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Closing Time: 11:59 a.m. ET

Subject: Request for Applications (RFA) Number: 720BHA23RFA00001

Program Title: Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Resilience Food Security Activity (RFSA)

Federal Assistance Listing Number: 98.007

Applicants:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications for a Cooperative Agreement from qualified entities to implement the FY23 DRC RFSAs. Private voluntary organizations (PVOs) or cooperatives, including U.S. and non-U.S. nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), may apply. Public international organizations (PIOs) are also eligible to apply.

USAID intends to make an award to the applicant(s) who best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this RFA, and subject to a risk assessment. Eligible parties interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this RFA 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 RFA and meet eligibility standards in Section C. This funding opportunity is posted on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), and may be amended. It is the responsibility of applicants to regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity and to ensure that the RFA has been received from the internet in its entirety. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from the transmission or conversion process. Applicants who have difficulty registering on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or accessing the RFA, should contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) for technical assistance.

USAID may only award to applicants that comply with all applicable Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section D.4. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the application process.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section G. 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](http://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,

Jeff Bryan  
Agreement Officer, Title II

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## Section A - Program Description

This funding opportunity is authorized under the Food for Peace (FFP) Act of 2018 and the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. The resulting award(s) will be subject to 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and USAID’s supplement, 2 CFR 700, as well as the additional requirements found in Section H.

### 1. BHA Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs)

USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) is committed to enhancing the resilience of vulnerable populations around the world. BHA’s resilience programming helps save lives, strengthen livelihoods, and build people’s capacities to better manage shocks and stressors. Using all of these approaches, BHA strengthens capacities of vulnerable populations to combat malnutrition, reduce morbidity and mortality, promote economic growth, minimize disaster risks, improve food security, and adapt to climate change. BHA uses a multi-sectoral, integrated activity design that sustainably improves outcomes and strengthens the adaptive, absorptive, and transformative capacities of vulnerable communities.

### 2. BHA Strategic Priorities

#### *a) BHA Vision*

BHA’s vision is to provide global leadership in humanitarian response, promote human welfare, alleviate suffering, and create the foundations for transformative change and self-reliance. BHA is dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by crisis, unconditionally and impartially, so that all whom BHA serves are treated with dignity and respect.

#### *b) BHA Mission*

BHA’s mission is to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the physical, social, and economic impact of rapid and slow-onset disasters by supporting at-risk populations to build stable foundations for the future. BHA is fully committed to implementing USAID’s mandate as the lead U.S. Government coordinator for international disaster response.

#### *c) The Early Recovery, Risk Reduction, and Resilience Strategic (ER4) Framework*

BHA provides the foundations for transformative change and self-reliance through support of early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience programs. The goal of [BHA’s ER4 Strategic Framework](#) is to ensure that vulnerable people have improved capacity to manage risk; to anticipate, withstand, recover from, and adapt to shocks and stressors; and to engage in positive, transformative change. While BHA considers all of its programs to be humanitarian assistance, RFSAs typically focus on longer-term outcomes related to resilience, thus reducing the need for ongoing and recurrent humanitarian assistance and laying the foundations that enable development activities to create pathways out of poverty.

### **3. U.S. Government and USAID Strategic Priorities**

#### ***a) USAID Resilience Policy***

The increasing frequency and intensity of shocks, combined with the growing pressures of chronic stressors, and the interconnectedness of global systems requires USAID to reconsider how it helps people, communities, and systems adapt and prosper amidst these challenges. In evermore complex risk environments, strengthening resilience of households, communities, and systems is essential for achieving and sustaining human well-being and dignity. See [USAID's Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis: USAID Policy and Program Guidance](#) for more information.

#### ***b) Global Food Security Strategy***

The U.S. Government's [Global Food Security Strategy \(GFSS\) 2022–2026](#) is an integrated, whole-of-government approach that aims to sustainably reduce global hunger, poverty, and malnutrition through the Feed the Future (FtF) initiative. The highest level objectives of the GFSS are to reduce poverty and stunting levels by 20 percent in the targeted areas, and improve resilience through agriculture-led growth. The strategy also aims to address crises that threaten to undermine global food security progress by responding to challenges, including COVID-19, conflict, inequity, and climate change.

#### ***c) Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy***

[USAID'S Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014–2025](#) addresses both direct and underlying causes of malnutrition, with the stated objective to scale up effective, integrated nutrition-specific and -sensitive interventions, programs, and systems across humanitarian and development contexts. The highest level objectives of the global Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy include:

- Decreasing chronic malnutrition, measured by stunting, by 20 percent.
- Reducing the number of stunted children by a minimum of 2 million.
- Maintaining Global Acute Malnutrition below the emergency threshold of 15 percent.
- Improving nutrition to save lives, build resilience, increase economic productivity, and advance development.
- Reducing malnutrition in women of reproductive age (15-49) and children under five, with a specific focus on the 1,000 day window from pregnancy to a child's second birthday.

#### ***d) Climate Strategy***

USAID's [Climate Strategy 2022–2030](#) is a whole-of-Agency approach to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, help partner countries adapt to climate change by building resilience, and improve our operations, guided by a single, overarching goal: to advance equitable and ambitious actions to confront the climate crisis. The strategy also supports the [President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience \(PREPARE\)](#). BHA will focus on advancing climate adaptation and therefore activities that enhance resilience and reduce the vulnerability of people, places, systems, and livelihoods to actual or expected impacts of climate change, including through improved use of information, planning, and action.

#### 4. Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS)

The RFSAs will align, where appropriate, with the [2020-2025 DRC CDCS](#). The CDCS's goal is, "A More Peaceful and Prosperous DRC with Improved Opportunities for Communities and Individuals to Thrive."

The first Development Objective (DO) is, "Responsiveness of Public Institutions to Citizens' Needs Improved." Interventions in the new RFSAs may include strengthening community-based organizations, other non-governmental entities, and local government institutions, to increase transparency and accountability in areas such as taxation, land tenure, and water resource management.

Under the second DO, "Community Resilience Increased," RFSAs will partner with key local stakeholders to localize development decision making to improve food and water utilization and associated behaviors at the household and community levels. RFSAs may support sustainable land use; coach farmers on improved agricultural techniques; revitalize local markets; and build collaboration between producers' organizations and value chain actors (including the private sector). Achieving sustainable food, nutrition, and economic security (FNES) outcomes in the DRC requires awardees to find local solutions to tackle climate change, address gender inequalities, and build the capacity of community structures, all of which are key components of the CDCS.

Finally, the third DO is, "Inclusive, Broad-Based, and Sustainable Economic Growth Increased." RFSAs are well positioned to enhance local enterprises and income generating activities (IGAs), expand financial inclusion, and improve agricultural livelihoods, contributing directly to the achievement of this DO.

#### 5. Background and Context

Humanitarian needs in the DRC are enormous. The DRC ranks 179 out of 191 countries on the [Human Development Index](#), and an estimated 72 percent of the population lives in poverty. According to the most recent [Integrated Phase Classification \(IPC\) Chronic Food Insecurity analysis](#), Kasai Province is at level 4 (severe chronic food insecurity); while Kasai Central and Tanganyika are at level 3 (food insecurity). Furthermore, the [UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey \(MICS\) \(2018\)](#) indicates stunting levels among children under five in Kasai is 47.4 percent, Kasai Central is 53.7 percent, and Tanganyika is 18.7 percent. The MICS data also indicate that among children 0-5 months only 30.1 percent in Kasai, 47.6 percent in Kasai Central, and 55.3 percent in Tanganyika are exclusively breastfed. Additionally, the MICS data show that only 11.2 percent of households in Kasai, 8.5 percent of households in Kasai Central, and 40.9 percent of households in Tanganyika access basic water services within 30 minutes of their home. Finally, only 6.2 percent of households in Kasai, 10.4 percent of households in Kasai Central, and 19.2 percent of households in Tanganyika have access to improved sanitation facilities.

