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Deadline for Receipt of Questions: April 3, 2019
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Subject: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) # **72061219RFA00002**
Program Title: Restoring Fisheries for Sustainable Livelihoods in Lake Malawi (REFRESH)
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 98.001

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The United States Agency for International Development in Malawi (USAID/Malawi) is seeking applications for a cooperative agreement from qualified entities to implement the Restoring Fisheries for Sustainable Livelihoods in Lake Malawi (REFRESH) program. Eligibility for this award is not restricted.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Malawi intends to make one award to the applicant who best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this NOFO subject to a risk assessment. Eligible parties interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and selection process.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this NOFO. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity and to ensure that the NOFO has been received from the internet in its entirety. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section D.6.g. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section D. The deadline for questions is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to www.grants.gov.

Issuance of this notice of funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of comments/suggestions or an application. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Martin", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Paul Martin
Agreement Officer

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SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1. Introduction

The Restoring Fisheries for Sustainable Livelihoods in Lake Malawi (REFRESH Lake Malawi) activity is a fisheries restoration intervention in Malawi to foster ecosystem based and participatory fisheries management in Lake Malawi. Lake Malawi is the world's most biologically diverse lake with more than 1,000 fish species and approximately 14 percent of global freshwater fish biodiversity. Overfishing and habitat destruction are threatening its ecosystem stability. Freshwater ecosystems cover approximately 22 percent of the surface area of Malawi. Lake Malawi has over 800 cichlids species of which 99 percent are endemic. The fisheries sector supports livelihoods, contributes approximately 4 percent of Gross Domestic Product and employs over 500,000 people. Artisanal fishing has long been the livelihood for lakeshore communities in Malawi. Fish constitutes 70% of the animal protein consumed by Malawians.¹ For years, fishers in Malawi have experienced reduced catches per unit effort, diminished species variety, and a corresponding decrease in their income.

There have been previous efforts by the Government of Malawi and various development partners to understand the biophysical and socio-economic dynamics of multi-species fisheries in Lake Malawi as the lake provides more than 90% of the fish supply in Malawi.² Similarly, previous USAID investments through Fisheries Integration of Society and Habitats (FISH), Community Partnerships in Sustainable Resources Management (COMPASS) I and II and other development partners' (DPs) investments through African Development Bank's (ADB) Lake Malawi Artisanal Fisheries Management and GIZ's National Aquatic Resources Management Program (NARMAP) laid the groundwork for Participatory Fisheries Management (PFM) through empowering communities and district councils in fisheries management in key water bodies in Malawi. Although the Government of Malawi strives to decentralize fisheries management and consolidate local governance in fisheries management at an ecosystem scale, the previous investments have not yielded the anticipated impacts of secure resource tenure and stewardship.

A.2. Purpose

The purpose of the REFRESH activity is to conserve the freshwater biodiversity of Lake Malawi by restoring the natural fisheries productivity in the lakeshore districts of Karonga, Rumphi, Likoma, Nkhata Bay, Nkhotakota, Salima, Dedza and Mangochi. Its sub-purposes are: a) the targeted Lake Malawi aquatic habitats are healthy and well-managed; b) the endemic fish populations of targeted parts of Lake Malawi are healthy and self-sustaining; and c) the fisheries in the targeted parts of Lake Malawi are managed sustainably by 2024.

The REFRESH activity will aim to achieve the following outcomes;

- Outcome 1 - Fisheries governance and regulatory framework strengthened;
- Outcome 2 - Ecosystem-based fisheries management improved;
- Outcome 3 - Decentralization of fisheries management strengthened;
- Outcome 4 - Commercialization of conservation enterprises to counter unsustainable fishing catalyzed and supported; *and*
- Outcome 5 - CDCS priorities for integration advanced.

¹ Government of Malawi (2016) National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy, Department of Fisheries

² Government of Malawi, Annual Economic Reports, 2017, 2018

REFRESH plans to support the Government of Malawi (GoM) to scale up of the best practices promoted under: a) the USAID supported Fisheries Integration of Society and Habitats (FISH) activity; b) National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (2016); c) the National Chambo Restoration Strategic Plan. REFRESH aligns with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III (2017), the National Agricultural Policy (2017), the National Agricultural Investment Plan (2018), the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2025), the National Decentralization Policy (1998) and the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (2016), which clearly underscore the significance of fisheries development in economic growth. In addition, the National Resilience Strategy (2018) under Pillar 1 of Resilient Agricultural Growth promotes sustainable capture fisheries and aquaculture production for both domestic and export markets. The Government of Malawi recognizes that fisheries conservation and management should be integrated with sustainable production of fish resources for food security. However, currently uncontrolled fishing operations of commercial trawlers, due to weak law enforcement, and the Department of Fisheries' apparent reluctance to transfer legal mandates to fisheries associations, are watering down the dividends from participatory fisheries management.

Additionally, the activity reinforces the USAID Biodiversity Policy which recognizes that Lake Malawi as a biologically significant ecosystem. Cognizant of the USAID/Malawi Mission's goal of improving Malawians' quality of life, the activity responds to the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Development Objective 2 of Sustainable Livelihoods Increased and IR 2.1: Resilience to climate change strengthened. The activity is a critical component of the Sustainable Livelihoods project which runs from 2016 to 2023 and will address the Project Outcome of Biodiversity Conserved under which fisheries biodiversity of Lake Malawi falls. REFRESH recognizes the need to integrate, collaborate and leverage support from the new Modern Cooking for Healthy Forests, Feed the Future, Food for Peace's new Development Food Security activity and other donor programs in Malawi in sustainable watershed management.

A.3. Background and Problem Analysis

Agriculture forms the basis of the Malawian economy. It represents over 38 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs over 85 percent of the labor force.³ Unfortunately, the agriculture sector faces a myriad of challenges: small land holdings, a poorly developed seed sector, weak agricultural extension services, limited access to finance, uncertainty due to climate change, significant policy constraints, and meagre irrigation infrastructure meaning a near-total dependence upon timely and sufficient rains. A changing climate and world price fluctuations of Malawi's few cash crops for export expose families and the economy to external shocks undermining economic growth. Partly as a result of these challenges, 70 percent of the population of Malawi lives below the poverty line.⁴ The cumulative effect of these challenges is widespread food insecurity and compromised health and nutrition for large segments of the population.

Malawi is endowed with abundant natural resources including animals, forests, fish and other aquatic life which are important for agriculture and the tourism industry. These natural resources contribute to the socio-economic development of the country through employment, food security and general livelihoods of rural people. Recently these natural resources have come under serious pressure from illegal and unsustainable utilization which leads to resource degradation, loss of habitats and biodiversity, and deprives Malawi of its natural and cultural capital and opportunities for sustainable economic development.

Put simply, the current rates at which Malawi's biodiversity, natural resources and associated ecosystem services are being degraded or lost constrain economic growth and diminish quality of life. The future

³ USAID (2013) Country Development Cooperation Strategy-Malawi (2013-2018), Public Version

⁴ *ibid*

well-being of Malawi's population hinges to a significant extent on reversing these trends. Malawi has made remarkable progress in developing fisheries policies and an overarching regulatory framework over the past decades. Implementing those policies and regulations, however, is weak and ineffective. Measurable results in the recovery of species and their habitats are not at the levels desired. Structural issues constraining policy implementation include weak inter-agency coordination and collaboration, weak technical staff capacity and retention, and a weak governance regime and unstable rule of law. These constraints are amplified by political interference at both central and local government levels, and severe budgetary challenges. The REFRESH activity aims to address these underlying challenges and threats to the natural resources in the fragile ecosystems described further below.

Threats to fish biodiversity

Lake Malawi is the most significant freshwater ecosystem for biodiversity conservation and livelihood security. Central to participatory fisheries management (PFM) is the role of Beach Village Committees as fisheries governance structures in regulating the fishery management through enforcement of bylaws and management plans in their respective areas of jurisdiction. Recently the FISH activity supported sound sustainable fisheries management and increased evidence based analysis on decentralized fisheries management decision making. However, the investment dividends are compounded by the underlying challenges of rampant rural and urban poverty mixed with the lack of sufficient political will and uncoordinated donor effort to arrest the key roots of these development problems. The greatest challenge for Malawi is to ensure conservation and sustainable use of fish resources while dealing with equally pressing and important issues of food and nutrition security, energy security, rapid human population growth, extreme poverty, high illiteracy levels, high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates and harmonization of policies and legislation in the country.

Numerous research indicates that catch per unit effort decreased fourfold as fishers have had to work harder to catch smaller fish.⁵ The most valuable fish *Oreochromis* “chambo” has shown similar dramatic declines in catches since the 1980s, due primarily to excessive fishing pressure from inadequate management.⁶ With the combination of over-fishing, shrinking mesh sizes for nets, degradation of spawning grounds and nursery areas, and limited adherence to sustainable management practices, 102 Malawian fish species are listed as endangered. The estimated cost of unsustainable fishing practices in Malawi, just in terms of catch and yield and not including other economic values such as biodiversity, is \$28 million annually⁷. Research further indicates that fish biodiversity and its population are greatly affected by reduced lake depth due to siltation. The depth of the most fragile lakes in Malawi has drastically reduced with devastating impacts on surrounding fishing communities.

Research also indicates that the knowledge and capacity base for decision making and sustainable fisheries management in Malawi is limited. Regular fish stock assessments are rarely undertaken, leading to a poor understanding of the effectiveness of previous participatory fisheries management approaches. In addition, limited support for extension in participatory fisheries management translates to restricted flow of information between stakeholders and further aggravates the capture fisheries problem.

Decentralized fisheries management and governance

Despite efforts to improve fisheries governance, there is still a long way to overcome many of the challenges that the capture fisheries sector faces. The decentralization drive of fisheries management --of

⁵ Kasulo V and Perrings, C. (2006) “Fishing down the value chain: Biodiversity and access regimes in freshwater fisheries — the case of Malawi.” *Ecological Economics*. 59: 106-114.

⁶ Bell, Richard J., Jeremy S. Collier, Daniel Jamu, Moses Banda. 2012. “Changes in the biomass of chambo in the southeast arm of Lake Malawi: A stock assessment of *Oreochromis* spp.” *Journal of Great Lakes Research*. 38(4): 7210-729.

⁷ Yaron, Gil, Ronald Mangani, John Mlawa, Patrick Kambewa, Steve Makungwa, Austin Mtethiwa, Spy Munthali, William Mgoola, and John Kazembe. 2011. *Economic Valuation of Sustainable Natural Resource Use in Malawi*. Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.

giving more responsibility to Local Governments, and Village-based Committees, such as Beach Village Committees (lakes), Riverine Village Committees (rivers)--did not yield the anticipated community empowerment results in the last decades as traditional authorities and non-representative entities dominated the decision making process.⁸ The participatory fisheries governance and management systems are usually characterized by profound disenfranchisement by fish resource users, total non-adherence and non-observance of the fisheries rules and regulations and corruption. The resulting governance challenges create a management vacuum and a *de facto* open access system which includes unregulated and illegal harvesting of fish resources which the government is grappling with now. This rampant lawlessness on freshwater capture fisheries in Lake Malawi calls for “*business unusual*” investments from the GoM and its development partners to help reinforce law enforcement and bring win-win “self-reliance” solutions to the struggling capture fisheries industry. The Department of Fisheries and district councils are usually under-capacitated and under-resourced to conduct meaningful resource patrols and enforcement of the law. The justice system in regard to fisheries crimes is so mundane that the culprits are usually under-punished hence not the effective deterrent to the errant fishers to commit future fisheries crimes. Hara (2005) observed that it is pertinent for fisheries projects to answer this thought-led question: “What measures are needed to get fishers to voluntarily advance their collective interests at the expense of their individual interests?”⁹ The REFRESH activity aims to understand to what extent fishers are willing to accept the regulations as appropriate and consistent with their persisting values. Legitimacy of a set of regulations is related to at least four factors.¹⁰

- 1) *Content of the regulations*: The more that regulations concede with the way fishers themselves define their problems, the greater will be their legitimacy.
- 2) *Distributional effects*: The more equitably restrictions are imposed, the more legitimate will the regulations be seriously regarded.
- 3) *Making of the regulations*: The more fishers are involved in the formulation and in the decision-making process in general, the more legitimate the regulatory process will be perceived.
- 4) *Implementation of the regulations*: The more directly involved fishers are in enforcing the regulations, the more the regulations will be accepted as legitimate.

The Applicant is expected to scale up the operationalization of PFM, drawing upon and modifying, as appropriate, the six policy step PFM guide¹¹ which aims to enhance legitimacy of the fisheries management plans and by-laws. During the FISH period, the fisheries community by-laws were adopted by district councils for more legitimate implementation as the community by-laws were contested in magistrate’s courts.

A.4. Geographic Focus

REFRESH envisages supporting the GoM to conserve the most biodiverse Lake Malawi to improve fish conservation/management and productivity, and livelihood security. Department of Fisheries’ Annual Economic Reports indicate that over 95% of the fish catch by volume come from Lake Malawi.¹² It is proposed that the activity will primarily target the lakeshore districts covering Mangochi, Dedza, Salima, Nkhonkhotakota, Nkhata Bay, Likoma, Rumphi and Karonga.

⁸ Njaya, Friday, Steve Donda, and Christophe Bene. 2011. “Analysis of Power in Fisheries Co-Management: Experiences from Malawi.” Society of Natural Resources. 0:1-15.

⁹ Hara M. (2005) Case for compliance studies to improve management of the Chambo on the south east arm of Lake Malawi in Banda, M., D. Jamu, F. Njaya, M. Makuwila and A. Maluwa (eds.) 2005. The Chambo Restoration Strategic Plan. WorldFish Center Conference Proceedings 71, 112 p.

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ Government of Malawi (2016) A Guide to Participatory Fisheries Management in Malawi: Volume 1: Implementation Guidelines.

¹² Government of Malawi, Annual Economic Reports, 2017, 2018

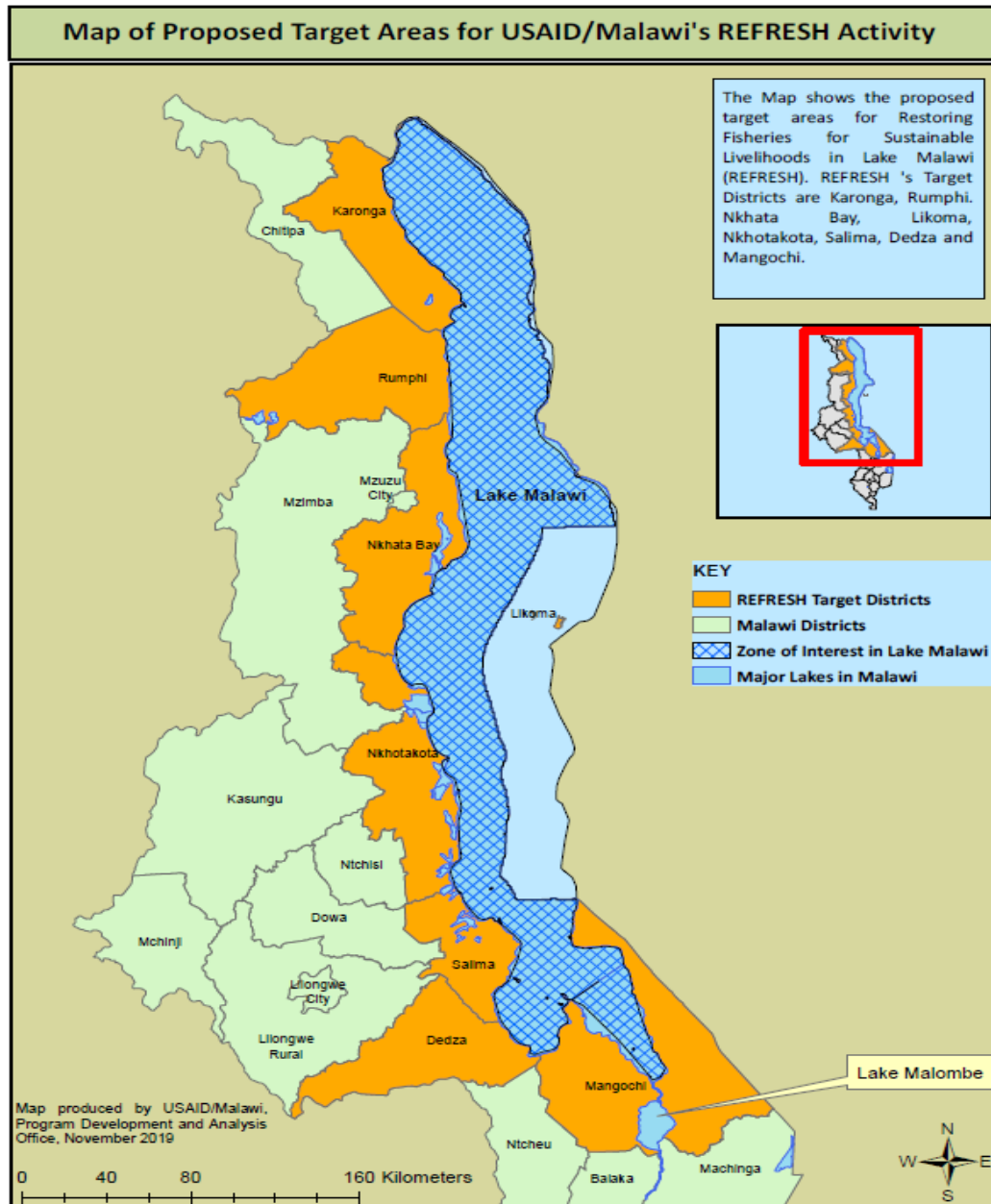


Figure 1: Proposed target areas for the REFRESH Activity

A.5. Results/Logical Framework and Outcomes

The illustrative Logical Framework for REFRESH, including how the activity fits into USAID/Malawi's broader CDCS (2013-2019), is presented in Figure 2 below. The REFRESH logframe was developed from the Situation Models and Results Chains which USAID/Malawi developed through a consultative process to understand the development context around fish biodiversity conservation and capture fisheries in Lake Malawi. These objectives coupled with subsequent outcomes are integrated in improving sustainable PFM; the outcomes complement one another and emanated from the strategic approaches identified in the Situation Models. The activity aligns with the Immediate Result (IR) 2.1 of the CDCS

Results Framework, “*Resilience to climate change strengthened*” and the activity objectives support the broader Development Objective (DO) of “*Sustainable livelihoods increased*” and Sustainable Livelihoods’ Outcome 3.3: “*Biodiversity conservation increased*” and the CDCS goal of “*Malawian’s quality of life improved*.”

