submit applications for funding. Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor does it commit USAID to pay for the costs incurred in the submission of an application. Further, USAID reserves the right to reject any, or all, applications received. In addition, final award of any resultant grant(s) cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal USAID procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant; should circumstances prevent award, all preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

USAID has a limited amount of funding available for this and other activities, and anticipates that, at best, only a limited number of proposals will be funded. USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

This APS is being posted and can be downloaded in the Grants.gov website (www.grants.gov). Any amendments can likewise be downloaded from the website. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the application documents have been received from www.grants.gov in its entirety. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

Any questions concerning this APS should be submitted in writing or via e-mail to the contact above. If there are problems in downloading the APS, please contact us via e-mail. Applicants should retain for their records one copy of all enclosures which accompany their application.

Sincerely,

Supervisory Regional Agreement Officer

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Sample

CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY AND MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT FOR FY 2009 (February 3, 2009 to October 1, 2009)

This USAID Annual Program Statement (APS) solicits applications from prospective partners to implement activities to improve the conservation and management of priority biodiversity through the reduction of the most pressing threats to these critical ecosystems.

USAID will support programs and activities that contribute to “Conservation of Biodiversity and Management of Natural Resources”. Programs eligible for funding are those that contribute to the objectives, as described under “Background” below, of the Assistance Agreement between the host country and the United States of America for Environment and Energy Programs.

I. Background

A. Problem Statement

This country is largely a resource-based economy where the foundation for growth relies on conservation of finite resources. It ranks among the planet’s 17 “mega-diversity” countries that concentrate a disproportionate amount of terrestrial biodiversity, and is recognized as the world center of marine diversity. This unique and rich biodiversity, critical to economic growth and human health, is under constant threat of destruction. Forest loss is among the highest in the region, with reported annual deforestation estimated to have reached more than 300,000 in the 1980s. Today, less than 5 percent of old growth forests are intact with forest cover declining from about 70 percent (21 million hectares) in the early 1900s to about 17 percent (5.3 million hectares) in the late 1990s. More than 40% of the country’s industrial round wood comes from undocumented, presumably illegal, sources. Exploitation of remaining forests defeats conservation efforts and marginalizes rural communities. Similarly, traditional fishing grounds are 20-40 percent overfished, and experts warn that key fisheries may collapse in the next ten years. Over-fishing of near-shore fishing grounds and illegal and destructive fishing threaten the source of approximately 50 percent of the country’s dietary protein and impose costly externalities on other sectors. Population growth continues to increase pressures on the country’s valuable natural resource base. Pollution from inadequate solid waste management and sanitation jeopardizes both biodiversity and human health.

Resource degradation and loss of biodiversity are in part due to lack of effective conservation measures that are compatible with both local and national livelihoods, and economic opportunities and needs. By promoting participatory and transparent governance approaches to natural resources management, where benefits accrue to locally based stakeholders, sustainable management and biodiversity conservation can be achieved. Managing the country’s natural resources wisely (protecting the quantity, quality, and diversity) is critical. Marine, forest, land and water resources provide food security, employment and valuable environmental services such as water supply for hydropower, irrigation and industrial processing. Natural resource

degradation has a profound social and economic impact as reflected in both health and economic growth indicators. Competition over productive natural resources can also be a source of conflict. In one district, where abundant natural resources could make a significant contribution to the food and fiber needs of the nation, the stakes are particularly high.

In partnership with lead government partner agencies, USAID has supported activities aimed at “Conservation of Biodiversity and Management of Natural Resources.” This includes activities in high biodiversity areas to conserve natural resources, improve liquid and solid waste management. Activities seek to improve management of natural resources and delivery of environmental services through capacity strengthening; policy reform and implementation; better enforcement of environmental laws; broadening the base for environmental financing; and mitigating natural resource conflicts.

B. Eligible Activities

Activities eligible for submission under this APS seek to conserve biodiversity and manage natural resources in ways that maintain their long-term viability and preserve their potential to meet the needs of present and future generations. The following list provides a set of Illustrative Indicators to further elucidate the objectives of the activities to be undertaken. Indicators used must be consistent with the country’s Development Plan, as well as with GRP department plans of action and monitoring protocols.