FNES in the DRC are driven by a combination of factors including, but not limited to: conflict, insecurity, pests, economic shocks, epidemics, climate events, poor infrastructure, individual and family shocks, a lack of agricultural development, insufficient external investment, and the exploitation of natural resources. The situation in the DRC continues to be dynamic and unpredictable, with multiple shocks and hazards further exacerbating chronic needs. Shocks and stressors are pervasive—whether related to health, economics, natural hazards, increased climate variability, environment, or conflict. The DRC scores low on indicators related to health risk exposure, political violence, adaptive capacity to climate change, and civil conflict. Additionally, people suffer from high rates of food and nutrition insecurity,

extreme poverty, and displacement. Chronic conflict and neglect have stripped many communities of their security, livelihoods, and social safety nets, leaving them ill-equipped to cope and recover from shocks.

According to the [IPC Acute Food Insecurity analysis](#), the DRC is the largest food security emergency in the world with an estimated 26.4 million people experiencing acute food insecurity. While conflict and population displacement are key drivers, chronic and extreme levels of poverty, lack of economic opportunity, and weak agricultural production are responsible for much of these staggering numbers. Some factors that contribute to low agricultural production in Kasai, Kasai Central, and Tanganyika include:

- A lack of good agricultural practices and extension services.
- A lack of access to farming inputs including tools; improved seeds, cuttings, and seedlings; crop protection products; and fertilizer.
- Poor soil quality (especially in Kasai and Kasai Central where soil is often sandy and acidic).
- Cultural norms impacting gender roles and responsibilities in agriculture.
- Livestock diseases such as Virulent New Castle Disease or [Peste des petits ruminants](#)/Plague of Small Ruminants.
- A lack of appropriate equipment and practices for fish farming, drying, and storage.
- Crop diseases such as Cassava Brown Streak and insect and pest attacks such as Fall Armyworm.
- Negative effects of climate change such as periods of drought, flooding, or erratic rainfall.
- Poor natural resource management such as deforestation.

The DRC context is characterized by weak provision of state water, sanitation, health, and nutrition services. Given the gap in state services, rural populations either rely on external development and humanitarian actors and traditional healers, or use alternate coping strategies such as collecting poor quality drinking water from streams and rivers. Additionally, access to safe, diverse, and nutrient-rich food (NRF) is a clear problem, especially for poor and extremely poor Congolese who have limited purchasing power. Diet quality is a challenge that extends beyond insufficient knowledge of which foods are best to improve diets of women, girls, and children under two.

While the provinces selected for the RFSA, Kasai, Kasai Central, and Tanganyika, are generally more stable, prior violence and conflict in these areas have caused repeated displacement, decreased livelihood opportunities, limited government services, hindered infrastructure development, damaged natural resources, and increased disease outbreaks. Additionally, climate projections indicate the DRC is likely to experience increases in temperatures, incidences of droughts and floods (potentially leading to landslides and erosion), and precipitation variability. Agriculture<sup>1</sup> within these provinces is highly dependent on rainfall and current climate variability already negatively impacts crop, livestock, and fishery productivity, potentially contributing to worsening food insecurity.

In Tanganyika province, interethnic conflict between the Twa and Bantu ethnic groups continues to be a destabilizing and destructive reality. This conflict has led to significant population displacement and food insecurity. While Kasai and Kasai Central provinces have largely stabilized since the Kamuina Nsapu conflict that occurred between 2016-2018, there are still pockets of intercommunal conflict that persist, and the threat of a resurgence of conflict is ever present. Additionally, natural hazards have contributed to food insecurity. Tanganyika has had recent events such as flooding along the banks of Lake

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<sup>1</sup> Agriculture refers, but is not limited to, crops, aquaculture, livestock, and insects.

Tanganyika, an outbreak of cassava brown streak virus, and elephants trampling crops in Manono territory. Kasai and Kasai Central have experienced drought, erratic rainfall, and livestock diseases.

The lack of thriving, profitable on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm enterprises and IGAs, have led to chronic and pervasive poverty in Kasai, Kasai Central, and Tanganyika. This lack of economic opportunity means that households do not have enough cash to cover household expenses such as food, clothing, education, health care, improved sanitation, and access to clean water. Additionally, economic participation for Congolese women is low. Women's share of non-agricultural employment is only 36 percent and the female to male unemployment ratio is 3/5.<sup>2</sup> Extreme poverty also serves as a social stressor that contributes to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and intercommunal and interethnic conflict.

Poor road and bridge infrastructure leaves rural communities isolated from urban markets, impacting agricultural producers and those with other enterprises and IGAs. Producer organizations and individual farmers, fishers, and livestock producers often lack the linkages needed to access inputs, extensions services, and buyers. Enterprises and farmers lack improved storage infrastructure and post-harvest handling practices, which leads to a significant amount of post-harvest losses. Additionally, agricultural enterprises are often challenged by a lack of business knowledge and poor management.

Financial services that could enable small business creation, expansion, or consistency of cash flow are largely unavailable to rural populations within the target provinces. The inability of rural populations to access and use credit or capital stifles the start up and growth of small businesses and IGAs and hinders the ability of smallholder farmers to increase agricultural and livestock production. Youth and women in particular have difficulty starting IGAs due to a lack of start-up capital. Additionally, only a quarter of women aged 15 and older hold accounts at financial institutions or use mobile money.<sup>3</sup>

## **6. Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes of the Activity**

The goal of the activity is for FNES to be sustainably improved among vulnerable households.

### ***a) Purposes, Sub-Purposes, and Cross-Cutting Themes***

The desired high-level purposes, sub-purposes, and cross-cutting themes are as follows:

- Strategic Purpose 1: Strengthened livelihoods and increased incomes
  - Sub-purpose 1.1: Improved usage of credit and capital
  - Sub-purpose 1.2: Increased profitable, diverse enterprises and IGAs
  - Sub-purpose 1.3: Increased sustainable agricultural production
- Strategic Purpose 2: Improved utilization of quality food among vulnerable people
  - Sub-purpose 2.1: Improved maternal, infant, and young child nutrition behaviors
  - Sub-purpose 2.2: Improved water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) behaviors
- Cross-Cutting Themes:
  - Risk reduction and resilience
  - Governance

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<sup>2</sup> Monitoring, Evaluation, and Coordination Contract (MECC). (August 25, 2020). *USAID/DRC 2020 Gender Analysis Report*. [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00XB7H.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XB7H.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



- Gender, youth, social inclusion (GYSI), and patterns of power
- Climate adaptation

To the extent the RFA includes illustrative activities, these are provided only as examples. Applicants are not limited to these activities nor are they required to include these illustrative activities in their applications. Applicants are expected to adhere to the Theory of Change (TOC) and propose activities that directly contribute to the sub-purposes, purposes, and goal of this RFA.

***b) Integration Across Purposes***

Throughout the activity design and implementation, applicants will be expected, to the extent possible, to integrate Purpose 1, 2, and cross-cutting themes across the same participant population. By focusing on the same participant population, this approach will ensure that communities benefit from the full suite of activities planned under both purposes, which are meant to holistically address FNES. For example, purpose 1 interventions linked to increasing food availability and access will complement purpose 2 interventions that improve food utilization. The graduation approach is one example of an evidence-based approach for effective integration across economic well-being and food and nutrition security. Given the success of the graduation approach, applicants may consider whether this methodology is contextually appropriate. Please see Appendix III for more information on the graduation approach.