Activity Purpose: Lake Malawi freshwater ecosystem conserved. The sub-purposes are 1) Sub-purpose 1: By 2024, Lake Malawi’s aquatic habitats are sustainably managed; 2) Sub-purpose 2: By 2024, the fish populations of Lake Malawi are restored; and 3) Sub-purpose 3: By 2024 the fisheries in the Lake Malawi are managed sustainably.

Development Hypothesis: The illustrative hypothesis posits that **IF** the ecosystem based fisheries management and governance are improved and strengthened; the capacity of the national and local governments to enforce fisheries laws is strengthened and decentralized; and conservation enterprises that reduce direct threats to overfishing and habitat destruction are commercialized, promoted and adopted, **THEN** fish biodiversity will be conserved leading to restoring capture fisheries in Lake Malawi freshwater ecosystem.

However the applicants are free to re-work the development hypothesis to the best of their knowledge on which interventions are plausible enough to arrive at the desired goal which will be refined further at the start-up workshop after awarding this activity.

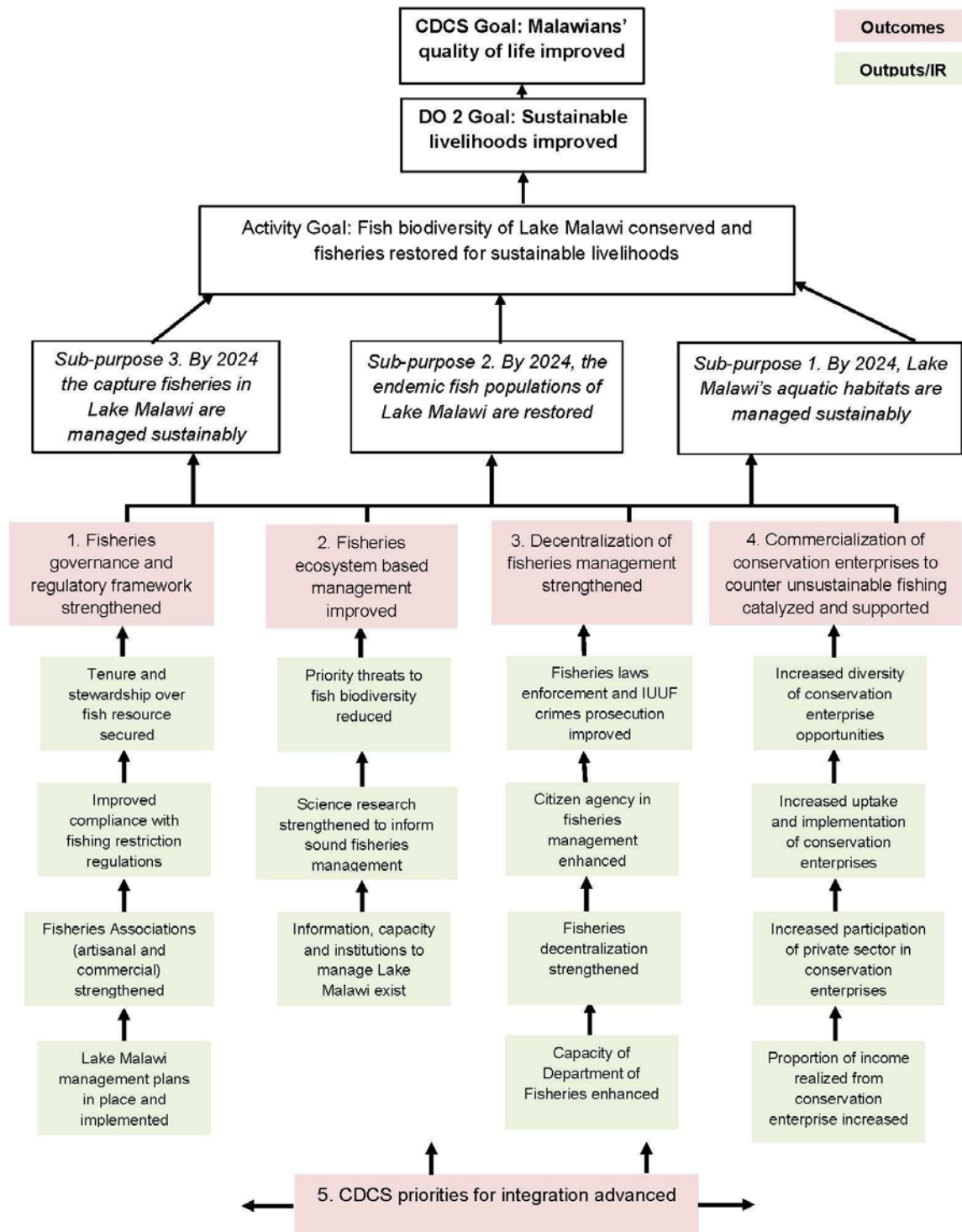


Figure 2: Illustrative logical framework for REFRESH

Outcomes:

1. *Fisheries governance strengthened and its regulatory framework improved*

Despite efforts to improve fisheries governance, varying capacities of Local Governments, and Village-based Committees, such as Beach Village Committees (artisanal) and Commercial Fishers Association (trawlers) have resulted in mixed appreciation of the effectiveness of strengthening fisheries governance. Efforts to improve participatory fisheries governance and management systems have more often than not been affected by adverse intrusion from Traditional Authorities (TAs) and limited representation of fish resource users in fisheries governance committees. Additionally unclear decision-making processes and authorities led to profound disenfranchisement by fish resource users. Total non-adherence and non-observance of the adopted rules and regulations governing the decentralized fisheries management framework have characterized the status quo for some decades.¹³ These among others create a management vacuum and a de facto open access system characterized by illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUUF). This state of lawlessness on Lake Malawi calls for “*business unusual*” innovative investments from the GoM, development partners, private sector and civil society to resuscitate the struggling capture fisheries industry. The applicants should explore how the fisheries regulations (management plans, by-laws) could be promoted and improved. The applicants should explore ways to restrict access or exclude other fishers (i.e., managed access) as one of the workable mechanisms to reduce fishing pressure, restore natural productivity and ensure stronger tenure rights to fish resources on Lake Malawi. Additionally the applicants should include pathways on how equitably could the local fisheries governance structures (Beach Village Committees, District Councils and others) implement this phased approach of exclusion and describe its positive or negative consequences.

2. *Ecosystem based fisheries management strengthened*

Lake Malawi’s ecosystem requires workable and cost-effective interventions to restore capture fisheries for biodiversity conservation, food and livelihood security. The applicants should look into ways how to address the underlying challenges to the Department of Fisheries and resource users failing to execute data or evidence-based fisheries management and/or undertake catch assessment surveys and beach recording and science-based stock assessments. It would be critical for the applicants to explain how they would work closely with Fisheries Research Units (Monkey Bay and Senga Bay) in building their capacities in the areas stated above. REFRESH envisages that Lake Malawi ecosystem based fisheries management should include some riverine migratory fish species in Bua, Linthipe, Dwangwa and Dwambazi rivers. Considering that Lake Malawi is a shared ecosystem among Mozambique, Tanzania and Malawi, and that there is a Memorandum of Understanding between Malawi and Mozambique on fisheries and aquaculture development, the applicants should describe how they would support the DoF materialize this transboundary cooperation. Both artisanal and commercial fishers are critical players in fisheries management that needs a common agenda. There have been conflicts between artisanal and commercial fishers over fish resources in particular artisanal fishers’ areas of jurisdiction- the breeding areas for most Tilapia cichlids. The conflicts border on restrictions of who should fish; what type and size of fish with what type and size fishing gear; when (periods of the season) to fish; where to fish and why. Rampant lack of understanding around the logic or science about input and output restrictions on fisheries undermines urgency to participate in good fisheries governance. The misuse of insecticide treated mosquito nets is emerging to be a big problem that needs an integrated approach with the National Malaria Control Program.¹⁴ Since REFRESH would require a number of specialized skills in advancing sustainable fisheries management in Lake Malawi, the applicants should outline what type of partnerships and/or alliances are foreseen as necessary to effectively and successfully implement an ecosystem based

¹³ Hara, Mafiniso. 2008. “Dilemmas of Democratic Decentralization in Mangochi District, Malawi: Interest and Mistrust in Fisheries Management.” *Conservation and Society* 6(1): 74–86.

¹⁴ Vector Works (2017) Final Report: Assessing the use of mosquito nets for fishing in Malawi

management for Lake Malawi. Based on the applicant's previous experiences delivering similar and relevant services with the purpose of promoting ecosystem based fisheries management, the applicant should explicitly describe what approaches/methods were the most beneficial and what challenges proved to be barriers or limitations.

3. *Decentralization of fisheries management strengthened*

Decentralization is the democratic concept that aims to achieve inclusiveness and fostering the agency of the public domain in various sectoral spheres. Functional decentralization reduces transaction costs and produces better accountability of decision makers to the local communities. In this sense, strengthening citizen agency in collective decision making and action is essential for successful political, administrative and fiscal decentralization.¹⁵ However, decentralization of fisheries management from the central government to lower tier actors such as district councils or resource users is rolling out at a snail's pace despite some significant reforms gaining noticeable traction such as human resource decentralization. The district council's capacity to manage fisheries resources is very weak as the function has been part of the central government from the colonial times. It is very expedient to foster decentralization of fisheries management at district councils which would ultimately lead to sound ownership and better regulation of the fisheries sector, and gain fiscal attention the sector desperately needs at the local government level. The Department of Fisheries at the national level, the District Fisheries Office, the Magistrate Courts (Judiciary) and largely the district councils (local governments) in the targeted districts possess varying inadequate operational, administrative and infrastructural capacities to undertake these core functions of decentralized fisheries management. The law enforcement and adjudication functions have been undermined by low intrinsic staff morale and motivation and high lawlessness to adhere to fisheries rules and regulations, inefficient justice service delivery largely arising from intrinsically weak community fisheries by-laws and weak application of the fisheries laws of the land by the Judiciary. Considering that the fisheries law enforcement and extension functions have, to some degree, been devolved to district councils and inherent governance related challenges that the capture fisheries faces, the applicants should describe practical interventions to support district council's capacity in carrying out these functions wherever feasible. Additionally the capacity of civil society should be strengthened to foster entrenchment of resource tenure and stewardship, compliance, accountability and transparency in an effort to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing on Lake Malawi.¹⁶ Integration or coordination with USAID's Local Government Accountability and Performance activity (LGAP) will be critical in achieving this outcome.

4. *Commercialization of conservation enterprises to counter unsustainable fishing promoted and supported*

Unsustainable utilization of natural resources management, -- overfishing and fish habitat destruction-- in search for livelihoods and income, results in the decline of fish stocks. The problem is exacerbated by a lack of viable alternative and complementary economic opportunities in the rural economies where fishing takes place. Previous conservation enterprises which would have deterred new fishers from entering the fishing industry and enticed the existing fishers to leave the industry and opt for equally profitable conservation enterprises faced scalability and sustainability challenges. Lack of sound business development services such as access to market information, business planning, record keeping by Small Medium Enterprise agencies and access to capital by the fishers still prevails in the lakeshore areas. The other angle would be to broaden the fish threat reduction focused conservation enterprises as a way to reduce the reliance on extracting fish resources. This can be done by supporting a comprehensive enterprise enabling environment with relevant business development agencies such as financial services providers, and business development services (BDS) providers. Cognizant of the livelihood challenges

¹⁵ Hara, Mafiniso. 2008. "Dilemmas of Democratic Decentralization in Mangochi District, Malawi: Interest and Mistrust in Fisheries Management." *Conservation and Society* 6(1): 74–86.

¹⁶ Mafaniso Hara, 2007, Nesting Participatory Fisheries Management within district decentralization: Case of Mangochi District, Malawi.

that the fishing community faces, the applicants should elaborate on the market based conservation and private sector engagement approaches that *promote sustainable fishing while providing economic benefits* - such as enterprise development or conservation product development and commercialization - that could be scaled up to add value to the asset of Lake Malawi. Additionally the applicant should outline the conditions which may need to be in place to ensure that the economic benefits promote sustainable fishing and do not drive further overfishing. Given the significant resources required and potential ecological risks to the Lake Malawi from use of exotic fish species and wild fish as feed stock, USAID does not envision aquaculture to be a conservation enterprise to be supported.

5. CDCS Priorities for Integration Advanced

The USAID/Malawi's CDCS (2013-2018) envisages a "3 C" approach of integration in its investment across various sectors in Malawi thus co-locating interventions to the extent that it is sensible; coordinating better within USAID and with other development partners (DPs), and collaborating to foster linkages among implementing partners and the DPs to improve results, and sustainability. To facilitate achievement of the outcome, the Recipient must participate in a range of coordination forums and approaches that will play a key role in putting the CDCS 3-C Approach into action. Past experience demonstrated that collaborative work plan workshops with potential integration partners are an effective approach to maximize synergies. Such forums and activities may include but are not limited to partner coordination meetings, joint work planning processes, and joint implementation of approaches. Ultimately, REFRESH must contribute to the achievement of USAID/Malawi's goal of improving Malawians' quality of life by integrating activities. It is imperative that REFRESH linkages to other USAID activities to enhance its impacts. As such the REFRESH activity should strive to collaborate with the following USAID, GoM and other Development Partners' activities where synergies exist as appropriate.

The following activities in descending order are expected to offer the most significant integration opportunities to REFRESH:

1. **Local Government Accountability and Performance (LGAP)** activity implemented by DAI in eight districts aims at improving local government performance and transparency, increase citizen engagement, and strengthen the enabling environment for decentralization in Malawi. This resonates quite well with sustainable utilization of natural resources through community and local government involvement. LGAP is taking an integrated systems approach that includes providing local government employees with the tools and skills to improve the quality of service, as well as incentivizing collaboration among local government institutions. LGAP is building sustainable district-led initiatives reinforcing ownership and accountability by local stakeholders and improving their capacity to sustain progress. With a new contribution from DFID, LGAP will target the following districts;
2. The new Food for Peace **Development Food Security Activity (DFSA)** will improve food security and nutrition in Malawi through supporting the implementation of the Government of Malawi's National Resilience Strategy (2018-2030) which aims to break the cycle of food insecurity. The REFRESH activity will closely collaborate with the GoM in wide landscape scale watershed management interventions such as farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR), woodlot, village forest areas and other restoration practices particularly in Mangochi district.
3. Feed the Future's **Ag Diversification (Ag Div)** activity implemented by Palladium International aims at reducing rural poverty and malnutrition through growth in agricultural incomes and employment, improved nutrition, enhanced resilience of smallholder farming systems, and women's empowerment. The critical value chains supported are legumes (including but not limited to soy and groundnuts) and orange fleshed sweet potato. Additionally the activity is supporting sustainable land based watershed management interventions such as climate smart agriculture, bamboo cultivation which at improving land productivity and reducing soil fertility loss.