- Number of hectares placed under improved natural resources (marine and terrestrial) management
- Number of hectares in areas of biological significance (marine and terrestrial) under improved management
- Number of hectares of natural resources (marine) showing improved biophysical conditions
- Number of hectares in areas of biological significance (marine) showing improved biophysical conditions
- Number of policies, laws, agreements or regulations (national and local) promoting sustainable natural resources management and conservation that are implemented
- Number of women and men trained in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation
- Water quality improved
- Number of tons of greenhouse gas emissions sequestered

C. USAID’s Biodiversity Code

Eligible activities must meet the criteria for USAID’s Biodiversity Code, which guides the Agency in determining what constitutes a biodiversity program. Within the code are four key criteria, all of which must be met to be considered a biodiversity program:

1. The program must have an explicit biodiversity objective, it isn’t enough to have biodiversity conservation result as a positive externality from another program;
2. Activities must be identified based on an analysis of threats to biodiversity;

3. The program must monitor associated indicators for biodiversity conservation;
4. Site-based programs must have the intent to positively impact biodiversity in biologically significant areas.

Additional information on USAID's Biodiversity Code may be found at: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/environment/biodiversity/code.html, while general information describing USAID's overall approach to biodiversity conservation can be found in *Biodiversity Conservation: A Guide for USAID Staff and Partners* at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/environment/biodiversity/usaid_pubs.html.

D. Areas of Interest

Further information on areas of interest can be found in a report done as part of USAID strategic planning entitled: *FAA Report: Conservation of Tropical Forests and Biological 2008*. This is a U.S. Government mandated assessment prepared periodically to inform USAID investment in conservation of tropical forests and biodiversity. The report examines the inventory and status of forests and biodiversity within a socioeconomic, environmental policy and biophysical context, and discusses the institutions and policies that are in place to protect and manage them. The report identifies major threats to these resources, along with their underlying causes. The report concludes with a brief discussion of some primary opportunities for interventions, including some specific recommendations on potential areas for USAID investment. The report may be found on the USAID mission's web site.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this APS is to disseminate information about USAID "Conservation of Biodiversity and Management of Natural Resources" program and activities for FY 2009 to ensure that interested parties will have a fair opportunity to submit applications for funding. This APS also explains the process and criteria for evaluating applications, including concept papers and full proposals.

Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor does it commit USAID to pay for the costs incurred in the submission of an application. Further, USAID reserves the right to reject any, or all, applications received. Finally, USAID has a limited amount of funding available for this and other activities, and anticipates that, at best, only a limited number of proposals will be funded.

III. Authority

The Annual Program Statement is authorized in accordance with the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

IV. Eligibility

Applicants may be U.S. or non-U.S. including non-profit or for-profit entities. However, no fee or profit will be paid to the grant or cooperative agreement award recipient. Applicants that are

selected for funding, who are first time recipients of USAID funds, may have to undergo pre-award financial and management reviews, to ensure the applicant's management systems comply with USAID standards.

V. Instructions to Applicants

All interested applicants must submit a proposal describing the activity, explaining how the applicant intends to carry out the program and clearly describing the work to be undertaken. The proposal should provide a complete overview of the program's design and implementation, and be a stand-alone representation of the proposed program. The proposal should also provide a detailed description of how the progress and achievements of the program will be monitored, measured and assessed. The technical approach should also include gender considerations with a focus on the participation and benefits to each gender group.

Technical proposals shall not exceed 15 pages, excluding attachments. Technical proposals that exceed that limit will not be reviewed. There is no page limit for the Cost Proposal. Excessively elaborate presentations should be avoided.

Proposals submitted should be in the following format:

1. Table of Contents listing all page numbers and attachments;
2. Project Abstract/Executive Summary (not to exceed one page);
3. Proposed Activities (problem statement, project description, proposed outcomes and impact indicators, gender and sustainability considerations, and the organization's qualifications and past experience);
4. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan (not to exceed two pages);
5. Appendix (should be lettered; e.g. Appendix A, and can include the resumes of key personnel, letters of support, letters from public entities, maps, and other supporting documents, etc.);
6. Cost Proposal. The required forms are as follows:
 - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
 - Budget Information, Non-construction Programs (SF-424A)
 - In addition, a budget narrative, which provides cost detail to support the cost elements proposed on the SF-424A (Applicants must provide the necessary cost detail)

The proposals shall take into account the technical evaluation criteria as outlined below under Section VI B.