***c) Purpose 1: Strengthened Livelihoods and Increased Incomes***

BHA seeks a comprehensive approach to 1) strengthen market-led and -sustained livelihoods and 2) increase incomes so vulnerable households are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs while becoming more economically secure. Additionally, BHA seeks market-based approaches that engage both the public- and private sector in addressing critical barriers to consistently profitable livelihoods. These approaches should build the food and income generating capacity of populations, limit subsidies, and increase the likelihood of sustaining outcomes. Interventions should address on-farm, off-farm, and/or non-farm livelihoods, specifically prioritizing vulnerable groups as discussed in the cross-cutting section on page 13.

***(1) Sub-Purpose 1.1: Improved Usage of Credit and Capital***

BHA seeks creative approaches to improving usage of fair and equitable credit and capital to increase profitable enterprises and agricultural production. Activities may include:

- Establishing and strengthening village savings and loan associations (VSLA)
- Facilitating linkages to commercial finance through existing donor-supported loan guarantee programs in the DRC
- Facilitating linkages to microfinance institutions (MFIs)
- Advising financial institutions on development of appropriate financial products
- Preparing borrowers to utilize these credit mechanisms
- Providing financial support from the RFSAs as a bridge to more sustainable opportunities

RFSAs funds may not be used as loan capital; applicants proposing loan activities may play a facilitation role to help participants access loans from external sources. Applicants may propose use of RFSAs funds to provide grants to participants. If proposing to provide financial support as part of the RFSAs, applicants

must include specific, tangible strategies for how activities supported with direct grants will become self-sustaining.

As program participants improve their ability to access and use credit or capital, it could contribute to increased agricultural production and increased profitability of on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm livelihoods. Outcomes may include increasing access to credit and savings through the establishment of group-based savings or strengthening linkages to input suppliers, output buyers, and MFIs. When developing approaches to attain material objectives, BHA encourages applicants to consider non-material constraints, such as accessibility for marginalized groups.

*(2) Sub-Purpose 1.2: Increased Profitable, Diverse Enterprises and IGAs*

Applicants should illustrate knowledge of the specific provincial and territorial context in the DRC when approaching livelihoods development. Applicants should consider factors that impact the pursuit of rural livelihoods such as: market-viability; economic opportunities; availability of local resources; existing skills and knowledge, including vocational skills and business knowledge; and other factors impacting successful entry to employment, particularly for women and youth. Applications should include on-farm, off-farm, and/or non-farm livelihoods, from self-employment to small business creation, and specifically prioritize the interests of women, youth, and vulnerable groups.

BHA seeks approaches to increase profitable enterprises from a diverse range of on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm IGAs. Activities may include:

- Business incubation
- Start-up grant funding for IGAs coupled with vocational and business training
- Strengthening producer groups to become profitable commercial entities
- Facilitating viable market linkages such as between producers and input suppliers, service providers, transporters, aggregators, and buyers
- Improving post-harvest handling
- Conserving and managing natural resources

BHA seeks to promote a wide diversity of IGAs and to prioritize IGAs that provide goods and services for which there is an existing or anticipated demand in the market. Applicants should demonstrate an understanding of approaches to developing market-led IGA strategies and the barriers that exist for marginalized groups to start an IGA. Applicants should also demonstrate the expertise and resources that will be available to assess and monitor the market viability and sustainability of livelihoods. Technical approaches should seek to provide inclusive and equitable access to market-viable IGA opportunities.

Poor infrastructure hinders agricultural production, economic growth, and trade and is a major factor contributing to food, nutrition, and economic insecurity. BHA encourages the inclusion of sustainable for-work assets such as roads and bridges oriented toward improving market access. BHA funds may be used for the repair, rehabilitation, and upgrade of existing roads and the repair or construction of new crossing structures (such as culverts or bridges). BHA will not fund the creation of new roads. For-work activities could also include building other communal assets that contribute to the community's food system such as market infrastructure. Infrastructure activities will require close coordination with relevant central government offices.

### *(3) Sub-Purpose 1.3: Increased Sustainable Agricultural Production*

BHA is looking for a comprehensive approach to improving agricultural production of NRF (including crops, livestock, aquaculture, and insects) that takes into account the myriad challenges detailed in Section A and provides a robust package of solutions. With regard to increasing agricultural production, potential interventions could include:

- Improving the local seed systems through support to seed multipliers.
- Facilitating linkages between national institutions such as the Agriculture Research Institute (INERA) and seed multipliers, the private sector, and smallholder farmers.
- Improving market linkages, including but not limited to, access to market information, buyers, input suppliers, and contract farming opportunities.
- Improving post-harvest handling practices and storage.
- Increasing availability of and participant access to small livestock, fingerlings, seeds, cuttings, and seedlings.

Applicants who propose direct provision of agricultural inputs are expected to frontload direct assistance to smallholder farmers in the early to middle years of the program. This assistance should reduce over time as access to finance improves and as food and market systems become more sustainable.

With regard to improving agricultural practices, potential interventions to support farmers and livestock producers could include:

- Providing direct agronomic technical assistance, including cascading approaches such as farmer field schools.
- Facilitating assistance by public sector extension workers from Territory Administration of Agriculture (ITA) or Territory Administration of Livestock and Fisheries (PEL).
- Providing private sector advisory services to smallholder farmers engaged in staple crop and vegetable garden production, livestock, aquaculture, and agroforestry.

Additional activities could include the use of for-work activities to improve agricultural production such as irrigation canals, fish ponds, and livestock markets. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consider the use of nature-based solutions (NbS), especially alongside any proposed built (or “gray”) infrastructure. NbS plays a supporting role in climate adaptation and the conservation of natural resources, which is critical to sustainable agricultural production.

Applicants should consider the intersection of GYSI, and patterns of power in relation to agricultural productivity. Potential activities should be cognizant of women’s time and energy burden and measures should be put in place to ensure selected activities are not too burdensome. Illustrative activities may include social behavior change (SBC) that improves gender equity with regard to household chores, childcare, and engagement in agricultural production. For additional information on gender, youth, and patterns of power see page 15.

#### ***d) Purpose 2: Improved Utilization of Quality Food Among Vulnerable People***

Improved utilization of food among vulnerable people is essential to reducing food and nutrition insecurity. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UN) explains food utilization as follows:

*“If food is available and households have adequate access to it, the next question is whether or not households are maximizing the consumption of adequate nutrition and energy. Sufficient energy and nutrient intake by individuals is the result of good care and feeding practices, food preparation, dietary diversity and intra-household distribution of food, and access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene and healthcare. Combined with good biological utilization of food consumed, this determines the nutritional status of individuals.”*

BHA recognizes that improved utilization of food is critical to achieving food and nutrition security outcomes. Nutrition programming should target individuals who are most vulnerable to malnutrition within a given household, including pregnant and lactating women, children under two, and adolescent girls. BHA requests that applicants address the individual, social, and structural determinants of malnutrition, offering a multi-sectoral package of targeted nutrition-sensitive activities and appropriate linkages to nutrition-specific interventions.

The applicant should prioritize a manageable number of key behaviors that will have the greatest impact in achieving program outcomes at the purpose and sub-purpose levels. Applicants should describe how the activity will address barriers and enablers to adoption, including social norms.