4. The new Sustainable Landscapes (SL) activity, **Modern Cooking for Healthy Forests**, the follow-on of Protecting Ecosystems and Restoring Forests in Malawi (PERFORM) will focus on supporting the Government of Malawi roll out the National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy and national Charcoal Strategy to foster sustainable management of forests. The REFRESH activity should closely coordinate with new SL activity around the critical watersheds that need SL investments. If coordinated and implemented successfully it will pay huge dividends in restoring fish ecosystems by reducing habitat destruction through silt loading and mineral toxicity.
5. **Fisheries Integration of Societies and Habitats (FISH)** implemented by Pact Inc. in promotion of participatory fisheries governance and management in the freshwater ecosystems is the predecessor of REFRESH. The FISH activity has worked with governance structures in developing ecosystems based regulations to sustainably manage fish and also build the capacity of fisher communities in sustainable land management technologies that are more resilient to climate change. REFRESH will consolidate the gains and follow the recommendations suggested in the FISH Mid-Term Evaluation report.¹⁷ FISH supported fisheries governance in Lakes Malawi, Malombe, Chilwa and Chiuta through the six PFM policy steps and REFRESH envisages scaling up best PFM practices in Lake Malawi.
6. **U.S. Forest Service (USFS) PAPA** is the USAID supported activity which works with African Parks in the natural resource and protected area management of Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve. African Parks is managing Majete Wildlife Reserve (2003), Liwonde National Park (2015) and Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve (2015). The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and African Parks are involved in fire management and training, synthesis of ecological information for improved protected area management, design of tourism and protected area infrastructure (e.g., trails, roads, and signage), and capacity building for law enforcement, with a particular focus on counter-wildlife trafficking and poaching in Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve. The health of Dwangwa/Dwambazi and Bua watersheds is critical to restoring the fisheries ecosystems in Nkhotakota district. The successful applicant should collaborate with African Parks and USFS to ensure that Lake Salmon, *Mpasa*, which migrates Bua river upstream for breeding is protected and sustainably utilized.
7. **Fisheries Resilience in Malawi (FIRM)** a Global Environment Facility (GEF)-FAO supported project (2017-2021) aims to build resilience in the fisheries sector especially among the riparian communities of Lake Malombe. Lake Malombe, connected to Lake Malawi in the north by the Upper Shire River, is heavily overfished. The project has worked closely with FISH in strengthening access to information and knowledge regarding climate change and its implications; creating an enabling environment for the promotion of climate change resilience among fishing communities; and strengthening capacities at local level to increase the resilience of fishing communities to climate change. REFRESH should collaborate further with FIRM on co-learning sustainable capture fisheries management practices proved successful around Lake Malombe.
8. **RIPPLE Africa's Fish Conservation** project is empowering local fishing communities to protect fish in their own areas of jurisdiction. The project works with artisanal fishers in participatory fisheries management through the development of fisheries bylaws in their areas in Nkhata Bay and Nkhotakota districts. These are the fishing districts where significant volumes of *Mcheni* and *Sardella (Usipa)* are caught. REFRESH should continue co-learning with Ripple Africa in Nkhotakota in banning the use of mosquito nets for fishing; enforcing a three month closed season to allow fish to breed; protecting shallow fish breeding grounds as fish sanctuaries and enforce a minimum mesh size restrictions.
9. **Aquaculture Value Chains for Higher Income and Food Security Project (AVCP) in Malawi (2018-2021)** is part of the global program on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GiZ)/Malawi to support the development of Malawi's aquaculture sector in selected regions to increase the availability of fish products and income from sustainably operated small and medium size aquaculture. The objectives are to improve income opportunities for the local population; increase production of sustainable aquaculture; support

¹⁷ https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00N589.pdf

diversification of agricultural production; protect natural resources; and contribute to securing the livelihood of the population in rural areas. The successful applicant would be expected to collaborate with AVCP on understanding and addressing potential ecological concerns or challenges the aquaculture development would cause in Lake Malawi.

A.6 Illustrative Performance Indicators

All indicators must be disaggregated by sex, and by all other required disaggregates. Below are some of the illustrative indicators. Refer to illustrative logical framework (Figure 2).

- EG10.2-1 Number of hectares of biologically significant areas showing improved biophysical conditions as a result of USG assistance.
- EG 10.2-2 Number of hectares of biologically significant areas under improved natural resource management as a result of USG assistance.
- EG.10.2-3 Number of people with improved economic benefits derived from sustainable natural resource management and/or biodiversity conservation as a result of USG assistance
- EG10.2-4 Number of people trained in sustainable natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation as a result of USG assistance.
- EG.10.2-5 Number of laws, policies or regulations that address biodiversity conservation and/or other environmental themes officially proposed, adopted, or implemented as a result of USG assistance.
- EG10.2-6 Number of people that apply improved conservation law enforcement practices as a result of USG assistance.
- Proportion of species exhibiting stable age distributions (relative abundance and age/size distribution)
- Number of Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials for fisheries produced and disseminated.
- Number of structures (Local fisheries management authorities (LFMA), Fisheries associations (FA)/ Beach village committees (BVC) functional (for example a district fisheries performance index - like LAPA – local authority performance assessment index)
- Number of district councils with functional decentralized fisheries management
of people undertaking illegal activities (e.g. fishing without a license, fishing in a closed season, fishing in a closed area, using illegal gear, cutting trees in protected areas, etc.)
- Number of civil society organizations engaged in fisheries management and decentralization
- Number of district councils with decentralized fisheries management
- Number of local fisheries management authorities co-managing fish resources
- Number of inclusive citizen agencies holding duty bearers transparent and accountable in fisheries management
- Amount of revenue mobilized locally for fisheries management
- Number of integration activities with other USAID and development partners undertaken

A.7. Lessons Learned

The Participatory Fisheries Management (PFM) approach introduced in Malawi by the Department of Fisheries on a pilot basis in Lake Malombe in 1993¹⁸ and rolled out across other water bodies has varying results for fishery restoration and livelihood security in Malawi. PFM was envisaged to address the rampant overfishing and habitat destruction in Lake Malombe and the South East Arm (SEA) of Lake Malawi. Despite decades of PFM implementation in the lakes, capture fisheries is still under critical threat due to overfishing and habitat destruction from inadequate management. Additionally, fisheries

¹⁸ Bell, R.H.V. and S.J. Donda. 1993. Community fisheries management program: Lake Malombe and Upper Shire River, Volumes 1 and 2. Mangochi. Consultancy Report, Government of Malawi, Department of Fisheries and the Malawi – Germany Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Project (MAGFAD).

governance is still facing challenges in that fishers seem not to have strong organizational capacity to co-manage fish resources with the central and local governments. Elite capture is usually observed in fisheries governance bodies that lack fair representation of the resource users of the beach, rendering PFM rather problematic. It has been noted that where Beach Village Committees are strong organizationally and well represented, fisheries management plans are better communicated to a wider fishing community and implemented. Another notable lesson from PFM has been low completion of the PFM process to an extent that fishers and other stakeholders felt confused and frustrated as the PFM approach still lingers in suspense without the signing of fisheries management agreements with either local or central governments.

Previous investments on the management of Lake Malawi and other lakes focused on just conserving fisheries resources without considering the capacity of the Fisheries Department to enforce regulations. It is imperative that political, administrative and fiscal decentralization of fisheries management and the capacity of the Department of Fisheries should be strengthened. For instance, it is generally observed that Malawi's well-articulated strategies and plans devised by the Department of Fisheries are inadequately implemented. A number of strategies meant to operationalize the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Act such as Chambo Restoration Strategic Plan, National Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Agenda have weak effective implementation strategies. Development of an effective implementation plan that also includes decentralization of human resource to local governments, filling huge vacancy rates, and sustainable financing mechanisms will facilitate the implementation of these strategies. It is recommended that integrated Lake Malawi management planning should be informed by scientific evidence. During FISH implementation, it was noted that recognition of local fisheries scientists in the DoF in scientific assessments is critical for the acceptance of the data and research methodologies by the government, and its sustainability of the research practices by FRU. The applicants should recognize that capacity building of the DoF and district councils goes beyond technical content and should include some infrastructural and/or material support depending on resource availability. Jamu *et. al* (2011)¹⁹ argued that fisheries management objectives should focus on the long-term resilience of the ecosystem, fisheries resources and livelihoods of people utilizing the resource. Strengthening civil society advocacy to lobby government and development partners provide adequate resources to ensure effective monitoring, enforcement of regulations and participatory development and implementation of integrated lake management plans has also lacked in the past.

¹⁹ Jamu et al. (2011) Challenges to sustainable management of the lakes of Malawi, Journal of Great Lakes Research, Elsevier.

Abbreviations

AOR	Agreement Representative
CDCS	Country Development and Cooperation Strategy
CLA	Collaborating, Learning and Adapting
COMPASS	Community Partnership for Sustainable Resource Management
COP	Chief of Party
DO	Development Objective
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FISH	Fisheries Integration of Society and Habitats
FRU	Fisheries Research Unit
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GoM	Government of Malawi
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunities
PFM	Participatory Fisheries Management
REFRESH	Restoring Fisheries for Sustainable Livelihoods in Lake Malawi
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

B.1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID/Malawi intends to award one cooperative agreement pursuant to this Notice of Funding Opportunity. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide approximately \$12 million in total funding over a five-year period.

B.2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Award

The anticipated period of performance is five years. The estimated start date will be TBD.

B.3. Substantial Involvement

USAID/Malawi will remain substantially involved over the life of the cooperative agreement to assist the recipient in achieving the expected outcomes and results of the program. Substantial involvement under the proposed award may include the following:

a. Approval of the Recipient's Implementation Plans

Annual implementation plans with supporting budgets, and subsequent revisions thereto, are subject to prior written approval by USAID's Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) before any substantive work for each year of the agreement is executed.

b. Approval of Specified Key Personnel

The following positions have been designated as key to the successful implementation of the program objectives of this agreement. These personnel are subject to prior written approval by the Agreement Officer (AO):

- Chief of Party (COP);
- Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP);
- Fisheries Governance and Decentralization Specialist;
- Conservation Enterprise Development Specialist; *and*
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Specialist.

c. USAID and Recipient Collaboration or Joint Participation

The recipient's successful accomplishment of program objectives will benefit from USAID's technical knowledge; thus the Agreement Officer may authorize the collaboration or joint participation of USAID and the recipient on the program. USAID involvement may include but is not limited to:

(1) Approval of the Recipient's Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP). In consultation with USAID through the AOR, the recipient will develop the AMELP which will align with the monitoring and reporting framework, and other relevant reporting mechanisms required by USAID/Malawi. During the first sixty (60) days from award date, the recipient will work closely with the AOR to establish major milestones, program monitoring indicators, as well as baseline data and performance targets which will demonstrate successful achievement of the results expected from this activity.

The AMELP will measure impact and progress toward achieving collection methods, baseline information, benchmarks and periodic evaluations, and data quality assessment reports. Data collected under the AMELP must be submitted with the final report. Regardless of the start date of this award, the AMELP will be adjusted to the USG fiscal calendar of October 1-September 30. As necessary, the AMELP may be updated each year of this award as part of the work plan approval process.

The recipient must adhere to the relevant ADS provisions with respect to monitoring and evaluation activities for the design and final program. The activity must include indicators against which results will be measured. These indicators are expected to include USG standard indicators and additional indicators as identified by the recipient in their application.

(2) Monitoring the Activity. USAID will monitor the activity to ensure activities are supporting the Mission's purpose, to share best practices and capture lessons learned and will authorize direction and/or redirection of interventions specified in the program description due to US foreign policy objectives and priorities, as well as interrelationships with other programs, including those of USAID's. Monitoring includes, but will not be limited to, site visits, reviewing terms of reference, quarterly and other types of reports, deliverables and other products; and participating in technical meetings as appropriate.

(3) Approval of Sub-awards. Per 2 CFR 200.308, all sub-awards (whether contracts or sub-grants) not included and approved in the original cooperative agreement will require prior written Agreement Officer's approval. In addition, prior written AOR concurrence with substantive provisions of sub-awards is required. Furthermore, USAID will participate as a member of any contracting and financing mechanism established by the activity.

(4) The Agreement Officer will provide approval to any construction activities for small-scale infrastructure (including specifications, materials and locations) once they are identified.

d. Agency Authority to Immediately Halt a Construction Activity

The AO may immediately halt a construction activity if identified specifications are not met.

B.4. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this program is 935.

B.5. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient

The principal purpose of the relationship with the recipient and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the REFRESH program which is authorized by Federal statute. The successful recipient will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The recipient will assume responsibility for administering Federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award.

B.6. Selection of Instrument

The purpose of the REFRESH activity is to conserve the freshwater biodiversity of Lake Malawi by restoring the natural fisheries productivity in the lakeshore districts of Karonga, Rumphi, Likoma, Nkhata Bay, Nkhotakota, Salima, Dedza and Mangochi. Interventions will achieve the following outcomes:

1 - Fisheries governance and regulatory framework strengthened;

- 2 - Ecosystem-based fisheries management improved;
- 3 - Decentralization of fisheries management strengthened; and
- 4 - Commercialization of conservation enterprises to counter unsustainable fishing catalyzed and supported.

Since the principal purpose of the relationship is to transfer Federal financial assistance to the recipient to carry out in the designated program area a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and other applicable authorities as provided in annual appropriations legislation by supporting development actors in this program area, who will help achieve sector outcomes by carrying out their mission, programs and activities in a manner that advances sustainable development in the program area, a cooperative agreement is recommended as the legal instrument, based on the application of the criteria specified in Section 6305 of the FGCAA (31 USC 6305 – Using cooperative agreements) and the supporting information provided in the Selection of Instrument (SOI) memorandum.

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility for this NOFO is not restricted. USAID/Malawi welcomes applications from organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID. It is a requirement that the organization is legally registered in the country of Malawi. If the applicant is a U.S. Organization and it is not registered in the country at the time of the award, the registration process should be completed during the first year of project implementation or sooner.

USAID/Malawi may not award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements (See Section D.6 (g)).

C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing is not required.

C.3. Other

N/A

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1 Agency Point of Contact

Name: Paul Martin
Title: Supervisory Agreement Officer
Email: pmartin@usaid.gov

D.2 Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO must be submitted via email to oaa-malawi-solicit@usaid.gov no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment to this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicant.

D.3 General Content and Form of Application

Applicants are expected to review, understand and comply with all aspects of this NOFO, its amendments (if any) before submitting the documents required. Applicants must ensure the necessary documents are complete and received at USAID on time. All submissions received by the stated deadlines will be reviewed in accordance with the review criteria contained in Section E of this NOFO. Failure to do so may result in the submission being considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed.

Submissions must be in electronic format. Applicants' authorized representatives are to print and sign their names on the cover pages of their submissions, as well as in required certifications.

For a submission to be considered timely, the electronic transmission must be submitted by email to oaa-malawi-solicit@usaid.gov and received by the USAID/Malawi internet server no later than the date and time indicated on the cover page of this NOFO.

Preparation of Applications:

Each applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO. Applications must be submitted in two separate parts: the Technical Application and the Business (Cost) Application. This subsection addresses general content requirements applying to the full application. Please see subsections D.5 and D.6 below for information on the content specific to the Technical and Business (Cost) applications. The Technical application must address technical aspects only, while the Business (Cost) application must present the costs, and address risk and other related issues.

Both the Technical and Business (Cost) applications must include a cover page containing the following information:

- Name of the organization(s) submitting the application;
- Identification and signature of the primary contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address) and the identification of the alternate contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address);
- Activity name;
- Notice of Funding Opportunity number;
- Name of any proposed sub-recipients or partnerships (identify if any of the organizations are local organizations, per USAID's definition of 'local entity' under ADS 303).

Any erasures or other changes to the application must be initialed by the person signing the application. Applications signed by an agent on behalf of the applicant must be accompanied by evidence of that agent's authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

Applicants may choose to submit a cover letter in addition to the cover pages, but it will serve only as a transmittal letter to the Agreement Officer. The cover letter will not be reviewed as part of the merit review criteria.

Applications must comply with the following:

- USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections. Please ensure that applications comply with the page limitations pages for the technical application, excluding annexes).
- Applications must be written in English.
- Use standard 8 ½" x 11", single sided, single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1" margins, left justification and headers and/or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and applicant's name.
- 10 point font can be used for graphs and charts. Tables, however, must comply with the 12 point Times New Roman requirement.
- Submitted via Microsoft Word or PDF formats, except budget files which must be submitted in Microsoft Excel.
- The estimated start date identified in Section B of this NOFO must be used in the cost application.
- The technical application must be a searchable and editable Word or PDF format as appropriate.
- The cost schedule must include an Excel spreadsheet with all cells unlocked and no hidden formulas or sheets. A PDF version of the Excel spreadsheet may be submitted in addition to the Excel version at the applicant's discretion, however, the official cost application submission is the unlocked Excel version.

Applicants must review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to do so may be considered as being non-responsive and may be evaluated accordingly. Applicants should retain a copy of the application and all enclosures for their records.

D.4 Application Submission Procedures

Applications in response to this NOFO must be submitted no later than the closing date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Late applications may be considered at the discretion of the Agreement Officer. Applicants must retain proof of timely delivery in the form of system generated documentation of delivery receipt date and time/confirmation from the receiving office/certified mail receipt.

Applications must be submitted by email to oaa-malawi-solicit@usaid.gov. Email submissions must include the NOFO number and applicant's name in the subject line heading. Each email transmission, with attachments must not exceed 5MB. In addition, for an application sent by multiple emails, the subject line must also indicate whether the email relates to the technical or cost application, and the desired sequence of the emails and their attachments (e.g. "No. 1 of 4", etc.). For example, if your cost application is being sent in two emails, the first email should have a subject line that states: "[NOFO number], [organization name], Cost Application, Part 1 of 2".

USAID's preference is that the technical application and the cost application each be submitted as consolidated email attachments, e.g. that you consolidate the various parts of a technical application into a

single document before sending it. If this is not possible, please provide instructions on how to collate the attachments. USAID will not be responsible for errors in compiling electronic applications if no instructions are provided or are unclear.