VI. Evaluation of Proposals

USAID will apply the following evaluation process and criteria to all proposals:

A. Evaluation Process: Proposals received in response to this Annual Program Statement will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria stipulated in Section VI B. If the proposal does not satisfy all of the criteria but generally has merit (particularly in terms of technical approach and strategic fit) USAID may ask the applicant to resubmit the proposal.

For proposals determined by USAID to have the highest technical merit, USAID will initiate negotiations for either a grant or a cooperative agreement, whichever USAID decides is appropriate. Additional information may be required at this stage. Likewise, USAID will inform unsuccessful applicants in writing, explaining briefly why the proposal was not selected for funding.

Until a grant or cooperative agreement document is signed by the Agreement Officer, no program expenditures will be paid by USAID.

B. Evaluation Criteria: Proposals received in response to this APS will be evaluated against the following selection criteria (the total number of points is 100):

1. *Strategic Fit:* The likelihood that the program for which funding is sought will make a significant contribution towards achieving the objectives set forth in this APS and areas for action identified above. (10 Points)
2. *Technical Approach:* Viability of the proposed technical approach, i.e., the proposed technical approach can reasonably be expected to produce the intended outcomes. In addition, the application should indicate how the proposed activities will be tracked, measured and reported. (35 Points)
3. *Organizational Effectiveness:* The ability of the organization to positively affect “Conservation of Biodiversity and Management of Natural Resources.” The proposal should demonstrate the organization’s effectiveness in terms of internal structure, technical capacity, and key personnel, in meeting its stated objectives. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability. (15 Points)
4. *Sustainability:* The likelihood that the programs being supported will continue beyond and without USAID funding. (10 Points)
5. *Cost Effectiveness:* The design of the activity in terms of its ability to achieve the objectives at lowest reasonable cost, including completeness, credibility and realism. Special consideration will be given to applicants who will contribute or leverage significant private and/or non-USAID funding towards achievement of the objective. (15 Points)
6. *Gender Issues and Disenfranchised Populations:* Applications should include a statement outlining issues related to both gender and disenfranchised populations (such as indigenous peoples) and how the applicant proposes to address these issues. (5 Points)
7. *Past Performance:* All applicants will be subject to a past performance review. Applicants must submit a list of all contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs over the past three years prior to receiving an award. Reference information shall include the location, current telephone numbers, points of contact, and award numbers if available. A brief description of work performed is also required. USAID reserves the right to solicit relevant information concerning an applicant’s past performance and may consider such information. (10 points)

C. Application Clarification: USAID may require applications to be clarified or supplemented to the extent considered necessary for evaluation through additional written submission(s).

D. Awards: Award(s) will be made to the responsible organization(s) whose proposed program, offers the best value to USAID. USAID may award cooperative agreements, grants and/or fixed obligation grants resulting from this solicitation. Awards to U.S. organizations will be in accordance with 22 CFR 226, Mandatory Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Recipients, and the Required as Applicable Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Recipients, all of which are available at the USAID Internet Site: <http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads>.

E. Cost Sharing: For this APS solicitation, the minimum cost contribution is 10 percent of the total cost. However, it should be noted that USAID is strongly encouraging applicants to contribute or leverage significant private and/or non-USAID resources towards achievement of the objectives of the program. Cost share may be provided as cash or as in-kind cost share. In-kind cost share must directly relate to the scope of specific program.

VII. Administration of Awards

The awards will be administered in accordance with all applicable USG regulations. These documents are available at <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>.

Awards will include language prohibiting transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism and any other required certificates. They also will require the inclusion of this prohibition in all subcontracts and sub-awards. For all organizations, the financial management capability may be assessed through a pre-award survey.

VIII. Points of Contact

Please direct technical queries to:

John Doe
Chief
Office of Energy and Environment
USAID
Tel: +123 456 7890; Fax: +123 456 7891

Email: someone@usaid.gov

Submit applications to:

Jane Doe
Acquisition Specialist
Office of Regional Procurement
USAID
Capital City, Country
Tel: +987 65 4321; Fax: +987 65 4320

Email: someone2@usaid.gov

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

Disclaimer: While there are numerous firms that offer to provide assistance in preparing concept papers and applications, USAID does not endorse any of these. Further, any costs incurred for such services would not be reimbursable by USAID, in the event a Grant is issued.