*(1) Sub-Purpose 2.1: Improved Maternal, Infant, and Young Child Nutrition Behaviors*

USAID expects applications to demonstrate an understanding of the cultural and contextual factors that contribute to poor food utilization and to propose approaches that are relevant and responsive. USAID seeks evidence-based, holistic, and sustainable approaches to improving nutrition behaviors. Applicants shall not propose the use of commodities, including specialized nutritious food products (SNFP),<sup>4</sup> for the prevention or treatment of individuals with moderate or severe acute malnutrition. USAID encourages applicants to select between three to five key maternal, infant, and young child nutrition behaviors that improve utilization of food. Illustrative examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Feeding and home treatment of children during illness
- Intra-household allocation of activities to reduce women’s time and energy burden
- Food handling, preparation, and storage
- Complementary feeding practices
- Family planning

As emphasized in the USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy, the DRC CDCS, and the DRC National Nutrition Policy (Program National de Nutrition - PRONANUT), nutrition-specific interventions alone will not eliminate under-nutrition. A complementary mix of limited nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programming is necessary to ensure sustainable FNES outcomes. Approaches must go beyond focusing on the mother-child dyad and work at the individual, family, and community levels. BHA supports participatory approaches to community nutrition such as the Community Based Nutrition (NAC) approach implemented by the Ministry of Health and PRONANUT. Additional information can be found in Appendix III.

Applicants should examine a range of approaches and modalities to improve the access, availability, and utilization of diverse, NRF, and locally available fortified foods. These may include SBC activities that promote improved infant and young child feeding practices, improved dietary diversity, and shared

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on SNFPs, please view the table [here](#).

decision making in the household, and lead to improved household allocation of food. These, combined with improved WASH and health seeking behaviors, are essential to improve utilization of food among vulnerable people. Sustained improvements in key nutrition behaviors will require SBC approaches that are linked to improved access and availability of diverse, safe, and quality food.

### *(2) Sub-Purpose 2.2: Improved WASH Behaviors*

Equitable and affordable access to sustainable WASH infrastructure is a precondition to improving WASH behaviors. Additionally, applicants should seek to increase community- and household-level actions to prevent waterborne diseases while taking into consideration the enabling environment. Applicants will need to propose evidence-based solutions that demonstrate an understanding of contextual challenges in the DRC, such as:

- A lack of demand for and access to sustainable sanitation infrastructure.
- Poor water supply governance and life-cycle costing options.
- Inability to pay usage fees and the unsustainability of WASH infrastructure and approaches.
- Structural and environmental WASH challenges, such as sandy soil.

As appropriate, applicants should attempt to integrate with and build upon sustainable WASH approaches implemented through other USAID activities. Applicants should consider approaches that contribute to sustainable access to improved sanitation and hygiene options that are community-informed, equitable, and demand-driven. Illustrative activities may include:

- Implementing behavior change activities to:
  - Increase proper hand washing practices.
  - Increase safe water storage, handling, and household treatment practices.
- Establishing community-based approaches to sustainable operations and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities.
- Reducing the social and individual barriers to sanitation services uptake.
- Coordinating and aligning with government approaches to promoting hygiene and sanitation practices.
- Collaborating with WASH service providers to increase market access for sanitation infrastructure and hygiene products and services.
- Monitoring and protecting sources for improved water quality.
- Repairing, rehabilitating, and/or constructing water supply systems.

BHA encourages applicants to consult the U.S. Government's [Global Water Strategy 2022 - 2027](#) for more information.

### *e) Cross-Cutting Themes*

The following themes are critical to successful RFSA implementation: 1) risk reduction and resilience; 2) governance; 3) GYSI and patterns of power; and 4) climate adaptation. These themes influence both Purpose 1 and Purpose 2 pathways so are cross-cutting rather than separate causal pathways. BHA expects applicants to integrate these themes throughout the RFSA TOC. Applicants should not propose separate activities to address the cross-cutting themes; all activities must contribute to the sub-purposes, purposes, and goal in this RFA.

### *(1) Risk Reduction and Resilience*

Increased self-reliance is possible when the DRC's citizens are better able to proactively reduce, mitigate, and manage risks and adapt to and recover from shocks and stressors. BHA expects RFSA applicants to promote ways to anticipate and reduce risks by strengthening absorptive, adaptive, and transformative resilience capacities. For example, approaches may include conflict-sensitive programming and proactive community level planning to prepare for shocks.

Additionally, BHA is committed to strengthening the resilience of individuals, households, communities, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stressors across all purposes. Resilience means being able to manage through adversity and change without compromising future well-being. Resilience requires absorptive, adaptive, and transformational capacities. As applicants propose specific interventions, it will be important to describe in detail how each intervention will strengthen resilience, for whom resilience will be increased, and to what shocks and stressors people will have improved resilience. Applicants should 1) identify the underlying causes (stressors) that perpetuate poverty traps and hinder resilient outcomes; 2) mitigate risks through appropriate and impactful interventions; 3) enhance human and social capital; 4) articulate how activities will be rolled out; and 5) indicate how improvements will be measured and reported. Applicants should identify risks stemming from both human-made (e.g., inflation, civil unrest, inter-ethnic/intercommunal conflict) and climate-related shocks and stressors,<sup>5</sup> explaining how the specific interventions will strengthen absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities. Additionally, applicants should discuss potential risks of maladaptation. Applicants are encouraged to consider additional resilience-related resources available through [ResilienceLinks](#).

It is important that applicants consider interventions that strengthen people's capacity to anticipate, cope with, and recover from future shocks by addressing the underlying drivers of risk affecting them. Applicants are encouraged to use risk-informed approaches for all interventions and identify key hazards, vulnerability and exposure, and risk reduction strategies in the overall activity design. Interventions should not only meet immediate needs but also strengthen the ability of people to handle future crises. Applicants should:

- Complement or build on existing risk reduction programs if applicable, and draw from best practices and lessons learned.
- Explain how specific interventions will serve to strengthen disaster risk management capacities, policies, and plans, or lead to strategy development.
- Describe how programming integrates relevant government and disaster management agencies and contributes to national risk reduction plans or strategies.
- Describe how strong community participation and multi-stakeholder involvement will be included in the development and implementation of risk reduction interventions, thus encouraging ownership and sustainability of interventions.

### *(2) Governance*

Inclusive and effective governance is essential for impactful, sustainable RFSA programming. At the community level, RFSA applicants will address governance issues when working with community groups

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<sup>5</sup> When describing how activities will address relevant climate risks, applicants must also highlight approaches in the Environmental Safeguards Plan in Annex 9. Climate risk management is further described in the Environmental Compliance section below.

such as VSLAs, producers' organizations, and water management committees. The design and implementation of RFSAs also require engagement with local government offices like the Provincial Division of Gender; the Inspector of Rural Development; and Agriculture, Fishery, and Livestock Inspectors (IPAPEL). Applicants should elaborate on how stakeholders at various levels will be engaged over the life of the activity and beyond in the targeted province.

### *(3) Gender, Youth, Social Inclusion, and Patterns of Power*

Food, nutrition, and economic insecurity are multi-dimensional challenges requiring a thorough understanding of contributing factors and appropriate solutions that address distinct and intersectional needs. For example, applying an intersectional approach requires understanding and identifying the intersection of gender and age with other factors of social exclusion (e.g., disability, sexual identities, etc.). Examples of other factors to consider throughout the design include ethnicity, religion, marital status, polygamy, and forced and early marriage. Overcoming barriers to change requires understanding patterns of power and addressing norms relating, but not exclusive to, gender, youth, and other types of social exclusion factors at play within households, communities, and local systems. The integration of these cross-cutting themes throughout the RFSAs will result in the positive change needed to ensure equitable, inclusive FNES outcomes.<sup>6</sup>

BHA promotes a focus on young people as positive change agents who bring creativity, energy, commitment, and novel perspectives to understanding and addressing food insecurity in their communities. Applicants are encouraged to pursue inclusive and Positive Youth Development (PYD) strategies that view young people as key partners in development efforts, from nutritional programming to strengthening agricultural markets to building food secure communities.<sup>7</sup> When developing RFSAs interventions applicants should take into account the following:

- Unique challenges, tensions, and expectations that young people face
- Disparities and constraints faced by the different youth cohorts related to different age segments
- Youth's participation in the agriculture and food system
- Marital status or parentage
- Differing nutritional needs by sex, age, and life situation
- Unique opportunities the various youth cohorts bring to the program

BHA encourages applicants to consult [USAID's 2022 updated Youth in Development Policy](#) for more information.