After submitting an application electronically, applicants should immediately check their own email to confirm that the attachments were indeed sent. If an applicant discovers an error in transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email that it is a "corrected" submission. Do not send the same email more than once unless there has been a change, and if so, please note that it is a "corrected" email.

Applicants are reminded that e-mail is NOT instantaneous, and in some cases delays of several hours occur from transmission to receipt. Therefore, applicants are requested to send the application in sufficient time ahead of the deadline. For this NOFO, the initial point of entry to the government infrastructure is the USAID mail server.

There may be a problem with the receipt of *.zip files due to anti-virus software. Therefore, applicants are discouraged from sending files in this format as USAID/Malawi cannot guarantee their acceptance by the internet server.

D.5 Technical Application Format

The technical application must be specific, complete, and presented concisely. The application must demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this program. The application must take into account the requirements of the program and merit review criteria found in this NOFO. The technical application must not exceed **32 pages**, excluding annexes, and must consist of the following:

(a) Cover Page (excluded from the page limitation)

The cover page shall include the applicant's name, identification of the primary contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address) and the identification of the alternate contact person (by name, title, organization, mailing address, telephone number and email address).

The applicant can include any other information or graphics on the cover page that it determines are beneficial.

(b) Table of Contents (excluded from the page limitation)

Include major sections and page numbering to easily cross-reference and identify merit review criteria.

c) Executive Summary (No more than 2 pages) (included in the page limitation)

The executive summary shall summarize briefly a description of proposed interventions, goals, purposes, and anticipated results and the key elements of the applicant's technical strategy, management approach, implementation plan, expected results and the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMELP). All information presented in the executive summary must be elaborated elsewhere within the application. No information presented herein must be absent from or contradicted elsewhere in the application.

d) Technical Approach (included in the page limitation)

The technical approach must not exceed fifteen (15) pages. The basic purpose of this section is to provide the information necessary to allow USAID/Malawi to fairly and completely review the applicant under each of the merit review criteria specified in Section E of this NOFO. In this section, the applicant must provide an explanation of its plans for achieving the activity goals and results (see Section A.5). The applicant should not merely repeat what is already described in the NOFO, but must describe how they propose to achieve the program's goals and results, detailing the broad strategic approach and methodology planned. The applicant should include illustrative activities for each result. In doing so, the applicant must include an illustrative theory of change. The illustrative theory of change should describe how proposed interventions are expected to achieve the end-of-activity goals, including a discussion of the logic and assumptions about why the proposed interventions will lead to those expected results.

The technical approach must demonstrate the overall merit of the proposed program including analysis and comprehension of the Malawian fisheries sector; understanding of the primary threats of biodiversity conservation in freshwater ecosystems and their proximate drivers that need urgent and concerted attention, *business unusual* approaches that need to be scaled up to reduce the primary threats and improve Lake Malawi's natural productivity from a wide range of perspectives outlined in Section B; responsiveness to overall activity objectives/outcomes, and sound application of state-of-the-art technical knowledge, creativity and clarity. The section must describe the overall conceptual framework for achieving results, including a concise development hypothesis or theory of change, a description of proposed interventions for each link in the theory of change, and clear indicators to mark progress towards each result under the conceptual framework. The feasibility of the approach proposed to achieve the activity's results over the 5-year award must also be justified.

The technical application must set forth the conceptual approach, methodology, and techniques - the "how" - for accomplishment of the stated objectives and corresponding cross cutting themes of sustainability, integration with other programs in watershed management and sustainable agricultural production systems, private sector engagement in particular with commercialization and development of conservation enterprises, and gender. Applications must detail how the applicant will achieve the prospective cooperative agreement's expected results. Applicants are encouraged to propose innovative interventions to achieve desired results. The application must outline links between the proposed results, conceptual approach, performance milestones, and a realistic timeline for achieving the annual and end of project results. Applications must describe in detail work plans related to the methodologies included in the project description, showing the phasing or dates by which planned interventions would be carried out as well as proposed indicators to assess the progress of the overall activity. The work plan must include or describe in detail all planned interventions including:

- Timeframe and sequence of interventions;
- Outcome of each intervention;
- Biodiversity Code: Applicant must articulate how activities will meet the four requirements of USAID's Biodiversity Code.²⁰
- Impact on gender: Applicant must include a description of the way in which gender integration issues will be incorporated throughout the activity, including specific actions to address gender gaps. The applicant must conduct a gender analysis compliant with USAID requirements within the first year of implementation.
- Proposed alliances and partnerships: Applicant must include plans for fostering multi-sectoral participation in the implementation of proposed activities. The applicant must include a governance structure for the alliance that ensures that industry, civil society, and government partners have a highly participatory role in both the development and execution of activities. This

²⁰ Page 21 of the Biodiversity Policy: <https://www.usaid.gov/biodiversity/policy>

should include the watershed management with other USAID supported activities such as Food for Peace, Feed the Future and Sustainable Landscapes.

- **Risk analysis:** Applicant must analyze potential risks and weigh how it would affect the program performance and how to mitigate them. This might include the proposed oil exploration, water supply program from Lake Malawi and the political tension over the boundary of Tanzania and Malawi over Lake Malawi.
- **Sustainability plan:** Applicant must include a discussion on sustainability to address major resource constraints (human, financial, and technological). The Sustainability plan must clearly demonstrate how desired outcomes, results and impacts will continue to be generated after USAID support ends, as well as in the longer term. In particular, the plan must address long-term environmental soundness (including climate impacts), social soundness, and economic sustainability. An exit strategy must be discussed.

If the applicant determines that a lengthy chart or other supporting documentation is helpful, this supporting documentation may be included in the Annex.

e) Illustrative Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMELP) (included in the page limitation)

In the technical application, the applicant must include an Illustrative AMELP and a description of the process by which the first component of the AMELP – *monitoring, including specified indicators, baselines, and targets* – will be developed and applied to improve project management. The illustrative AMELP must identify appropriate output and outcome indicators, life-of-program targets and year-to-year milestones with appropriate linkages to the major required results. It must include: program performance measures that test the theory of change or development hypothesis; a results framework that builds on the results framework in the program description; performance indicators, including draft targets for each indicator and information on data collection methods and quality assurances; and a calendar of key performance management tasks. It must also include information on how baseline data will be generated or obtained. Required and required-as-applicable indicators noted in the program description must be included as appropriate.

The applicant must propose a limited number of additional, specific metrics that might uniquely capture the effectiveness of proposed interventions and their integrated, cross-sector approach to decentralized and ecosystem based fisheries management. The AMELP must also include a performance indicator tracking table which lists all of the proposed performance indicators, the baseline values and targets. The tracking table will help easily monitor progress over time, affording an executive audience an immediate sense of progress or the lack thereof.

In addition, the applicant must offer evaluation questions to be considered for the second component of the AMELP – *performance evaluation*. The evaluation must consider descriptive and normative questions linked to program design or management decisions: what a particular project or program has achieved; how it is being implemented; how it is perceived and valued; whether expected results are occurring. Qualitative and quantitative methods are appropriate.

Applicants must propose evaluation components that complement the new USAID Evaluation Policy and include an evaluation plan that includes both a midterm and final program evaluation.

The illustrative AMELP must not exceed 10 pages, and the applicant must describe through an illustrative communications strategy how the data generated will be shared with government counterparts and other stakeholders.

f) Key Personnel and Staffing Plan (included in the page limitation)

Applicants must present a sound description for project management and staffing. The applicant must propose an overall staffing pattern that demonstrates the breadth and depth of technical expertise and experience required to implement this complex activity. The staffing plan must demonstrate a solid understanding of key technical and organizational requirements and an appropriate mix of skills, while avoiding excessive staffing. Applicants must also clearly describe how the REFRESH program will be managed, and propose a management plan which must:

- Demonstrate the applicant's ability to manage the activities to be carried out under the agreement, including lines of supervision, accountability, decision-making and responsibility among staff. The applicant must discuss how resources will be organized to achieve results. The applicant must discuss fully the "what" and the "how" of its plan. The purpose of this approach is to allow the applicant great creative freedom to develop a plan for resource organization and use;
- Describe how the applicant will provide technical support and oversight and work with USAID/Malawi, the Government of Malawi and other important stakeholders. This includes the plan explaining how the applicant's organization would liaise with the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and in-country staff;
- Demonstrate that the applicant has an understanding of management barriers that could occur during program implementation on both a global and country level, and how the applicant plans to overcome these barriers;
- Describe the role of each technical staff/advisor in the program and specify where s/he will be based;
- Identify and describe sub-recipients and/or sub-contractors, if any, indicating the extent of utilization intended and the tasks/functions they will perform. The plan must describe how those organizations were selected and how they will effectively contribute to the implementing team;
- Describe the role of and contractual arrangement with each sub-recipient/sub-awardee; the approach for managing proposed sub-recipient/sub awardees to maximize their input and utility; and demonstrated past experience managing and building technical and organizational capacity of sub-partners. Given the limited funding of this award and the broad scope, applicants may want to propose innovative ways to reduce managerial costs of sub-partners such as sharing office space, vehicles, etc.; and
- Outline a mobilization plan that demonstrates ability for rapid start-up by efficiently establishing in-country presence with necessary registration and documentation and ability to be operational within 60 days of signature of the award.

Key Personnel

Applications shall include proposed key personnel to manage the activity and an explanation of how the background and expertise needed for proposed key positions and personnel will complement each other and benefit the activity.

The proposed key personnel must include:

1. Chief of Party;
2. Deputy Chief of Party (Programs)/Fish Ecologist;
3. Fisheries Governance and Decentralization Specialist;
4. Conservation Enterprise Development Specialist;
5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Specialist.

The minimum qualifications for Key Personnel are as follows:

Chief of Party (COP)

The COP must have both technical and management experience, preferably experience managing complex USAID-funded projects. The COP must possess the requisite leadership qualities, broad technical expertise and experience, professional reputation, management experience, interpersonal skills, and professional relations needed to fulfill the diverse managerial and technical requirements of the program description. The COP must be engaged for the full period of the activity and shall be responsible for administering and managing the implementation of the activity and has the overall responsibility for assuring that all assistance provided is technically sound and appropriate to meet activity objectives. The COP shall manage and supervise the work of all organizations (sub-grantees) and individuals engaged under the USAID REFRESH Activity. In addition to these supervisory/management functions, the COP must play a leading and substantive role in developing and implementing activities under the activity components, and shall have demonstrated expertise in fisheries, freshwater biodiversity conservation and fish ecology programming. The COP must be responsible for quarterly and annual reports, annual work plans, performance indicators, financial reports, regular results reporting as needed, in addition to the overall quality control and the timeliness of all required deliverables. S/he must serve as the primary point of contact for the USAID Agreement Officer and the AOR.

The COP is the principal liaison between the USAID REFRESH Activity and USAID/Malawi, GoM stakeholders, donors, and all other relevant stakeholders and client country partners. The COP must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- A Master's or Ph.D. in at least one of the following fields: natural resource management, freshwater capture fisheries management, biodiversity conservation or other relevant international development field with bias towards natural resource governance and decentralization processes and private sector engagement. At least 10 years of demonstrated technical and managerial experience in freshwater fisheries management and conservation, natural resource management – preferably in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Technical and/or COP experience on conservation, environmental, governance, decentralization, livelihoods, or fisheries projects are strongly preferred.
- At least 5 years of demonstrated excellence in a senior level management and leadership position, including direct supervision of professional and support staff, quality evaluation of staff performance and deliverables, and contract/grant management.
- Experience working to build institutional capacity of government counterparts at the national and/or local level.
- Demonstrated experience managing multi-million dollar complex projects.
- Demonstrated organizational skills and strong track record in meeting deliverables and deadlines.
- Technical understanding of conservation enterprise development
- Ability to identify, address and resolve communication issues within the project and with external project stakeholders.
- Ability to establish and maintain collaborative working relationships with USAID/Malawi, Department of Fisheries and other host government partners at the national and state levels, and personnel within the Project.
- Ability to respond to changing situations as well as diverse stakeholders and government partners in a flexible Manner.
- Proven track record of effective and convincing negotiation skills.
- Ability to produce exceptional quality deliverables and a strong commitment to work.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills in English are required.

Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP)

DCOP must have both technical and management experience. The DCOP must be experienced in

managing and implementing fisheries, biodiversity conservation, fisheries decentralization and governance and must provide a key leadership role, supporting both the technical direction of the program and overseeing programmatic operations projects. The incumbent must serve as the **Fish Ecologist** which is one of the subject matter specialists of the activity.

The DCOP must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- A Master's degree or higher in one of the following fields: natural resource management, freshwater fish ecology, biodiversity conservation or other relevant international development field with bias towards capture fisheries management, natural resource governance and decentralization processes and private sector engagement. At least 10 years of demonstrated technical and managerial experience in freshwater fisheries management and conservation, natural resource management – preferably in Sub-Saharan Africa. At least 5 years of demonstrated excellence in a management position, preferably in an international development context, including direct supervision of professional and support staff, quality evaluation of staff performance and deliverables, and contract/grant management.
- Experience supervising and leading teams and monitoring staff performance.
- Experience integrating gender and private sector engagement into development programming is preferred.
- Strong communication and coordination skills required.
- Demonstrated experience in overseeing projects or components of projects which include climate change adaptation components.
- Demonstrated excellent interpersonal skills and ability to motivate staff to be accountable for project outcomes.
- Demonstrated organizational skills and strong track record in meeting deliverables and deadlines and ability to provide oversight of financial and operational aspects of projects
- Experience interacting with government agencies, host-country government partners and counterparts, and international donor agencies.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills in English are required.
- The proposed candidate's experience and education are complementary to those of other proposed candidates.

Fisheries Governance and Decentralization Specialist – must be one of the subject matter specialists as an advisor to the DCOP on the following technical areas: fisheries governance and/or decentralization, institutional strengthening, central government and local government coordination, legal and legislative frameworks and processes. He/she should have a proven track record in effectively managing and directing activities with a focus on their areas of expertise.

The Fisheries Governance and Decentralization Specialist must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- A Master's degree or higher in one of the following fields: natural resource management and governance; or political science/ecology.
- At least 5 years of demonstrated technical expertise, with substantial developing country experience and expertise to effectively provide technical assistance on legal and legislative frameworks and processes and oversee the design and implementation of decentralization and governance activities.
- At least 3 years of demonstrated excellence in a management position, preferably including direct supervision of professional and support staff, quality evaluation of staff performance and deliverables, and contract/grant management.
- Experience and skills necessary for facilitating collaborative approaches to management of shared natural resources such as trans-boundary water body like Lake Malawi.

- Proven track record of working on design of capacity development programs in local governance.
- Proven track record contribution to knowledge management and policy development.
- A thorough understanding of issues relating to local discourse on decentralization governance and fisheries management.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills in English are required.

Conservation Enterprise Development Specialist –will be one of the subject matter specialists as an advisor to the DCOP on the following technical areas: conservation enterprise development and livelihoods; investment development and networking; business and entrepreneurship development; and business innovation and research. He/she should have a proven track record in effectively managing and directing enterprise development activities with a focus on their area of expertise. The incumbent must lead the activities under Outcome 4: *Commercialization of conservation enterprises to counter unsustainable fishing catalyzed and supported.*

The Conservation Enterprise Development Specialist must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- A Master's degree or higher in one of the following fields: business administration and/or biodiversity conservation, business and enterprise development, public administration.
- At least 5 years of demonstrated technical expertise, with substantial developing country experience in development and implementation of innovative strategies within their subject areas and experience and expertise to effectively provide technical assistance and oversee the design and implementation of conservation enterprise activities.
- Ability to organize and conduct business and product development trainings and technical workshops.
- Experience and skills necessary for facilitating business development and networking; market research and negotiating sustainable financing mechanisms for district councils and other beach village committees, or commercial fishers and others.
- Proven track record of working on design of commercially viable enterprises which are self-sustaining and thorough understanding of the trade and business regulatory frameworks and public private partnership processes.
- A thorough understanding of issues relating to local discourse on tourism development, cultural heritage, and potential natural resources based enterprises along the lakeshore districts.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills in English are required.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Specialist (MERL): The main responsibility of the MERL Specialist must be to ensure that feasible, efficient and useful MERL systems are designed and implemented, allowing the REFRESH project to meet its reporting requirements and provide meaningful and timely data for use in project management. The MERL Specialist shall oversee the design and daily management of the MERL activities, including: maintaining a comprehensive plan for MERL implementation; planning and implementing project data collection, management, and analysis; and planning and implementing MERL-related capacity-building activities for the REFRESH project partners and staff.

The MERL Specialist must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Post-graduate degree (Master's Degree or higher) in social science, development economics, statistics or related field.
- Minimum of 5 years in M&E of international, multilateral, and/or USG-funded programs.
- Experience supporting natural resources management and biodiversity projects with a fisheries focus.
- Experience in understanding and interpreting Results based frameworks and capturing and analyzing performance indicators at output, outcome and impact levels.