Applicants must integrate and mainstream gender considerations throughout the activity design, ensuring that it is responsive to these issues through all stages of the RFSAs program cycle. Applicants should also describe how meaningful participation and leadership among women, youth, indigenous peoples, local communities, and other marginalized and/or under-represented groups will be increased. Integration of gender-informed and responsive approaches must be context appropriate and reflected throughout the activity. Promoting women and girls' self-determination—and transforming gender relations for the better—are equally vital for attaining equitable and sustained FNES. BHA encourages

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<sup>6</sup> [Suggested Approaches for Integrating Inclusive Development Across the Program Cycle and in Mission Operations](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Promoting PYD](#)

applicants to consult [USAID's 2020 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy](#) for more information.

#### *(4) Climate Adaptation*

Addressing the impacts of the climate crisis requires a holistic approach and RFSA applicants must take into consideration the ever-changing climatic conditions in the DRC throughout activity design and implementation. Predicted climate impacts should inform adaptation efforts, and RFSA applicants should consider climate risks that could potentially impact program objectives. Additionally, applicants are expected to design climate-smart interventions while being mindful not to cause additional harm through their own operations.

#### **f) Title II Commodities**

Applicants must request Title II commodities. **However, applicants may not request SNFPs.** BHA's most recent list of Title II commodities can be found in [BHA's FY23 Q2 Commodity Calculator](#) and the [FY23 Q2 Commodity & Ocean Estimates document](#). At least 25 percent of the life of award value must be allocated to commodity procurement, ocean and inland transportation, and Internal Transportation, Storage, and Handling (ITSH). ITSH funds can only be programmed in conjunction with commodities sourced from the United States. For more information, particularly concerning eligible uses of Section 202(e) and ITSH funding, please refer to [Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance Functional Policy \(BHAFP\) 20-01](#). Monetization is not authorized. All resource requests must be appropriately justified.

RFSA applicants will be expected to indicate how Title II commodities will contribute to the stated purposes, sub-purposes, and cross-cutting themes as appropriate. BHA expects applicants to take a holistic approach to the use of Title II commodities and creatively incorporate Title II commodities into interventions that contribute to achievement of the overall program goal. BHA expects applicants to propose the integration of commodities in support of both purposes, or provide strong justification as to why an alternate approach is proposed. BHA is open to approaches that include unconditional and conditional distribution of food in support of both Purpose 1 and 2 objectives.

Applicants must indicate how the proposed resource transfers and work norms (if applicable) are aligned with in-country standards. If proposing unconditional food assistance, applicants should use a do no harm approach that avoids disincentivizing engagement in Purpose 1 activities and that does not contribute to aid dependency. For example, applicants are encouraged to consider the agricultural calendar in the timing of unconditional transfers, aligning potential food distributions with the lean season. Additionally, applicants proposing unconditional assistance must obtain provincial government concurrence with planned interventions prior to implementation.

Applicants are encouraged to review available market data and analyses including USAID commissioned assessments (Appendix III).

## **7. Programming Principles**

BHA is committed to taking actions that uphold and are consistent with the four humanitarian principles, which are broadly accepted by international humanitarian stakeholders and enjoy wide recognition in the international community. These are the principles of humanity, neutrality,



impartiality, and independence. For BHA, this commitment translates into action on the ground through the following programming principles:

**a) *Design for People-Centered Approaches***

BHA is committed to keeping the interests and the voices of the most vulnerable at the center of its work, and to crafting responses based on the strengths, priorities, risks, and needs of the target population. Creating opportunities for vulnerable populations requires working in partnership with local communities and understanding their resources and capacities. People-centered approaches also require:

- Understanding the broader systems affecting communities (such as social dynamics and formal and informal institutions)
- Addressing challenges (such as conflict, gender inequalities, shocks, and stressors) that may undermine opportunities for positive change
- Providing linkages to newly emerging or previously out-of-reach resources, services, and catalysts for change

Important factors to consider include:

- Unique community power dynamics
- Existing community tensions related to natural resource management
- Different livelihoods, gender, age, social class, physical capabilities, and political or religious affiliation

**b) *Prioritization and Focus***

BHA strongly discourages approaches that have too many wide-ranging interventions. Applicants are therefore expected to analyze the context of the specific territories and health zones of operation, and prioritize capacities and needs in order to develop programs specific to that context and the targeted populations. In low resource environments, the full sweep of context-specific needs and opportunities can easily exceed the capacity of any one activity to respond comprehensively and effectively. There are limits, in addition, to the level of change in knowledge, attitudes, and practices that individuals, households, and communities can absorb. Effective programming will identify leverage points and factors that address key drivers of need and seek to prioritize and sequence a limited number of interventions. Applicants must complete analysis and prioritization of factors for each system and objective. Prioritization and focus on a limited number of factors affecting each purpose or objective of an applicant's RFSA is key. Lessons learned from previous RFSA evaluations have indicated that projects often try to respond to all determinants of food insecurity and malnutrition. The results have limited success. Some interventions are successful, while others are not implemented at all or are only successful at a very small scale due to a lack of prioritization and focus.

**c) *Strive for Sustainability***

In its goal statement, BHA has increased its commitment to investing in improved FNES for vulnerable populations in a manner that supports long-term and self-perpetuating change and the continued well-being of the vulnerable populations. Embodied in this commitment is the need to understand the operating environment, including existing or residual conflict dynamics. Additionally, strengthened formal and informal local systems increase the potential for sustained motivation, capacity, resources, and linkages.

***d) Develop Context-Specific and Tailored Responses***

A thorough analysis of the drivers of food, nutrition, and economic insecurity for each sub-target population and thoughtful, direct, and inclusive engagement of communities in the design can facilitate a more tailored approach to programming specific to each sub-target population. The analysis should incorporate ways in which barriers to FNES relate to and influence each other and their impact on each sub-target population. Carefully designed and implemented interventions tailored to the specific set of participants provide greater potential for short-term impact and long-term sustainability than a “one-size-fits-all” approach. Understanding and responding to the local context and specific needs of different groups, while also striving to promote social cohesion, can facilitate opportunities for transformative change and help communities to grow, strengthen systems, and improve well-being for the most vulnerable. BHA anticipates activities will strategically and operationally work in line with relevant national and local government policies and systems to create opportunities for positive change by leveraging and linking with other actors and programs working to address the drivers of food, nutrition, and economic insecurity. This requires coordination and joint planning with a broad set of stakeholders to support complementarity and coherence; collective impacts and sustainability; and the intentional pursuit of sequencing, layering, and integrating (SLI) activities and interventions, including across the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus. BHA expects applicants to have a thorough contextual understanding of how a proposed RFSa would fit within the nexus context, including an understanding of the opportunities and pitfalls. For example, in addition to describing how the proposed RFSa would, if applicable, build off of humanitarian activities, BHA expects applicants to explain how they will avoid duplication with actors such as the World Food Program (WFP), particularly around distribution of Title II commodities.

***e) Community and Public- and Private-Sector Engagement and Sustainability***

Applicants are strongly encouraged to incorporate local capacity strengthening in all areas of the proposed activity. Local capacity engagement includes the amount of resources managed by local entities, formal engagements (sub-awards, sub-contracts, partnerships, etc.), and capacity building efforts with local civil society and the private sector, such as NGOs, cooperatives, universities, academia, and private companies, among other entities. Applicants are also encouraged to consult with provincial and local officials (including technical offices) to leverage their expertise and knowledge. Acceptable local capacity engagement can be a combination of any of these approaches. Integration of local capacity engagement must be context appropriate, reflected at every phase of the activity, and expected to increase over the course of the award. As applicable and appropriate, BHA encourages applicants to partner with local organizations and have local organizations directly manage resources to the extent they have the necessary technical and financial management capacity. More information on community and public- and private-sector engagement and sustainability can be found on page 34.

***f) Anticipate and Manage Shocks and Stressors to Support Impact and Sustainability***

BHA works in countries that are particularly vulnerable to rapid and slow onset disasters and complex emergencies. As such, applicants should plan for and anticipate context-specific shocks and stressors. This includes the ability to pivot and/or mitigate the negative effects of shocks through response planning at the activity level and strengthening of relevant resilience capacities within the local system and relevant local partners. When disaster risk exposure and vulnerabilities are reduced (e.g., when a community is able to anticipate, prepare for, and reduce future risks of recurring natural hazards), opportunities for a more resilient recovery increase. BHA’s disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities seek to improve household, community, and national capacity to reduce risk, including from climate, and

strengthen disaster preparedness and management across all three types of resilience capacities (i.e., absorptive, adaptive, transformative). It is important that applicants consider interventions that strengthen people's capacity to anticipate, prepare for, and reduce risks, and recover rapidly from potential shocks by addressing the underlying causes of those disasters. Applicants should consider approaches that integrate flexibility and adaptability to respond quickly to the impact of shocks.

Applications may include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying underlying risks.
- Reducing the impact of both current and future shocks, preventing the erosion of household assets and livelihoods, and accelerating recovery—contributing to the future resilience of affected households and communities.
- Preparing for and rapidly responding to the impact of shocks and stressors.
- Developing policies, strategies, and plans to minimize risks and explain how the specific interventions will strengthen absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities.

***g) Address Social Dynamics and Local Governance to Strengthen Local Systems***

FNES are multi-dimensional challenges requiring a thorough understanding of contributing factors, potential drivers, and existing bottlenecks down to the sub-population level. Social and gender norms, power dynamics, levels of inclusion, and the nature of participation within local systems have the potential to undermine development impacts when left unaddressed, or conversely, to provide engines of positive change when enhanced in ways that increase motivation, equity, social cohesion, and transparent, socially accountable service delivery. BHA supports awardees to work within local systems in order to strengthen human and institutional actors through understanding, addressing, and improving social dynamics and local governance.

***h) COVID-19 Principles***

Applicants are expected to nuance existing requirements to reflect COVID-19 considerations and factors, ensuring that program approaches remain safe and accessible and do not amplify existing risks, or create new ones. RFSA programs can play an important role in minimizing the impact of the pandemic; protecting nutrition security gains; and considering new risks facing households, communities, service delivery, and local systems. However, the beneficial impact of interventions must be balanced with the safety, health, and wellbeing of partner staff, and of those populations being served. For more information, please refer to [Guidance For BHA Development Food Security Activity Partners Working In COVID-19 Affected Operating Environments](#).

***i) Conflict-Sensitive Programming***

Conflict-sensitive programming recognizes that all development and resilience programs are impacted by conflict dynamics, whether positively or negatively, intentionally or unintentionally. Considering the context in Kasai, Kasai Central, and Tanganyika, applicants should incorporate conflict-sensitive approaches and considerations to minimize unintended negative outcomes and increase intentional positive ones, while remaining focused on the RFSA goals and objectives. Applicants should describe how targeting and interventions will be designed using a conflict-sensitive approach that protects social cohesion and mitigates conflict at the community level.

*j) Psychosocial Considerations*

USAID expects applicants to recognize that psychosocial wellbeing has an impact on FNES. While USAID does not expect separate psychosocial support interventions, applicants should develop their programs while considering that there are high rates of trauma, anxiety, and depression among participants. While the war in Kasai and Kasai Central ended in 2018 and Tanganyika is experiencing greater stability, exposure to conflict-related traumatic events are a major mental health risk factor. Additionally, these mental health concerns are exacerbated by high rates of sexual violence against women and girls.<sup>8</sup>

**8. Authorizing Legislation**

The FFP Act, Section 201 (7 U.S.C. 1721) General Authority, authorizes the USAID Administrator to establish programs to:

- Provide agricultural commodities to foreign countries on behalf of the people of the United States to address famine and food crises.
- Combat malnutrition, especially in children and mothers.
- Carry out actions that attempt to alleviate the causes of hunger, mortality, and morbidity.
- Promote economic and community development.
- Promote food security and support sound environmental practices.
- Carry out feeding interventions.
- Build resilience to mitigate and prevent food crises and reduce the future need for emergency assistance.

For more information, particularly concerning eligible uses of Section 202(e) and ITSH funding, please refer to [Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance Functional Policy \(BHAFP\) 20-01](#).

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<sup>8</sup> UN Women. Global Database on Violence Against Women. Democratic Republic of Congo. <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/fr/countries/africa/democratic-republic-of-the-congo>

## Section B - Federal Award Information

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

BHA intends to award up to three Cooperative Agreements to sustainably improve FNES among vulnerable households and communities in the Kasai, Kasai Central, and Tanganyika provinces in the DRC. Subject to the availability of funds and commodities, and at the discretion of the Agency, each award is intended to be up to \$105.7 million in Title II resources for a five year period. Each application may only focus on one province. Prime applicants may only submit one application. Sub-awardees may be listed on more than one application.

USAID reserves the right to adjust the number of awards, including not funding any awards, and may also adjust funding levels, and/or sources of funding. Note that not all funding is interchangeable and some budget adjustments may need to take place. BHA will notify successful applicants of any changes or updates accordingly.

### 2. Start Date and Period of Performance

The anticipated start date of the new award(s) is on or about September 29, 2023. The anticipated performance period for the award(s) is five years.

### 3. Substantial Involvement

In accordance with the [ADS 303.3.11](#), a cooperative agreement, as distinguished from a grant, provides for substantial involvement between the Federal Awarding Agency and the awardee in carrying out the activity contemplated by the Federal award. The examples of substantial involvement below are a guide, not a checklist. The Agreement Officer (AO) will determine the appropriate level of substantial involvement based on the programmatic requirements of the award and include only those elements of substantial involvement as needed. Examples of potential areas of substantial involvement during performance include:

- Approval of the awardee's annual implementation plans during performance.
- Ability to immediately halt an activity if the awardee does not meet detailed performance specifications (e.g., construction).
- Review and approval of one stage of work, before work can begin on a subsequent stage during the period covered by the cooperative agreement.
- Review and approval of substantive provisions of proposed sub-awards or contracts (see definitions in 2 CFR 200). These would be provisions that go beyond existing policies on Federal review of procurement standards and sole-source procurement.
- Involvement in the selection of key personnel.
- USAID and awardee collaboration or joint participation, such as when the awardee's successful accomplishment of program objectives would benefit from USAID's technical knowledge.
- USAID and awardee joint collaboration in support of USAID/DRC coordination, planning, and monitoring platforms, such as when needed to promote learning, assess implementation, and ensure coordination across activities.

- USAID monitoring to permit specific kinds of direction or redirection of the work because of the interrelationships with other projects or activities.
- Direct USAID operational involvement or participation to ensure compliance with statutory requirements (e.g, civil rights, environmental protection, those for individuals with physical and cognitive disabilities), which would exceed USAID's role that is normally part of the general statutory requirements understood in advance of the award.
- Highly prescriptive USAID requirements established prior to award that limit the awardee's discretion with respect to the scope of services offered, organizational structure, staffing, mode of operation, and other management processes, coupled with close monitoring or operational involvement during performance over and above the normal exercise of Federal stewardship responsibilities to ensure compliance with these requirements.