- Demonstrated capacity in performance management and data interpretation and report writing.
- Experience in the design, conduct and analysis of research studies (quantitative and qualitative).
- Ability to work effectively and harmoniously as part of a team with other staff.
- Strong interpersonal, communication, and diplomatic skills for building and maintaining good relationships with government counterparts and other stakeholders.
- Computer literacy with demonstrated use of word processing, spreadsheet and presentation software (e.g., Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point).
- Experience with database development and management in Access (or something similar).
- Experience using mapping (e.g., Arc-GIS etc.), and statistical analysis software (SPSS®, Epi STATA®, SAS®, or similar).
- Excellent oral and written communication skills in English required.

Applicants must provide summary descriptions of roles, responsibilities and qualifications of all key personnel relevant to successful implementation of the proposed technical approach. Applicants must also include, in an annex, resumes for all key personnel candidates. Resumes may not exceed three pages in length and shall be in chronological order starting with most recent experience. Letters of commitment from all key personnel to the effect that they will be available for the period of the program, should the applicant receive an award, must also be included in the annex. Finally, a list of three non-personal professional references must be included in the annex for each proposed key personnel. The reference information provided in the annex must consist of the following: full name and relationship, accurate and up to date email address and phone number. The U.S. Government retains the right to contact employment references for all key personnel (including those not provided by the applicant), and to use this information in the rating of personnel proposed. Noting that all staff may not be available or needed at inception, dates that key personnel are available to start work full-time with the project are also required.

USAID reserves the right to adjust the level of key personnel during the performance of the REFRESH program.

g) Organizational Capacity and Governance Structure (included in the page limitation)

Organizational Capacity – The applicants must demonstrate their experience in the geographic and program areas identified in the Section B: Program Description. Applicants must clearly describe their technical, managerial and organizational ability to manage multiple complex activities involving collaborative efforts, and maintain clear and effective lines of communication between and among implementing partners and sub-partners.

Governance Structure - USAID recognizes that the governance structure for REFRESH is more likely to be effective if it is co-developed with key partners during the early months of implementation. The applicant must provide an illustrative governance structure, identifying key features that will enable success of the program. This illustrative governance structure must describe the functions, roles, and responsibilities of key partners, advisory bodies, and proposed subawardees.

It must also identify the roles for industry, civil society, and government stakeholders in the program. The structure must include a clear point of contact for USAID. If an applicant proposes a consortium approach and/or sub-awards, applicant must describe the formal relationships between organizations and the differing capabilities required to meet the requirements set forth in Section A of the NOFO.

Applicants must state whether or not they have any existing relationships with the proposed partners and, if so, must include the Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) in the annex.

h) Annexes

The technical application annex shall contain resumes, letters of commitments from personnel or partners, proposed teaming arrangements, past performance and personnel references, letters of recommendation, awards, testimonials and any other supporting documentation requested in the NOFO. Additionally, it shall include:

ANNEX A – Illustrative annual work plan

The illustrative annual work plan must highlight the prescribed activities with their timelines to address the problem context indicated in the program description. The plan must also describe the applicant's preferred approach to a joint work plan workshop with key partners and the GoM. The joint work plan workshop must include collaborative development of a theory-based results chain, which will form the basis for on-going planning, monitoring, evaluation, and evidence-based adaptive management. The joint work plan workshop must also produce a finalized management structure for the activity.

ANNEX B – Illustrative Organogram Chart

Applicant must provide a chart that details the illustrative governance structure and lines of reporting and communication, including key personnel, advisory bodies, any sub-awardees and/or connections to key partners and USAID.

ANNEX C – Resumes of Key Personnel and letters of commitment.

Key Personnel resumes must not exceed three pages and must be in chronological order starting with most recent experience and include a list of 3 non-personal professional references. Letters of commitment from all key personnel must also be included.

ANNEX D – Past Performance

The applicant must provide information regarding its recent history of performance for all its cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs, not to exceed ten years, as follows:

- Name of the Awarding Organization;
- Award Number;
- Activity Title;
- A brief description of the activity;
- Period of Performance;
- Award Amount;
- Reports and findings from any audits performed in the last {insert desired number of years}; and
- Name of at least two (2) updated professional contacts who most directly observed the work at the organization for which the service was performed with complete current contact information including telephone number, and e-mail address for each proposed individual.

If the applicant encountered problems on any of the referenced awards, it may provide a short explanation and the corrective action taken. The applicant should not provide general information on its performance. USAID reserves the right to obtain relevant information concerning an applicant's history of performance from any sources and may consider such information in its review of the applicant's risk. The Agency may request additional information and conduct a pre-award survey if it determines that it is necessary to inform the risk assessment.

ANNEX E – An Illustrative five-year Work Plan

The illustrative five-year work plan must detail a relatively specific set of illustrative activities with benchmarks and partnerships that in combination lay a strong foundation for eventually achieving the life-of-project targets contained in the AMELP.

D.6 Business (Cost) Application Format

The business (cost) application must be submitted separately from the technical application. While no page limit exists for the full cost application, applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible while still providing the necessary details. The business (cost) application must illustrate the entire period of performance, using the budget format shown in the SF-424A.

Prior to award, applicants may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to assess the applicant's risk in accordance with 2 CFR 200.205. Applicants should not submit any additional information with their initial application.

The cost application must contain the following sections (which are further elaborated below this listing with the letters for each requirement):

a) **Cover Page** (See Section D.3 above for requirements)

b) **SF 424 Form(s)**

The applicant must sign and submit the cost application using the SF-424 series. Standard forms can be accessed electronically at www.grants.gov or using the following links:

Instructions for SF-424	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424-instructions.html
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html
Instructions for SF-424A	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424a-instructions.html
Budget Information (SF-424A)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html
Instructions for SF-424B	http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424b-instructions.html
Assurances (SF-424B)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html

Failure to accurately complete these forms could result in the rejection of the application.

c) **Required Certifications and Assurances**

The applicant must complete the following documents and submit a signed copy with their application: “Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient” document found at <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mav.pdf>

d) **Budget and Budget Narrative**

The budget must be submitted as one unprotected Excel file (MS Office 2000 or later versions) with visible formulas and references and must be broken out by project year, including itemization of the federal and non-federal amount. Files must not contain any hidden or otherwise inaccessible cells.

Budgets with hidden cells lengthen the cost analysis time required to make award, and may result in a rejection of the cost application. The budget narrative must contain sufficient detail to allow USAID to understand the proposed costs. The applicant must ensure the budgeted costs address any additional requirements identified in Section F, such as branding and marking. The budget narrative must be thorough, including sources for costs to support USAID's determination that the proposed costs are fair and reasonable.

At a minimum, the budget must include the following worksheets or tabs, and contents:

- Summary budget, inclusive of all program costs (federal and non-federal), broken out by major budget category and by year for activities implemented by the applicant and any potential sub-applicants for the entire period of the program. See Section H, Annex 1 for Summary Budget Template;
- Separate summary budget presenting outcomes costs. Each outcome cost must be broken down into direct cost and indirect costs. See Section H, Annex 1 for Summary Budget Template;
- Detailed budget, including a breakdown by year, sufficient to allow the Agency to determine that the costs represent a realistic and efficient use of funding to implement the applicant's program and are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E. The budget will provide detail on all federal funding broken out by budget category for the entire implementation period of the activity;
- Separate detailed budgets for each sub-recipient (if any) with the same details by budget category breakdown and year as with the prime applicant.

The detailed budget must contain the following budget categories and information, at a minimum:

- 1) Salaries and Allowances – Must be proposed consistent with 2 CFR 200.430 Compensation - Personal Services. The applicant's budget must include position title, salary rate, level of effort, and salary escalation factors for each position. Allowances, when proposed, must be broken down by specific type and by position. Applicants must explain all assumptions in the Budget Narrative. The Budget Narrative must demonstrate that the proposed compensation is reasonable for the services rendered and consistent with what is paid for similar work in other activities of the applicant. Applicants must provide their established written policies on personnel compensation. If the applicant's written policies do not address a specific element of compensation that is being proposed, the Budget Narrative must describe the rationale used and supporting market research.
- 2) Fringe Benefits – (if applicable) If the applicant has a fringe benefit rate approved by an agency of the U.S. Government, the applicant must use such rate and provide evidence of its approval. If an applicant does not have a fringe benefit rate approved, the applicant must propose a rate and explain how the applicant determined the rate. In this case, the Budget Narrative must include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., superannuation, gratuity, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in U.S. dollars and as a percentage of salaries.
- 3) Travel and Transportation – Provide details to explain the purpose of the trips, the number of trips, the origin and destination, the number of individuals traveling, and the duration of the trips. Per Diem and associated travel costs must be based on the applicant's normal travel policies. When appropriate please provide supporting documentation as an attachment, such as company travel policy, and explain assumptions in the Budget Narrative.
- 4) Procurement or Rental of Goods (Equipment & Supplies), Services, and Real Property – Must include information on estimated types of equipment, models, supplies and the cost per unit and quantity. The Budget Narrative must include the purpose of the equipment and supplies and the basis for the estimates. The Budget Narrative must support the necessity of any rental costs and reasonableness in

light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable property, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased.

- 5) Sub-awards – Specify the budget for the portion of the program to be passed through to any sub-recipients. See 2 CFR 200.330 for assistance in determining whether the sub-tier entity is a sub-recipient or contractor. The sub-recipient budgets must align with the same requirements as the applicant's budget, including those related to fringe and indirect costs.
- 6) Construction – If applicable
- 7) Other Direct Costs – This may include other costs not elsewhere specified, such as report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, as well as any other miscellaneous costs which directly benefit the program proposed by the applicant. The applicant must indicate the subject, venue and duration of any proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs. Otherwise, the narrative should be minimal.
- 8) Indirect Costs – Applicants must indicate whether they are proposing indirect costs or will charge all costs directly. In order to better understand indirect costs please see Subpart E of 2 CFR 200.414.

Applicant with a NICRA issued by a USG Agency must use that NICRA.

Initial Application Requirements: If the applicant has a current NICRA, submit your approved NICRA and the associated disclosed practices. If your NICRA was issued by an Agency other than USAID, provide the contact information for the approving Agency. Additionally, at the Agency's discretion, a provisional rate may be set forth in the award subject to audit and finalization. See [USAID's Indirect Cost Rate Guide for Non Profit Organizations](#) for further guidance.

Applicant that does not have an approved NICRA must provide additional supporting information, including financial statements and audits, (for the past 3 years), should the application still be under consideration after the merit review.

e) Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407

Inclusion of an item of cost in the detailed application budget does not satisfy any requirements for prior approval by the Agency. If the applicant would like the award to reflect approval of any cost elements for which prior written approval is specifically required for allowability, the applicant must specify and justify that cost. See 2 CFR 200.407 for information regarding which cost elements require prior written approval.

f) Approval of Sub-awards

The applicant must submit information for all sub-awards that it wishes to have approved at the time of award. For each proposed sub-award the applicant must provide the following:

- Name of organization
- DUNS Number
- Confirmation that the sub-recipient does not appear on the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) list
- Confirmation that the sub-recipient does not have active exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM)
- Confirmation that the sub-recipient is not listed in the United Nations Security designation list
- Confirmation that the sub-recipient is not suspended or debarred

- Confirmation that the applicant has completed a risk assessment of the sub-recipient, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.331(b)
- Any negative findings as a result of the risk assessment and the applicant's plan for mitigation.

g) Dun and Bradstreet and SAM Requirements

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier (DUNS number) and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements. Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is exempted from requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

1. Provide a valid DUNS number for the applicant and all proposed sub-recipients;
2. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. SAM is streamlining processes, eliminating the need to enter the same data multiple times, and consolidating hosting to make the process of doing business with the government more efficient (www.sam.gov).
3. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin the process early. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements above by the time USAID is ready to make an award, USAID may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

DUNS number: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

SAM registration: <http://www.sam.gov>

Non-U.S. applicants can find additional resources for registering in SAM, including a Quick Start Guide and a video on how to obtain an NCAGE code, on www.sam.gov, navigate to Help, then to International Registrants.

h) Branding Strategy & Marking Plan

The apparently successful applicant will be asked to provide a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan to be evaluated and approved by the Agreement Officer and incorporated into any resulting award

Branding Strategy – Assistance (June 2012)

- (a) Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Branding Strategy," describing how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, and how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and host country citizens.
- (b) The request for a Branding Strategy, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.
- (c) Failure to submit and negotiate a Branding Strategy within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.
- (d) The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the

Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.

- (e) The Branding Strategy must include, at a minimum, all of the following:
- (i) All estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth.
 - (ii) The intended name of the program, project, or activity.
 - 1) USAID requires the applicant to use the “USAID Identity,” comprised of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline “from the American people” as found on the USAID Web site at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>, unless Section VI of the RFA or APS states that the USAID Administrator has approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.
 - 2) USAID prefers local language translations of the phrase “made possible by (or with) the generous support of the American People” next to the USAID Identity when acknowledging contributions.
 - 3) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.
 - 4) If branding in the above manner is inappropriate or not possible, the applicant must explain how USAID's involvement will be showcased during publicity for the program or project.
 - 5) USAID prefers to fund projects that do not have a separate logo or identity that competes with the USAID Identity. If there is a plan to develop a separate logo to consistently identify this program, the applicant must attach a copy of the proposed logos.
 - (iii) The intended primary and secondary audiences for this project or program, including direct beneficiaries and any special target segments.
 - (iv) Planned communication or program materials used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries.
 - 1) Describe the main program message.
 - 2) Provide plans for training materials, posters, pamphlets, public service announcement, billboards, Web sites, and so forth, as appropriate.
 - 3) Provide any plans to announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens, such as media releases, press conferences, public events, and so forth. Applicant must incorporate the USAID Identity and the message, “USAID is from the American People.”
 - 4) Provide any additional ideas to increase awareness that the American people support this project or program.
 - (v) Information on any direct involvement from host-country government or ministry, including any planned acknowledgement of the host-country government.
 - (vi) Any other groups whose logo or identity the applicant will use on program materials and related materials. Indicate if they are a donor or why they will be visibly acknowledged, and if they will receive the same prominence as USAID.
- (f) The Agreement Officer will review the Branding Strategy to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.

- (g) If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Branding Strategy will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement.

Marking – Assistance (June 2012)

- a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a “Marking Plan,” detailing the public communications, commodities, and program materials, and other items that will visibly bear the “USAID Identity,” which comprises of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline “from the American people.” The USAID Identity is the official marking for the Agency, and is found on the USAID Web site at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.
- b. The request for a Marking Plan, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.
- c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Marking Plan within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.
- d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.
- e. The Marking Plan must include all of the following:
 - 1) A description of the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the applicant plans to produce and which will bear the USAID Identity as part of the award, including:
 - (i) Program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other sites physical in nature;
 - (ii) Technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audiovisual productions, public service announcements, Web sites/Internet activities, promotional, informational, media, or communications products funded by USAID;
 - (iii) Commodities, equipment, supplies, and other materials funded by USAID, including commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs; and
 - (iv) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.
 - (v) Events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences and other public activities. If the USAID Identity cannot be displayed, the recipient is encouraged to otherwise acknowledge USAID and the support of the American people.
 - 2) A table on the program deliverables with the following details:
 - (i) The program deliverables that the applicant plans to mark with the USAID Identity;
 - (ii) The type of marking and what materials the applicant will use to mark the program deliverables;
 - (iii) When in the performance period the applicant will mark the program deliverables, and where the applicant will place the marking;

- (iv) What program deliverables the applicant does not plan to mark with the USAID Identity , and
 - (v) The rationale for not marking program deliverables.
- 3) Any requests for an exemption from USAID marking requirements, and an explanation of why the exemption would apply. The applicant may request an exemption if USAID marking requirements would:
- (i) Compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials. The applicant must identify the USAID Development Objective, Interim Result, or program goal furthered by an appearance of neutrality, or state why an aspect of the award is presumptively neutral. Identify by category or deliverable item, examples of material for which an exemption is sought.
 - (ii) Diminish the credibility of audits, reports, analyses, studies, or policy recommendations whose data or findings must be seen as independent. The applicant must explain why each particular deliverable must be seen as credible.
 - (iii) Undercut host-country government “ownership” of constitutions, laws, regulations, policies, studies, assessments, reports, publications, surveys or audits, public service announcements, or other communications. The applicant must explain why each particular item or product is better positioned as host-country government item or product.
 - (iv) Impair the functionality of an item. The applicant must explain how marking the item or commodity would impair its functionality.
 - (v) Incur substantial costs or be impractical. The applicant must explain why marking would not be cost beneficial or practical.
 - (vi) Offend local cultural or social norms, or be considered inappropriate. The applicant must identify the relevant norm, and explain why marking would violate that norm or otherwise be inappropriate.
 - (vii) Conflict with international law. The applicant must identify the applicable international law violated by the marking.
- f. The Agreement Officer will consider the Marking Plan's adequacy and reasonableness and will approve or disapprove any exemption requests. The Marking Plan will be reviewed to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.
- g. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Marking Plan, including any approved exemptions, will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement, and will apply for the term of the award unless provided otherwise.

i) Funding Restrictions

Profit is not allowable for recipients or sub-recipients under this award. See 2 CFR 200.330 for assistance in determining whether a sub-tier entity is a sub-recipient or contractor.

Small-scale infrastructure construction is authorized under this award.