For specifics and additional detail, please refer to [ADS 303.3.11](#) - Substantial Involvement and Cooperative Agreements.

Note: ADS 303 applies to NGOs/PVOs while ADS 308 applies to PIOs. Reference to the Code of Federal Regulations or the ADS applies to NGOs only.

#### **4. Authorized Geographic Code**

The geographic code for the procurement of commodities and services under this prospective award is 935. BHA reserves the right to modify this.

#### **5. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Awardee(s)**

The principal purpose of the relationship with the awardee and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the FY23 DRC RFSAs, which is authorized by Federal statute. The successful awardee 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 awardee 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.

#### **6. Activity Eligibility Requirements**

Any proposed direct distribution of Title II commodities and cash transfers or food vouchers (if applicable) must clearly support interventions that sustainably reduce vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity. This includes increasing the availability of and access to nutritious food, building incomes/assets to increase yearlong access to a diverse and adequate diet, and/or improving knowledge and behaviors to ensure that food consumption supports health and healthy growth.

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## Section C - Eligibility Information

### 1. Eligible Applicants

According to the 2018 FFP Act, eligible organizations shall be— (1) a PVO as defined in [22 CFR 203](#), or (2) an intergovernmental organization, such as WFP. This does not preclude other organizations from working as sub-recipients or sub-implementers of the prime. Applicants may include small businesses as sub-recipients as appropriate.

### 2. New Partners and Local Organizations

USAID encourages applications from potential new partners (i.e., those who have not received any USAID funding previously) and local organizations. Applicants are highly encouraged to propose approaches that include local contributions demonstrating strong commitment to sustainability and self-reliance. This may include private-sector engagement (PSE) that supports the activity's goal and objectives.

Applicants are encouraged to build strong coalitions with local partners (including local government, local NGOs, and the private sector) and progressively hand over some of the management, implementation, and technical responsibilities through the course of the award. However, the prime awardee will not change over the life of the award.

USAID welcomes applications from organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID. However, awards to new organizations may be delayed as the USAID AO may need to undertake pre-award risk assessments as discussed in [ADS 303.3.9](#). These organizations should take this into account and plan accordingly as these pre-award risk assessments may affect implementation dates and activities.

### 3. Cost Share

Cost share is not required and, in accordance with [2 CFR 200.306](#), it will not be used as a separate factor during the merit review of applications. However, if the applicant decides to include cost share, the application must provide detailed information, including the amount of matching funds and in-kind contributions, in U.S. dollars (USD) and not percentages ([2 CFR 200.306](#), [2 CFR 700.10](#), [ADS Chapter 303](#)). The proposed cost share will be incorporated into the award budget.

### 4. Other Eligibility Information

Each applicant is limited to one application as a prime for this RFA. An applicant may also be a sub-awardee of applications submitted by other organizations. Note that sub-awardees may be proposed on more than one application and applicants may sign non-exclusive letters of commitment with sub-recipients (international or local), if applicable, since BHA neither expects nor desires exclusivity for sub-recipients.

In the case of a consortium, the applicant must be the consortium lead and must identify any other members of the consortium or individuals tied to the implementation of the activity as described in the

application, along with all sub-awardees. The respective roles of any other members of the consortium or individuals, including all sub-awardees, must be described and separate detailed budgets must be attached for each.

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## Section D – Application and Submission Information

### 1. Agency Point of Contact

All communications concerning this RFA, including its appendices and technical references, must be submitted in writing by March 14, 2023 at 11:59 a.m. ET, to: [BHA.RFA.720BHA23RFA00001@usaid.gov](mailto:BHA.RFA.720BHA23RFA00001@usaid.gov).

### 2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this RFA should be submitted to [BHA.RFA.720BHA23RFA00001@usaid.gov](mailto:BHA.RFA.720BHA23RFA00001@usaid.gov) no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, or as amended. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this RFA will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment to this RFA, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicant.

### 3. Submission Date and Time

The application submission deadline is April 17, 2023, at 11:59 a.m. ET. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the electronic application is received by the due date and time specified.

### 4. UEI and SAM Registration

Applicants must obtain a UEI and register in SAM (<https://sam.gov/>) in order to be eligible to receive federal assistance, such as grants and cooperative agreements. Unless an exemption applies (see ADS 303maz), applicants must be registered in SAM prior to submitting an application for award for USAID's consideration. Recipients must maintain an active SAM registration while they have an active award. Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or entity that is exempted from UEI/SAM requirements under 2 CFR 25.110) is required to:

1. Provide a valid UEI for the applicant and all proposed subawards.
2. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application.
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 above requirements 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.

Applicants can find additional resources for registering in SAM, including a Quick Start Guide and a video, on <https://sam.gov/>.

## 5. 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
- UEI
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not appear on the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) list
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not have active exclusions in the SAM
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not listed in the UN Security designation list
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not suspended or debarred
- Confirmation that the applicant has completed a risk assessment of the subrecipient, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.332(b)
- Any negative findings as a result of the risk assessment and the applicant's plan for mitigation.

## 6. General Content and Form of Application

Each applicant must furnish the information required by this RFA. 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 subsection 8 and subsection (e), below, for information on the content specific to the Technical and Business (Cost) Applications. The Technical Application focuses on technical aspects of the proposed activity while the Business (Cost) Application must present the costs, and address risk and other related issues.

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.

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.

Applications must comply with the following:

- Written in English
- Uses standard 8 ½" x 11", single sided, single-spaced, 12 point Calibri font, 1" margins, left justification, and headers and/or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and applicant's name
- Uses a minimum of 10 point font for graphs, tables, and charts
- Submitted via Microsoft Word or PDF formats, except budget files which must be submitted in Microsoft Excel
- Uses the estimated start date identified in Section B of this RFA
- Uses a searchable and editable Word or PDF format, as appropriate, for the technical application

Additionally, the cost application 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 RFA. 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.

## **7. Application Submission Procedures**

Applications in response to this RFA 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 AO. Applicants must retain proof of timely delivery in the form of system-generated documentation of delivery receipt date and time.

USAID may award the resulting assistance award(s) based on initial applications received, without discussions and negotiations. Therefore, each initial application must contain the applicant's best terms from a technical and cost standpoint. However, as part of its evaluation process, USAID may elect to discuss technical, cost, or other pre-award issues with one or more applicants. Alternatively, USAID may proceed with award selection based on its evaluation of initial applications received, use an alternative process, and/or commence negotiations solely with one applicant.

Applications must be submitted by email to [BHA.RFA.720BHA23RFA00001@usaid.gov](mailto:BHA.RFA.720BHA23RFA00001@usaid.gov). Email submissions must include the RFA number and applicant's name in the subject line heading. 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 the cost application is being sent in two emails, the first email should have a subject line that states: "720BHA23RFA00001, [organization name], Cost Application, Part 1 of 2."

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 email 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 RFA, the initial point of entry to the government infrastructure is the USAID mail server.

USAID will not be responsible for errors in compiling electronic applications if no instructions are provided or are unclear. File size including attachments must not exceed 10 megabytes.