USAID will not allow the reimbursement of pre-award costs under this award without the explicit written approval of the Agreement Officer.

Except as may be specifically approved in advance by the AO, all commodities and services that will be reimbursed by USAID under this award must be from the authorized geographic code specified in Section B.4 of this NOFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

j) Conflict of Interest Pre-Award Term (August 2018)

a. Personal Conflict of Interest

1. An actual or appearance of a conflict of interest exists when an applicant organization or an employee of the organization has a relationship with an Agency official involved in the competitive award decision-making process that could affect that Agency official's impartiality. The term "conflict of interest" includes situations in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, the obligations and duties of a USAID employee or recipient employee.
2. The applicant must provide conflict of interest disclosures when it submits an SF-424. Should the applicant discover a previously undisclosed conflict of interest after submitting the application, the applicant must disclose the conflict of interest to the AO no later than ten (10) calendar days following discovery.

b. Organizational Conflict of Interest

The applicant must notify USAID of any actual or potential conflict of interest that they are aware of that may provide the applicant with an unfair competitive advantage in competing for this financial assistance award. Examples of an unfair competitive advantage include, but are not limited to, situations in which an applicant or the applicant's employee gained access to non-public information regarding a federal assistance funding opportunity, or an applicant or applicant's employee was substantially involved in the preparation of a federal assistance funding opportunity. USAID will promptly take appropriate action upon receiving any such notification from the applicant.

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1. CRITERIA

The merit review criteria here are tailored to the requirements of this particular NOFO. Applicant should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant matters which the applicant should address in its application, and (b) set the standard against which the application will be evaluated.

Technical and other factors will be evaluated relative to each other, as described here and prescribed by the Technical Application Format. The technical application will be scored by a Selection Committee (SC) using the criteria described in this section.

E.2. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Technical evaluations will be evaluated using a scoring rating against each evaluation criterion and sub-criterion. To facilitate the review of applications, applicants are requested to organize the narrative sections according to the application format (Section D) and the merit review criteria.

a) Merit Review

USAID will conduct a merit review of all technical applications received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

Factor 1: Technical Approach – 30 points

A compelling overall vision for the program, including a logical theory of change that explains how the applicant will achieve the program goals and results described in Section A: Program Description. The extent to which the technical application articulates the clarity and robustness of the solutions to address the underlying challenges to implementation of fisheries governance and decentralization, and ecosystem based fisheries management; and the degree to which the application demonstrates integration with the Department of Fisheries and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

Factor 2: Personnel and Staffing Plan – 30 points

The extent to which the key personnel proposed have the demonstrated knowledge, skills, qualifications, and experience required to collectively accomplish the activity goal.

Factor 3: Organizational Capacity and Governance Structure – 15 points

Applicant must demonstrate a sound technical capacity, and corporate experience in technical areas relevant to the program. Sub-recipient arrangements, if any, with civil society organizations (CSO) or Non-Government Organizations (NGO), which will enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of program implementation and the sustainability of the activity, will also be evaluated.

Factor 4: Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMELP) – 15 points

The extent to which the applicant's Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan and overall approach to monitoring, evaluating, and learning identify sound methods for collecting, analyzing, and using data, and demonstrate how the applicant will rigorously evaluate progress, facilitate ongoing learning and adaptive management by applying the principles of CLA, and include effective performance

and impact indicators for measuring progress toward all intermediate results and objectives.

Factor 5: Past Performance – 10 points

The applicant's performance information determined to be relevant will be reviewed in accordance with the elements below:

- (1) Quality of product or service, including consistency in meeting goals and targets;
- (2) Timeliness of performance, including adherence to schedules and other time-sensitive project conditions, and effectiveness of home and field office management to make prompt decisions and ensure efficient completion of tasks;
- (3) Business relations, addressing the history of professional behavior and overall business-like concern for the interests of the customer, including coordination among sub-partners and developing country partners, cooperative attitude in remedying problems, and timely completion of all administrative requirements;
- (4) Customer satisfaction with performance, including end user or beneficiary wherever possible;
- (5) Effectiveness and retention of key personnel, including appropriateness of personnel for the job and prompt and satisfactory changes in personnel when problems with clients were identified.

USAID may use performance information obtained from other than the sources identified by the applicant. USAID will solicit additional information from the references provided in this NOFO and potentially from other sources for evaluating an applicant's performance.

If the performance information contains negative information on which the applicant has not previously been given an opportunity to comment, USAID will provide the applicant an opportunity to comment on it prior to its consideration in the evaluation, and any applicant comment will be considered with the negative performance information. USAID will initially determine the relevance of similar performance information as a predictor of probable performance under the subject requirement. USAID may give more weight to performance information that is considered more relevant and/or more current.

In cases where (a) an applicant lacks relevant performance history, or (b) information on performance is not available, then the applicant will not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably on performance. The "neutral" rating assigned to any applicant lacking relevant performance history is a score commensurate with the percentage of points received vs. possible points. Prior to assigning a "neutral" past performance rating, the Agreement Officer may take into account a broad range of information related to an applicant's performance.

b) Business Review

There will be two aspects of cost review - cost realism and cost analysis.

(1) Cost Realism

Cost realism will be conducted concurrent with the technical application review. Cost realism is an assessment of the accuracy with the proposed costs and represents the most probable cost of performance within the applicant's technical and management approach. Cost realism will be performed as part of the review process to:

- Verify the applicant's understanding of the activity objective;
- Assess the degree to which the cost application reflects the approaches and/or risk assessments made in the technical application as well as the risk that the applicant will provide the supplies or services for the offered cost; and

- Assess the degree to which the costs included in the cost application accurately represent the work effort included in the technical application.

(2) Cost Analysis

Cost evaluation consists of validating the Non Federal entity's internal controls and determining cost reasonableness for its application in accordance with 2 CFR 200, ADS 303 or ADS 308 as applicable. Performing cost reasonableness analyses is essential to conclude that the amount of Federal financial assistance the Government will contribute to support an Applicant's budget is appropriate for the proposed activity. The Agency will evaluate the cost application of the applicant under consideration for an award as a result of the merit criteria review to determine whether the costs are allowable in accordance with the cost principles found in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E.

Cost will be reviewed for general completeness, reasonableness, allowability, and allocability. The Agency will also consider (1) the extent of the applicant's understanding of the financial aspects of the program and the applicant's ability to perform the activities within the amount requested; (2) whether the applicant's plans will achieve the program objectives with reasonable economy and efficiency; and (3) whether any special conditions relating to costs should be included in the award.

The final cost/business application will also be reviewed to ensure that all compliance requirements have been satisfied and the Agreement Officer can make an affirmative determination of responsibility.

The AO will perform a risk assessment (2 CFR 200.205). The AO may determine that a pre-award survey is required to inform the risk assessment in determining whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organizational, experience, accounting and operational controls, financial resources, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award. Depending on the result of the risk assessment, the AO will decide to execute the award, not execute the award, or award with “specific conditions” (2 CFR 200.207).

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1. FEDERAL AWARD NOTICES

USAID anticipates awarding one (1) cooperative agreement resulting from this NOFO to the Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA) whose application best meets the merit review criteria (see Section E). The Agreement Officer will only do so after making a positive responsibility determination that the ASA possesses, or has the ability to obtain, the necessary management competence in planning and carrying out assistance programs and that it will practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability of funds and other assets provided by USAID.

USAID reserves the right to award any or more none of the applications.

Award of the agreement contemplated by this NOFO cannot be made until funds have been appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award.

The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds.

Following the selection for award and successful negotiations, the ASA will receive an electronic copy of the notice of the award signed by the Agreement Officer which will serve as the authorizing document. No costs chargeable to the proposed Agreement may be incurred before receipt of a fully executed Agreement from the Agreement Officer.

F.2. ADMINISTRATIVE & NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The resulting award from this NOFO will be administered in accordance with the following policies and regulations.

For US organizations: [ADS 303](#), [2 CFR 700](#), [2 CFR 200](#), and [Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental organizations](#).

2 CFR 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles, https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/textidx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl as applicable.

See Annex 5, for the Standard Provisions link that will be applicable to any awards resulting from this NOFO.

F.3. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Financial Reporting

The Recipient must submit quarterly financial reports to USAID within 30 calendar days following the end of each quarter using the Office of Management and Budget SF-425. Financial reports are due January 31, April 30, July 31, and October 31. The SF 425 (and SF 425a if necessary) must be submitted via electronic format to the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) and the Agreement Officer (AO). The Federal Financial Report (FFR/SF-425) is available in PDF or Excel format at the OMB website: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms/

Performance Reporting

The Recipient will adhere to all reporting requirements listed below. All reports as required under Substantial Involvement shall be submitted by the due date for approval of the USAID AOR (Agreement Officer Representative) designated by the Agreement Officer. The AOR can request Ad Hoc reports throughout the life of the activity and as needed but will endeavor to limit these requests when regular reporting can provide the same information. The Recipient will consult with the AOR on the format and expected content of reports prior to submission.

Initial Annual Work Plan: Within 60 days of signature of the Cooperative Agreement, the Recipient will submit for USAID AOR approval an initial annual work plan also explaining the start-up workshop process, including collaborative development of a theory-based results chain. The AOR will provide comments within 20 working days to the Recipient and the Recipient will have 15 working days to respond and make all requested changes, after which the AOR will provide final approval within 15 working days.

Subsequent Annual Work Plan: All subsequent Work Plans will be submitted to the AOR no later than 1 August and will cover an entire Fiscal Year, i.e. October 1 to September 30. All Work Plans must be developed in cooperation with the AOR, other USAID/Malawi programs, other relevant USAID/Malawi activities, donor programs, Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, District Councils, local leaders, beneficiary communities, and all other relevant stakeholders as designated by the AOR. Work Plans will take their structure from the strategic approaches identified in REFRESH's logical framework and should be based on intentional reflection and learning activities, such as analysis of monitoring data from the previous year, after action reviews, or collaborative analysis with partners. For this deliverable, USAID will provide a results chain-based work plan template that can be revised in consultation with the AOR.

Theory-based results chain: Within 60 days of signature of the award, Recipient will submit a theory-based results chain, which will form the basis for the Life of Agreement Strategic Plan, the AMELP, and annual work plans. This will be developed from the co-design workshop the Recipient will hold in conjunction with key stakeholders, sub-awardees and USAID²¹

Five-year work plan: Within 60 days of signature of the Cooperative Agreement, the Recipient will be required to submit a five-year work plan for approval by the USAID AOR. The plan will be based on the program's theory-based results chain and will identify the program's key strategic approaches, interim results, and timelines. The plan must demonstrate how REFRESH Lake Malawi will comply with USAID's Biodiversity Code. The approved five-year work plan and theory-based results chain will inform the development of the subsequent Annual Work Plans.

Activity Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Plan (AMELP): The Recipient will submit to the AOR a five-year Activity Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Plan within 60 days of the signature of the Cooperative Agreement (with the submission of the first Work Plan) that include Performance Indicators for the first year. For all subsequent years of operation, the Recipient will submit an annual AMELP to align with each Work Plan submission, and updated five-year AMELP if required by the AOR. The AOR will provide comments within 20 working days to the Recipient and the Recipient will have 15 working days to respond and make all requested changes, after which the AOR will provide final approval within 15 working days.

The AMELP will clearly align with the proposed Theory of Chain, Results Framework, and activity work

²¹ Further information on the use of results chains for biodiversity programming at USAID can be found at: <https://rmportal.net/biodiversityconservation-gateway/resources/projects/measuring-impact/how-to-guides-for-usaidbiodiversity-programming>).

plan. However, the Recipient will measure and report indicators to effectively communicate program results, learn from program activities, and apply evidence-based adaptive management. USAID/Malawi recommends the use of both standard and custom indicators that measure key intermediate results. Performance indicators will be associated with the stated theory of change and will be developed during the joint work plan process following issuance of this award. Final performance indicators will be agreed upon during the start-up workshop after issuance of this award. As stipulated in the USAID Biodiversity Policy, monitoring must occur along the theory of change or result chains which illustrate how actions will address the threats to and drivers of biodiversity loss. Measuring specific sub-IRs, outcomes, and impacts facilitates better understanding of which approaches are working under which conditions, and which interventions need to be refined or strengthened within each of the respective components of the activity. The AMELP will also clearly highlight how the Recipient will generate baseline values for performance indicators. The AMELP will be finalized in the first quarter of the activity, and any subsequent changes will require concurrence from USAID/AOR.

The Recipient can propose a limited number of additional, specific metrics that might uniquely capture the effectiveness of proposed interventions and their integrated, cross-sector approach to decentralized and ecosystem based fisheries management. The Recipient will develop a Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS), using the USAID standard template, for each indicator, and include all of the PIRS in the AMELP. The AMELP will also include a performance indicator tracking table which lists all of the proposed performance indicators, the baseline values and targets. The tracking table will help easily monitor progress over time, affording an executive audience an immediate sense of progress or the lack thereof.

The AMELP will also specify how the Recipient will design and implement effective data management systems that facilitate generation, capture, storage, and use of high quality data. Throughout the life of the activity, the Recipient will also be required to use USAID/Malawi's web-based reporting platform (DevResults) for routine data capturing and report submission as well as activity information upload and management. The Recipient will also ensure that the data management system put in place adequately lays down a foundation to facilitate comparative analysis during the planned third-party evaluations.

In line with USAID/Malawi's 3-C approach, the AMELP will serve as a central tool for ensuring and tracking increased coordination and integration of components of the activity with other cross-sector activities- including those supported by USAID/Malawi, other USG initiatives and efforts, other donors, and the GoM contributing to this activity's outcomes and achievements of its high-level goal. The AMELP will also allow USAID to gauge the Recipient's performance and understand any unforeseen changes in strategy to achieve intended results. Finally, the Recipient will ensure that across objectives, the AMELP system maintains a high degree of fidelity to USAID/Malawi's CDCS.

Quarterly Reports: The Recipient shall prepare and submit a Quarterly Report to the AOR within 30 days of the end of each quarter, following the submission of the first Work Plan, and quarterly thereafter for the life of the activity. The first Quarterly Report will be due after the first full quarter of implementation of the activity, after the activity is awarded. USAID will provide written feedback within 30 days and the Recipient will have 10 working days to respond and make any necessary changes. Following the end of each fiscal year the Recipient will prepare and submit to the AOR and the Agreement Officer an Annual Report in lieu of a Quarter Four Report.

At a minimum Quarterly Reports shall include the following:

- Discussion of the overall performance of the program, including details of any discrepancies between expected and actual results.
- Details of achievements for each activity implemented under each component, how this relates to the Work Plan and Work Plan timeline, and how this relates to planned targets and tracking the achievements against the AMELP.

- Discussion on how activities are impacting gender equality and empowerment as well as other cross cutting issues of sustainability, integration and private sector engagement.
- Identify problems or issues encountered, including issues adhering to the work plan/timeline, how they were or will be resolved and, if/as required, recommended USAID/Malawi Mission-level intervention to facilitate timely resolution.
- Discussion of sub-grant component and progress towards the AMELP.
- Description of assessment and surveillance data used to measure results.
- Success stories and an explanation of successes achieved, constraints encountered, and adjustments made for achieving program objectives.
- A comparison of actual accomplishments, both for the reporting period and cumulatively, with the established goals and objectives, and expected results; the findings of the investigator; or both.
- Data (both qualitative and quantitative) must be presented using established baseline data and indicators as identified in the AMELP, and be supported by a brief narrative.
- Reasons why the established goals/targets were not met (if applicable), the impact on the program objective(s), and how the impact has been/will be addressed.
- Calendar for next quarter's activities.

Annual Reports: The Quarter Four Report will serve as the Annual Report for the concluding year, and shall be submitted within 30 days following the close of the fourth quarter (within 30 days of the end of the USG fiscal Year or by November 1). In addition to meeting the above requirements for Quarterly Reports, the Annual Report shall include a discussion, supported with quantitative and qualitative evidence, of progress against indicators and/or impacts achieved to-date as detailed in the corresponding year's Activity MEL Plan. This Report will be instrumental in helping the Mission to complete Annual Reports to USAID/Washington on overall project impacts.

The Annual Report shall include the following:

- Cumulative progress over the year (activities completed, benchmarks achieved, performance standards completed) as related to the work plan.
- Quantitative progress towards AMELP targets and rationale for deviations from set targets.
- Problems encountered and whether they were resolved or are still outstanding.
- Proposed solutions to new or ongoing problems.
- Lessons learned during the year of implementation.
- Discussion on how activities are impacting gender equality and empowerment.
- Success stories (photos, captions and narrative), including examples of synergy, and collaboration with other USAID programs, donors, local organizations, other relevant stakeholders and partners.
- Documentation of best practices that can be taken to scale.

Final Report: Upon completion of the USAID REFRESH Lake Malawi Activity, the Recipient must submit a final performance report. The final performance report, to include the final version of all published reports and products produced under the award is due 90 calendar days after the expiration or termination of the contract in accordance with 22 CFR 226.51.

Outreach and Communications Strategy: A communication and outreach strategy shall be developed on an annual basis. The strategies will include the overall communication message of the program. The strategies must also focus on opportunities for USG visibility through the components of the project in terms of branding and marking but also with regard to events and other direct engagements. The activity offers opportunities for signing ceremonies, graduation ceremonies and engagement with the NGOs and their target audiences throughout the course of the project. The strategy must ensure the use of traditional and social media and must be updated on a semi-annual basis.

The Recipient must implement an effective communications strategy for sharing information, knowledge, and lessons learned. Communication efforts must reach a range of audiences and stakeholders both nationally and internationally, focusing on Malawian communities, stakeholders, extension service providers, farmers, and policy makers, but also reaching agriculture and nutrition professionals and the larger community of USAID stakeholders both in the United States and abroad. Primary goals of communications efforts must include increasing public knowledge and awareness of Lake Malawi's unique fish biodiversity that needs to be conserved for inclusive economic growth, food and nutrition security, showcasing success stories and lessons learned, influencing policy and practice, and most importantly, enhancing and sustaining behavior change for various actors; government, civil society, fishers, fish traders, urban and rural consumers. The Recipient must implement the communications strategy in close coordination with the USAID/Malawi AOR and with USAID/Malawi's Development, Outreach, and Communications Office.

F.4. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201.5.10g and 204 (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ADS/200/>), which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities. Applicant's environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this NOFO. In addition, the Recipient must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter shall govern.

In accordance with 22 CFR 216.2, the Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) for USAID/Malawi Sustainable Livelihoods pad was cleared by the African Bureau Environmental Officer in August 2018 https://ecd.usaid.gov/document.php?doc_id=50950. This IEE will guide environmental compliance and climate risks management of the activity. The recipient must ensure that activities deemed to have the potential to negatively impact the environment to be implemented under REFRESH comply with conditions set forth in the Sustainable Livelihoods IEEs. The recipient shall be responsible for ensuring that all environmental conditions/mitigation measures either proposed in the IEE or developed as a result of environmental screening of activities during implementation are budgeted for and implemented. The IEE recommends that research, training and selected capacity building activities are categorically excluded from further environmental analysis while activities supporting local natural resources governance structures, support for small scale aquaculture ponds, and construction works have negative determination with conditions requiring preparation of Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP).

Accordingly, the recipient will develop an EMMP describing how the project will, in particular terms, implement those conditions in the IEE that apply to project activities, including monitoring to assure appropriate implementation and sufficiency of environmental compliance measures. This shall include training of staff and partners, where appropriate. The recipient's budget should reflect the costs of implementing the environmental compliance activities. For the purposes of this solicitation, recipient (s) should include costs for environmental compliance implementation and monitoring in the appropriate cost elements of their application.

The recipient shall integrate these environmental compliance measures into the initial work plan and subsequent project annual work plans and performance management plans, report on them in the normal basis of project reporting. USAID/Malawi SEG Team shall assure that this integration occurs. Reports

shall consider implementation of USAID environmental mitigation measures, “Best Practices” for Environmental Management, and new issues or conditions that may impact environmental compliance measures, recommendations when appropriate for improving the effectiveness of mitigation measures and compliance and any other major modifications/revisions in the development activities, and mitigation and monitoring procedures. The recipient’s final report will include a specific section on the implementation of the Agency’s environmental regulations (22CFR216), mitigation actions and their effectiveness throughout the life of the program.

The recipient, in collaboration with the USAID Contracting Officer’s Technical Representative, shall periodically review all ongoing and planned activities under this project to determine if they are within the scope of approved IEE. This review should occur at least annually and immediately upon evidence or concern of non-compliance. The results of a compliance self-assessment and any joint reviews should be summarized in corresponding periodic reporting (semi-annual and annual reports).

F.5 OTHER REQUIREMENTS

a. Foreign Government Delegation to International Conferences

Funds in the agreement may not be used to finance the travel, per diem, hotel expenses, meals, conference fees or other conference costs for any member of a foreign government’s delegation to an international conference sponsored by a public international organization, except as provided in ADS Mandatory Reference “Guidance on Funding Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences” at <http://www.info.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/300/refindx3.htm> or as approved by the Agreement Officer.

b. Branding Strategy and Marking Plan

It is a federal statutory and regulatory requirement that all USAID programs, projects, activities, public communications, and commodities that USAID partially or fully funds under a USAID grant or cooperative agreement or other assistance award or sub-award, must be marked appropriately overseas with the USAID Identity. See Section 641, Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended and 2 CFR 700.16.

Under the regulation, *USAID requires the submission of a Branding Strategy and a Marking Plan, but only by the “apparent successful applicant,”* as defined in the regulation.

A Branding Strategy and Marking Plan must be in accordance with USAID Branding and Marking Plan as required per ADS 320 at the following link: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/320>.

c. Geographic Information System (GIS)

USAID/Malawi uses Mission-wide GIS data to support informed decision making and increase the use of evidence to affect decisions and resource allocations across the portfolio. This includes data management, standardization, and collection using global positioning system hand held receivers (e.g., GPS Units or mobile devices with GPS location technology) to capture the geo-referenced location data of activities, etc. For all activities that are required to collect GIS data, at a minimum, the Contractor must submit data on:

- The location(s) where the activity is being implemented, unless otherwise specified by USAID. The location of the activity’s beneficiaries may also be collected. The Activity Location Data must be collected according the standards provided by USAID, such as the use of standard district/sub district names (Traditional Authority, Group Village Head, Extension Planning Area, Forest Reserves etc.);

- Activity Location that excludes personally identifiable information. If the Activity Location Data collected by the Contractor requires protection from unauthorized access to mitigate data risk, the Contractor must notify USAID in writing before submitting the Activity Location Data to USAID:
- Activity Location Data must be submitted electronically according to the standards and procedures provided by USAID. Data must be submitted six months after the starting date of the award and bi-annually afterwards coinciding with the 2nd Quarterly and the Annual Performance Reports. If the Activity Location Data has not changed since the previous data submission, it must be indicated when the data is submitted.
- Geographic Data Assets - All geographic data assets must also be submitted in accordance with the special provision “Submission of Datasets to the Development Data Library (DDL)” (See F.10). For Geographic Data Files, the Contractor must submit both primary and derived Geographic Data Files in Shapefile (.shp), GeoTIFF (.tif), CSV (.csv), or GeoJSON (.geojson) file formats. In addition to fulfilling the submission requirements noted above, Geographic Data Files that are stored in other file formats that may be useful to end users can be voluntarily submitted in those file formats. For example, Geographic Data Files stored in a File Geodatabase (.gdb) or as a Web Map Service (WMS) can also be submitted.

d. Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Adaptive Management

The successful Recipient must establish and sustain a strong monitoring, evaluation, learning, and adaptive management approach that effectively tracks activity progress and fosters evidence-based decision making, learning, and iterative adaptation to unexpected results or changes in context. Building on the best practices and lessons learned from the FISH activity, the Recipient must develop and implement a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that is capable of generating high quality information, and also encourages learning and ongoing adaptive management. This integrated model provides a unique opportunity to document best practices and lessons learned to inform the implementation and design of ongoing and future cross-sectoral development activities. This is in line with USAID/Malawi’s objective of promoting collaboration, learning, and adapting within the scope of the activity itself, but also across the broader Environment portfolio. The USAID Biodiversity Policy also requires monitoring along the activity’s theory of change. In addition, USAID’s commitment to rigorous evaluation and evidence-based investments requires that the Recipient develop a framework for monitoring, evaluating, learning, and adapting that will support, validate, and/or highlight the need to refine the causal model and related interventions as outlined in the activity design, while integrating support for formal, third-party evaluation activities and ongoing active learning and adaptation as part of the project work plan. Current and past lessons on monitoring, evaluation, learning, and adapting are captured and shared on USAID’s Learning Lab.

Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) Plan

USAID/Malawi recognizes that development efforts yield positive change more quickly if they are coordinated and collaborative, test promising new approaches in a continuous search for improvement, and build on what works, while eliminating what does not. The Recipient must therefore implement a CLA approach to continuously assess the activity’s causal pathways, target outcomes, and adjust the interventions and approach as necessary to yield the most effective course of action. To that end, the Recipient must develop a formal CLA Plan which incorporates the CLA approach, and which includes best practices in the industry while also allowing flexibility for new, innovative methods of capturing, analyzing, and sharing evidence and experiences. The CLA Plan must clearly relate to the MEL, while incorporating activities to complement continuous performance monitoring and external evaluation. Specifically, the CLA Plan must achieve the following objectives:

- **Maximize success:** A comprehensive CLA Plan will support collaboration across USAID implementing partners, and with stakeholders such as civil society, the GoM, and other donors, in order to fully support a systems approach. The Recipient must integrate learning into USAID/Malawi's ongoing donor coordination activities, as well as the Mission's established relationships with various offices of the GoM (at national and district levels), leaders in the agriculture, climate change, and health sectors, and other key stakeholders.
- **Realize learning opportunities regarding an integrated approach:** Given the opportunities to capture evidence and to provide experience and feedback within the Biodiversity Conservation context, the Recipient's CLA Plan must prioritize methods of gathering and sharing this learning with various stakeholders, including USAID/Malawi. Additional learning activities might include qualitative and/or informal surveys or communication to track contextual shifts, game-changing trends, gender dynamics, and/or results of an innovative intervention or technology so as to allow for adjustments and refinements of approaches during the course of implementation.
- **Leverage opportunities to build local capacity to sustain results:** A CLA Plan must explicitly support learning and capacity building by local partners and stakeholders, thereby contributing to best practices in development and supporting USAID's Local Solutions goal of strengthening local systems to sustain results.

The CLA Plan must propose learning strategies, processes, and time frames to ensure iterative reflection on new learning (including from the impact evaluation which will be completed in 2017), emergent contextual shifts, game-changing trends, and adaptation of interventions and approach accordingly over the entire life of the activity. Working closely with USAID/Malawi, the Recipient must finalize the CLA Plan in the first quarter, in conjunction with the AMELP.

Illustrative CLA Questions

The Recipient must propose a set of key learning questions, and decide which to pursue with the USAID Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) approval. These questions must contribute to the Biodiversity and Development Learning Agenda²², and be aligned with the learning priorities of USAID/Malawi and other key stakeholders in Malawi's agriculture and nutrition sectors. The following are examples of themes around which the Recipient might propose learning questions:

- Improve understanding of how conservation enterprises are contributing to the reduction of fishing intensity and overfishing and how private sector could be engaged to help conserve biodiversity.
- Understand why fisheries decentralization has been derailed by elite capture stemming from traditional authorities, central government and others in the past and what should be done to avoid it and foster meaningful decentralized fisheries management.
- What conditions need to be in place for fish value-chain improvements to incentivize sustainable fishing and not drive over-fishing.
- Using the applied political economy analysis approach, understand the spoilers and champions for ecosystem based fisheries management and how these actors can be employed to drum up support for a wider adoption of sustainable fishing practices on Lake Malawi.
- Understanding how young women and adolescent girls and children are impacted by fisheries sub-sector and how the negative impacts could be mitigated.

e. Data Quality

The Recipient must ensure quality of all data collected and reported, whether directly by the Recipient or through its sub-partners. The Recipient must clearly highlight the data quality assurance plan and all

²² Measuring Impact (2015) USAID Biodiversity and Development Learning Agenda

measures that will be put in place to ensure adherence to Biodiversity Conservation data quality requirements as part of the AMELP. The Recipient must take initiative to build on the best practices and lessons learned from ongoing or completed USAID activities such as FISH, COMPASS I and II. The Recipient must prioritize strengthening the capacity of all sub-partners, and especially local sub-partners, in M&E to ensure that they collect and report high quality data that follow best practices and comply with Biodiversity Conservation programming requirements and USAID ADS regulations related to data quality. The Recipient must perform regular Data Quality Analyses for indicators with all partners and ensure understanding of Performance Indicator Reference Sheets and application of homogenous data collection processes for shared indicators across sub-partners. The Recipient must dedicate sufficient resources to M&E personnel and budgets. The AMELP must also specify M&E staffing plans and capacity building for local partners.

f. Open Data

USAID established an open data policy in October 2014 to ensure that data from USAID programs are public, easily accessible, reusable, complete, and timely, in keeping with USAID's Evaluation Policy and the Office of Management and Budget's Open Data Policy. To comply with this policy, the Recipient must submit to the Development Data Library, at www.usaid.gov/data, in a machine-readable, non-proprietary format, a copy of any dataset created or obtained in performance of this award, including datasets produced by a sub-grantee at any tier.

g. External Evaluation

In accordance with USAID's Evaluation Policy and the ADS 203.3.1.3 requirements, REFRESH falls within the category of a large project and must therefore undergo third-party mid-term and final performance evaluations. The external nature of the evaluations is aimed at ensuring that the activity's outcomes and impacts are objectively captured and measured. USAID/Malawi will be responsible for soliciting, managing, and paying for all costs related to the third-party evaluations through an independent mechanism; however, the Recipient must coordinate closely with the external evaluation team in planning and executing the evaluations. The third-party evaluator will propose the evaluation methodology depending on the evaluation questions, but to a large extent a mixed-methods approach will be recommended.

A third-party impact evaluation will be informed by the Biodiversity Conservation Learning Agenda. The Recipient must collaborate with the impact evaluation team. An impact evaluation would require baseline, mid-term, and final assessments, and close collaboration with the Recipient throughout implementation to maintain the integrity of identified control groups.

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY

Any questions and requests for clarifications should be submitted to the following email address:

Email: oa-malawi-solicit@usaid.gov

Please note that only the Agreement Officer is authorized to make commitments in behalf of USAID/Malawi.

SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

USAID reserves the right to fund or not the application submitted. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. Any award and subsequent incremental funding will be subject to the availability of funds and continued relevance to Agency programming.

APPLICATIONS WITH PROPRIETARY DATA

Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purpose, should mark the cover page with the following:

“This application includes data that must not be disclosed duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, an award is made as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government will have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting award. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government’s right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets {insert sheet numbers}.”

Additionally, the Applicant must mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following:

“Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application.”

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. ADS 201.3.15.3; USAID's *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy* (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdact200.pdf)
2. USAID Malawi's *Country Development Cooperation Strategy* (<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/malawi-cdcs-2013-2108.pdf>)
3. USAID's *Biodiversity Policy*). (<https://www.usaid.gov/biodiversity/policy>)
4. USAID Biodiversity Programming How-To Guides (<https://usaidlearninglab.org/library/usaid-biodiversity-programming-how-guides>).
5. Building a Conservation Enterprise: Keys for Success (<https://rmportal.net/conservation-enterprises/ce-documents/conservation-enterprises/ce-documents/building-a-conservation-enterprise-keys-for-success>)
6. USAID Biodiversity Guide for Staff & Partners (<https://rmportal.net/library/content/tools/biodiversity-conservation-tools/usaids-biodiversity-guide-for-staff-partners/view>)
7. USAID Evaluation policy (<https://www.usaid.gov/evaluation/policy>)

ANNEX 2 - SUMMARY BUDGETS

Template by Category

Total Estimated Amount						
Cost Elements	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Personnel						
Fringe Benefits						
Consultants						
Travel, Transportation & Per Diem						
Equipment						
Supplies						
Sub-Awards						
Other Direct Cost						
Total Direct Cost						
Indirect Cost						
Grand Total						

Template by Outcomes

Outcomes	Direct Cost	Indirect Cost	Total Cost
Outcome 1- Fisheries governance and regulatory framework strengthened			
Outcome 2 - Ecosystem-based fisheries management improved			
Outcome 3 - Decentralization of fisheries management strengthened			
Outcome 4 - Commercialization of conservation enterprises to counter unsustainable fishing catalyzed and supported			
Outcome 5 - CDCS priorities for integration advanced			

ANNEX 3 - CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

Part I – Certifications and Assurances

1. Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Non-Discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs

Note: This certification applies to Non-U.S. organizations if any part of the program will be undertaken in the United States.

- (a) The recipient hereby assures that no person in the United States will, on the bases set forth below, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity receiving financial assistance from USAID, and that with respect to the Cooperative Agreement for which application is being made, it will comply with the requirements of:
- (1) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub. L. 88-352, 42 U.S.C. 2000- d), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance;
 - (2) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance;
 - (3) The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (Pub. L. 95-478), which prohibits discrimination based on age in the delivery of services and benefits supported with Federal funds;
 - (4) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance (whether or not the programs or activities are offered or sponsored by an educational institution); and
 - (5) USAID regulations implementing the above nondiscrimination laws, set forth in Chapter II of Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations.
- (b) If the recipient is an institution of higher education, the Assurances given herein extend to admission practices and to all other practices relating to the treatment of students or clients of the institution, or relating to the opportunity to participate in the provision of services or other benefits to such individuals, and must be applicable to the entire institution unless the recipient establishes to the satisfaction of the USAID Administrator that the institution's practices in designated parts or programs of the institution will in no way affect its practices in the program of the institution for which financial assistance is sought, or the beneficiaries of, or participants in, such programs.

2. Certification Regarding Lobbying

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

- (1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal Cooperative

Agreement, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

- (2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned must complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.
- (3) The undersigned must require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including contracts, subawards, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients must certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, United States Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification will be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

3. Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

"The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that: If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned must complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement will be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure."

4. Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals (ADS 206)

USAID reserves the right to terminate this Agreement, to demand a refund or take other appropriate measures if the Grantee is found to have been convicted of a narcotics offense or to have been engaged in drug trafficking as defined in 22 CFR Part 140. The undersigned must review USAID ADS 206 to determine if any certifications are required for Key Individuals or Covered Participants.

If there are COVERED PARTICIPANTS: USAID reserves the right to terminate assistance to or take other appropriate measures with respect to, any participant approved by USAID who is found to have been convicted of a narcotics offense or to have been engaged in drug trafficking as defined in 22 CFR Part 140.

5. Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing, Implementing Executive Order 13224

By signing and submitting this application, the prospective recipient provides the certification set out below:

1. The Recipient, to the best of its current knowledge, did not provide, within the previous ten years, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it does not and will not knowingly provide, material support or resources to any individual or entity that commits, attempts to commit, advocates,

facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated, or participated in terrorist acts, as that term is defined in paragraph 3. The Certification in the preceding sentence will not be deemed applicable to material support or resources provided by the Recipient pursuant to an authorization contained in one or more applicable licenses issued by the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

2. The following steps may enable the Recipient to comply with its obligations under paragraph 1:
 - a. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Recipient will verify that the individual or entity does not (i) appear on the master list of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons, which is maintained by OFAC, or (ii) is not included in any supplementary information concerning prohibited individuals or entities that may be provided by USAID to the Recipient.
 - b. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Recipient also will verify that the individual or entity has not been designated by the United Nations Security (UNSC) sanctions committee established under UNSC Resolution 1267 (1999) (the "1267 Committee") [individuals and entities linked to the Taliban, Usama bin Laden, or the Al-Qaida Organization]. To determine whether there has been a published designation of an individual or entity by the 1267 Committee, the Recipient should refer to the consolidated list available online at the Committee's Web site: <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1267/1267ListEng.htm>.
 - c. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Recipient will consider all information about that individual or entity of which it is aware and all public information that is reasonably available to it or of which it should be aware.
 - d. The Recipient also will implement reasonable monitoring and oversight procedures to safeguard against assistance being diverted to support terrorist activity.
3. For purposes of this Certification –
 - a. "Material support and resources" means currency or monetary instruments or financial securities, financial services, lodging, training, expert advice or assistance, safehouses, false documentation or identification, communications equipment, facilities, weapons, lethal substances, explosives, personnel, transportation, and other physical assets, except medicine or religious materials."
 - b. "Training" means instruction or teaching designed to impart a specific skill, as opposed to general knowledge.
 - c. "Expert advice or assistance" means advice or assistance derived from scientific, technical, or other specialized knowledge.
 - d. "Terrorist act" means –
 - (i) an act prohibited pursuant to one of the 12 United Nations Conventions and Protocols related to terrorism (see UN terrorism conventions Internet site: <http://untreaty.un.org/English/Terrorism.asp>); or
 - (ii) an act of premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents; or
 - (iii) any other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.
 - e. "Entity" means a partnership, association, corporation, or other organization, group or subgroup.

- f. References in this Certification to the provision of material support and resources must not be deemed to include the furnishing of USAID funds or USAID-financed commodities to the ultimate beneficiaries of USAID assistance, such as recipients of food, medical care, micro-enterprise loans, shelter, etc., unless the Recipient has reason to believe that one or more of these beneficiaries commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated or participated in terrorist acts.
- g. The Recipient's obligations under paragraph 1 are not applicable to the procurement of goods and/or services by the Recipient that are acquired in the ordinary course of business through contract or purchase, e.g., utilities, rents, office supplies, gasoline, etc., unless the Recipient has reason to believe that a vendor or supplier of such goods and services commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated or participated in terrorist acts.

This Certification is an express term and condition of any agreement issued as a result of this application, and any violation of it will be grounds for unilateral termination of the agreement by USAID prior to the end of its term.

6. Certification Regarding Trafficking in Persons, Implementing Title XVII of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013

Note: This certification must be completed prior to receiving an award if the estimated value of services required to be performed under the award outside the United States exceeds \$500,000. This certification must also be submitted annually to the Agreement Officer during the term of the award.

By signing below, the applicant or recipient, as applicable, through its duly designated representative, after having conducted due diligence, hereby certifies the following:

1. The applicant/recipient has implemented a compliance plan to prevent the prohibited activities identified in section (a) of the Mandatory Provision "Trafficking in Persons" and is in compliance with that plan;
2. The application/recipient has implemented procedures to prevent any activities described in section (a) of the Mandatory Provision "Trafficking in Persons" and to monitor, detect, and terminate any contractor, subawardee, employee, or other agent of the applicant/recipient engaging in any activities described in such section; and
3. To the best of the representative's knowledge, neither the applicant/recipient, nor any employee, contractor, or subawardee of the applicant/recipient, nor any agent of the applicant/recipient or of such a contractor or subawardee, is engaged in any of the activities described in section (a) the Mandatory Provision "Trafficking in Persons."

7. Certification of Recipient

By signing below the recipient provides certifications and assurances for (1) the Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Non-Discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs, (2) the Certification Regarding Lobbying, (3) the Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals (ADS 206), (4) the Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing Implementing Executive Order 13224, and (5) the Certification Regarding Trafficking in Persons above.

These certifications and assurances are given in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all Federal grants, loans, contracts, property, discounts, or other Federal financial assistance extended

after the date hereof to the recipient by the Agency, including installment payments after such date on account of applications for Federal financial assistance which was approved before such date. The recipient recognizes and agrees that such Federal financial assistance will be extended in reliance on the representations and agreements made in these assurances, and that the United States will have the right to seek judicial enforcement of these assurances. These assurances are binding on the recipient, its successors, transferees, and assignees, and the person or persons whose signatures appear below are authorized to sign these assurances on behalf of the recipient.

Request for Application or
Annual Program Statement No. _____

Application No. _____

Date of Application _____

Name of Recipient _____

Typed Name and Title _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Part II – Key Individual Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking

I hereby certify that within the last ten years:

1. I have not been convicted of a violation of, or a conspiracy to violate, any law or regulation of the United States or any other country concerning narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances.
2. I am not and have not been an illicit trafficker in any such drug or controlled substance.
3. I am not and have not been a knowing assistor, abettor, conspirator, or colluder with others in the illicit trafficking in any such drug or substance.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title/Position: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

NOTICE:

1. You are required to sign this Certification under the provisions of 22 CFR Part 140, Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers. These regulations were issued by the Department of State and require that certain key individuals of organizations must sign this Certification.
2. If you make a false Certification you are subject to U.S. criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1001.

Part III – Participant Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking

1. I hereby certify that within the last ten years:

- a. I have not been convicted of a violation of, or a conspiracy to violate, any law or regulation of the United States or any other country concerning narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances.
- b. I am not and have not been an illicit trafficker in any such drug or controlled substance.
- c. I am not or have not been a knowing assistor, abettor, conspirator, or colluder with others in the illicit trafficking in any such drug or substance.

2. I understand that USAID may terminate my training if it is determined that I engaged in the above conduct during the last ten years or during my USAID training.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

NOTICE:

1. You are required to sign this certification under the provisions of 22 CFR Part 140, Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers. These regulations were issued by the Department of State and require that certain participants must sign this certification.

2. If you make a false certification you are subject to U.S. criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1001.

Part IV – Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction

(a) As required by sections 744 and 745 of Division E of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113-235), and similar provisions, if contained in subsequent appropriations acts, none of the funds made available by that Act may be used to enter into an assistance award with any organization that –

- (1) “Was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency has direct knowledge of the conviction, unless the agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government”; or
- (2) “Has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency has direct knowledge of the unpaid tax liability, unless the Federal agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government”.

It is USAID’s policy that no award may be made to any organization covered by (1) or (2) above, unless the M/MPBP Compliance Division has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

(b) **Applicant Representation:**

- (1) The Applicant represents that it is ☐ is not ☐ an organization that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under a Federal law within the preceding 24 months.
- (2) The Applicant represents that it is ☐ is not ☐ an organization that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability.

Part V – Prohibition on Providing Federal Assistance to Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements – Representation (May 2017)

(a) Definitions.

“Contract” has the meaning given in 2 CFR Part 200.

“Contractor” means an entity that receives a contract as defined in 2 CFR Part 200.

“Internal confidentiality agreement or statement” means a confidentiality agreement or any other written statement that the recipient requires any of its employees or subrecipients to sign regarding nondisclosure of recipient information, except that it does not include confidentiality agreements arising out of civil litigation or confidentiality agreements that recipient employees or subrecipients sign at the behest of a Federal agency.

“Subaward” has the meaning given in 2 CFR Part 200.

“Subrecipient” has the meaning given in 2 CFR Part 200.

(b) In accordance with section 743 of Division E, Title VII, of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113-235) and its successor provisions in subsequent appropriations acts (and as extended in continuing resolutions), Government agencies are not permitted to use funds appropriated (or otherwise made available) for federal assistance to a non-Federal entity that requires its employees, subrecipients, or contractors seeking to report waste, fraud, or abuse to sign internal confidentiality agreements or statements that prohibit or otherwise restrict its employees, subrecipients, or contractors from lawfully reporting such waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information.

(c) The prohibition in paragraph (b) of this provision does not contravene requirements applicable to Standard Form 312, (Classified Information Nondisclosure Agreement), Form 4414 (Sensitive Compartmented Information Nondisclosure Agreement), or any other form issued by a Federal department or agency governing the nondisclosure of classified information.

(d) Representation. By submission of its application, the prospective recipient represents that it will not require its employees, subrecipients, or contractors to sign or comply with internal confidentiality agreements or statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting its employees, subrecipients, or contractors from lawfully reporting waste, fraud, or abuse related to the performance of a Federal award to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information (for example, the Agency Office of the Inspector General).

Part VI – Other Statements of Recipient

1. Authorized Individuals

The recipient represents that the following persons are authorized to negotiate on its behalf with the Government and to bind the recipient in connection with this application or grant:

Name	Title	Telephone No.	Facsimile No.
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

2. Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)

If the recipient is a U.S. organization, or a foreign organization which has income effectively connected with the conduct of activities in the U.S. or has an office or a place of business or a fiscal paying agent in the U.S., please indicate the recipient's TIN:

TIN: _____

3. Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number

(a) Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation using an applicable exemption, in the space provided at the end of this provision, the recipient should supply the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number applicable to that name and address. Recipients should take care to report the number that identifies the recipient's name and address exactly as stated in the application.

(b) The DUNS is a 9-digit number assigned by Dun and Bradstreet Information Services. If the recipient does not have a DUNS number, the recipient should call Dun and Bradstreet directly at 1-800-333-0505. A DUNS number will be provided immediately by telephone at no charge to the recipient. The recipient should be prepared to provide the following information:

- (1) Recipient's name.
- (2) Recipient's address.
- (3) Recipient's telephone number.
- (4) Line of business.
- (5) Chief executive officer/key manager.
- (6) Date the organization was started.
- (7) Number of people employed by the recipient.
- (8) Company affiliation.

(c) Recipients located outside the United States may email Dun and Bradstreet at globalinfo@dbisma.com to obtain the location and phone number of the local Dun and Bradstreet Information Services office.

The DUNS system is distinct from the Federal Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) system. DUNS:

4. Letter of Credit (LOC) Number

If the recipient has an existing Letter of Credit (LOC) with USAID, please indicate the LOC number:
LOC: _____

5. Procurement Information

(a) Applicability. This applies to the procurement of goods and services planned by the recipient (i.e., contracts, purchase orders, etc.) from a supplier of goods or services for the direct use or benefit of the recipient in conducting the program supported by the grant, and not to assistance provided by the recipient (i.e., a subgrant or subagreement) to a subgrantee or subrecipient in support of the subgrantee's or subrecipient's program. Provision by the recipient of the requested information does not, in and of itself, constitute USAID approval.

(b) Amount of Procurement. Please indicate the total estimated dollar amount of goods and services which the recipient plans to purchase under the grant: \$ _____

(c) Nonexpendable Property. If the recipient plans to purchase nonexpendable equipment which would require the approval of the Agreement Officer, indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types, quantities of each, and estimated unit costs. Nonexpendable equipment for which the Agreement Officer's approval to purchase is required is any article of nonexpendable tangible personal property charged directly to the grant, having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION (Generic)	_____
QUANTITY	_____
ESTIMATED UNIT COST	_____

(d) Source If the recipient plans to purchase any goods/commodities which are not in accordance with the Standard Provision "USAID Eligibility Rules for Procurement of Commodities and Services," indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types and quantities of each, estimated unit costs of each, and probable source. "Source" means the country from which a commodity is shipped to the cooperating country or the cooperating country itself if the commodity is located in the cooperating country at the time of purchase. However, where a commodity is shipped from a free port or bonded warehouse in the form in which received, "source" means the country from which the commodity was shipped to the free port or bonded warehouse. Additionally, "available for purchase" includes "offered for sale at the time of purchase" if the commodity is listed in a vendor's catalog or other statement of inventory, kept as part of the vendor's customary business practices and regularly offered for sale, even if the commodities are not physically on the vendors' shelves or even in the source country at the time of the order. In such cases, the recipient must document that the commodity was listed in the vendor's catalog or other statement of inventory; that the vendor has a regular and customary business practice of selling the commodity through "just in time" or other similar inventory practices; and the recipient did not engage the vendor to list the commodity in its catalog or other statement of inventory just to fulfill the recipient's request for the commodity.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION (Generic)	_____
QUANTITY	_____
ESTIMATED UNIT COST	_____

(e) Restricted Goods. If the recipient plans to purchase any restricted goods, indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types and quantities of each, estimated unit costs of each, intended

use, and probable source. Restricted goods are Agricultural Commodities, Motor Vehicles, Pharmaceuticals, Pesticides, Used Equipment, U.S. Government-Owned Excess Property, and Fertilizer.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION (Generic)	_____
QUANTITY	_____
ESTIMATED UNIT COST	_____

(f) Supplier Nationality. If the recipient plans to purchase any goods or services from suppliers of goods and services whose nationality is not in accordance with the Standard Provision “USAID Eligibility Rules for Procurement of Commodities and Services,” indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types and quantities of each good or service, estimated costs of each, probable nationality of each non-U.S. supplier of each good or service, and the rationale for purchasing from a non-U.S. supplier.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION (Generic)	_____
QUANTITY	_____
ESTIMATED UNIT COST	_____

6. Past Performance References

Please provide past performance information requested in this NOFO using template in Annex 4.

7. Type of Organization

The recipient, by checking the applicable box, represents that –

(a) If the recipient is a U.S. entity, it operates as ☐ a corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of, ☐ an individual, ☐ a partnership, ☐ a nongovernmental nonprofit organization, ☐ a state or local governmental organization, ☐ a private college or university, ☐ a public college or university, ☐ an international organization, or ☐ a joint venture; or

(b) If the recipient is a non-U.S. entity, it operates as ☐ a corporation organized under the laws of _____ (country), ☐ an individual, ☐ a partnership, ☐ a nongovernmental nonprofit organization, ☐ a nongovernmental educational institution, ☐ a governmental organization, ☐ an international organization, or ☐ a joint venture.

8. Estimated Costs of Communications Products

The following are the estimate(s) of the cost of each separate communications product (i.e., any printed material [other than non-color photocopy material], photographic services, or video production services) which is anticipated under the grant. Each estimate must include all the costs associated with preparation and execution of the product. Use a continuation page as necessary.

ANNEX 4 – PAST PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

APPLICANT PERFORMANCE REPORT - SHORT FORM	
PART I: Applicant Information (to be completed by Applicant)	
1.	Name and Address of Awarding Entity:
2.	Award Number:
3.	Award Type:
4.	Award Value (TEC): (if sub-award, sub-award value)
5.	Problems: (if problems encountered on this award, explain corrective action taken)
6.	Period of Performance:
7.	Contacts: (Name, Telephone Number and E-mail address)
7a.	Agreement Officer:
7b.	Technical Officer:
8.	Title/Brief Description of Product/Service Provided/ Results Achieved to Date:
1.	Other:
PART II: Performance Assessment (to be obtained by USAID—DO NOT COMPLETE)	
1.	Quality of product or service, including consistency in meeting goals and targets, and cooperation and effectiveness of the Prime in fixing problems. Comment:
2.	Cost control, including forecasting costs as well as accuracy in financial reporting. Comment:
3.	Timeliness of performance, including adherence to contract schedules and other time-sensitive project conditions, and effectiveness of home and field office management to make prompt decisions and ensure efficient operation of tasks. Comment:
4.	Customer satisfaction, including satisfactory business relationship to clients, initiation and management of several complex activities simultaneously, coordination among subcontractors and developing country partners, prompt and satisfactory correction of problems, and cooperative attitude in fixing problems. Comment:
5.	Effectiveness of key personnel including: effectiveness and appropriateness of personnel for the job; and prompt and satisfactory changes in personnel when problems with clients were identified. Comment:

ANNEX 5 - STANDARD PROVISIONS

The actual Standard Provisions included in the award will be dependent on the organization that is selected. The award will include the latest Mandatory Provisions for either U.S., non-U.S. Nongovernmental organizations (Note: the full text of these provisions may be found at: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303maa.pdf>, and <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf>)