## **8. Technical Application Format**

The technical application should 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 should take into account the requirements of the program and merit review criteria found in this RFA. Applications should include the following sections and page count:

- Cover Page (1 page, see requirements on page 28)

- Executive Summary (2 pages maximum, see requirements on page 29)
- Activity Design (45 pages maximum, see requirements on page 29)
- Management and Staffing (12 pages maximum, see requirements on page 39)
- Annexes (see requirements on page 47)
- Business (Cost) Application (no page limit, see requirements on page 46 and Annexes 2 - 4)
- Environmental Compliance and Climate Risk Management (4 pages maximum, see requirements on page 46)

**a) Cover Page (1 page maximum)**

The cover page must include:

- Name of the organization applying
- Name and title of the organization's representative who has signatory authority and authority to submit the application
- Name, title, and contact information (mailing address, email, and telephone number) of the organization's point of contact with whom USAID will coordinate on matters related to the application (if different from the organization's representative with signatory authority and authority to submit the application)
- RFA number
- Program name
- Name of any proposed sub-awardees or partnerships (identify whether the organizations are local organizations, per USAID's definition of local entity under ADS 303)
- Total life of award (LOA) Title II food commodity(ies) request, in metric tons (MT) (rounded to the nearest 10 MT)
- Total funds requested (in U.S. dollars), including Section 202(e); Section 202(e) Enhanced; commodity and freight (C&F) estimate; ITSH (please note ITSH is only associated with U.S. in-kind commodities); and cost share, if applicable
- Valid UEI number
- Activation date in SAM
- Participant information as requested in Table 1, which includes:
  - Total direct activity participants: The number of unique individuals who will directly participate in RFSA interventions during the period of performance (if someone participates in more than one intervention, only count them once)
  - Total direct activity participating households: The number of unique households targeted by the project
  - Estimated total households in target area: The number of unique households in proposed intervention area calculated by dividing the total population by average household size
  - Proportion of total households in the target area: The number of participant households divided by the estimated number of households in the target area

Table 1: Activity Participant Table

Total Direct Activity Participants	
Total Direct Activity Participating Households <sup>9</sup>	
Estimated Households in Target Area	
Proportion of Total Households in the Target Area	

***b) Executive Summary (2 page maximum)***

The Executive Summary must provide a high-level overview of key elements of the Technical Application. The executive summary must include:

- A Problem Statement, including the underlying causes and major determinants of food, nutrition, and economic insecurity to be addressed.
- An overarching TOC that describes the hypothesized series of changes needed to address the underlying causes of food, nutrition, and economic insecurity.
- The proposed set of interventions to achieve the RFSA’s FNES objectives.

***c) Activity Design (45 page maximum)***

The FY23 DRC RFSA design presents the vision for reaching the activity’s goals and purposes and the strategy that will be taken to reach the described outcomes. In this section, applicants must demonstrate a tailored, focused, and integrated approach to reach the RFSA’s goal.

Applicants must present an integrated narrative that details:

- The context of the participants and intervention area (provinces, territories, and health zones).
- The conceptual framework that describes the theory of how the proposed set of interventions will lead to the desired change.
- The methodology and strategy used for targeting.
- The technical approach that justifies the selection of the specific proposed interventions, includes supporting evidence and lessons learned from related programs and contexts, and explains how the interventions will be implemented.
- The strategy for answering relevant knowledge gaps and refining the activity design during the refinement period.

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<sup>9</sup> A household is categorized by people who live in the same homestead (dwelling structures and adjoining land occupied by family members) and also share the same eating arrangements. If people live independently in separate homesteads and do not share the same eating arrangements they should be treated as separate households. If households share a compound/dwelling but do not regularly share the same eating arrangements then they would be counted as separate households. Polygamous households who share a compound or dwelling space but not eating arrangements would be counted as separate households as would and returnees who live with host families but do not share eating arrangements.

Please refer to the Program Description section for information about the activity goal and priority outcomes.

### *(1) Context Analysis*

A context-appropriate and effective activity requires a deep understanding of targeted participants and communities and the needs, opportunities, and constraints they face. A description of the context must demonstrate local, contextualized knowledge of the participants and the proposed targeted areas (provinces, territories, and health zones) as well as the larger enabling environment in the country. If only national or provincial level data and evidence are available, the applicant must explain why the data can be generalized to the sub-national level. Different methods may be required to achieve the same high-level purposes in the different target areas based on information contained in the Desk Review and Market Study and other contextual analyses (Appendix III). Elements may include:

- A description of the geographic area of intervention (provinces, territories, and health zones) and the profiles of the target participants.
- A well-referenced and data-driven description of the current FNES context, including chronic, acute, and micronutrient malnutrition.
- A description of socio-economic, political, environmental, and climatic context; status of infrastructure and markets; and safety and security considerations that may positively or negatively influence the implementation of the RFSA and anticipated outcomes.
- A thorough and clear analysis of the underlying causes of food, nutrition, and economic insecurity.
- A description of the other actors in the target area, including their goals and specific interventions.
- A description of the capacity of the host government's institutions and reach into the targeted areas.
- A description of the availability and quality of public and private extension services and health systems.
- An analysis of the local systems that influence the community's ability to sustainably engage in solutions to food, nutrition, and economic insecurity. This may include a description of dynamics regarding roles, relationships, rules, results, and resources in a local system.

### *(2) Conceptual Framework*

The conceptual framework is made up of the context-specific targeting and technical approach. The conceptual framework should demonstrate the linkages between the underlying causes and influencing factors of food, nutrition, and economic insecurity specific to the target area. A conceptual framework includes a preliminary TOC with all required elements and provides clear, logical steps showing how the proposed set of interventions and interactions will produce all the necessary and sufficient outcomes/conditions to achieve the stated goal based on evidence and plausible reasoning. While applicants will include their full TOC diagram, TOC complementary documentation, and logical framework in Annexes 7 and 10, elements of the TOC and the logical framework should be incorporated into the Activity Design narrative to explain the technical approach.

### *(3) Targeting*

Applicants are encouraged to propose both territories and health zones to target with BHA activities. These territories and health zones may fall within Kasai, Kasai Central, and Tanganyika provinces only. Implementers are not permitted to implement in the following territories in Tanganyika: Kalemie, Moba, and Kongolo. Implementers may also not target Dimbelenge territory in Kasai Central.

Applicants need to consider all people when designing their targeting approaches; applicants should intentionally and consistently account for community social dynamics and seek to enhance social cohesion as part of the research or program design. It is strongly recommended that projects use participatory tools and methodologies to identify target communities and/or households most requiring assistance. Applications should present a targeting strategy that prioritizes the poorest households most vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity. BHA also encourages applicants to target individuals and organizations who are most likely to drive system change, in addition to targeting the most vulnerable and food insecure.

BHA expects applicants to propose intervention-appropriate targeting criteria. For interventions that address challenges at the community level, a wide targeting approach might be appropriate, while interventions providing material resources might be better suited for a particular demographic. Applicants should consider and describe how different targeting approaches might influence the ability of communities to cooperate on activities, and should develop strategies that strengthen social cohesion. To the extent possible, BHA expects applicants to align their targeting approach so that extremely vulnerable households participate in both purpose 1 and purpose 2 activities (see Section A: Program Description). Overall, the targeting approach should prominently engage the most vulnerable while also appropriately engaging other members and sectors of the community, factoring in social dynamics. Applicants should be sensitive to the local context in proposing targeting approaches that promote and protect social cohesion and trust, mitigate conflict at the community level, and do no harm. When working to improve outcomes in a province, it might be necessary to work across provincial boundaries, for example, to sustainably obtain quality inputs or facilitate market linkages. Cross-border engagement should focus on impacting vulnerable households within the targeted province.

### *(4) Technical Approach*

The applicant must design technical interventions and prioritize the key drivers of food, nutrition, and economic insecurity for each sub-population targeted by the RFSA. The technical interventions should come directly from the conceptual framework. Applicants should refer to [BHA's RFSA Technical References](#) for information and emerging best practices relevant to many of the sectors and activities BHA addresses. This section should include an explanatory narrative about what the interventions will be, the evidence about why those interventions are being prioritized, and how applicants will integrate them within and across purposes and with other stakeholders' (e.g., U.S. Government and other donors) investments to achieve the goal. Additionally, it should be clear who are the target participants for each intervention. Applicants should explain how the proposed technical interventions contribute directly to the TOC. In addition, applicants should present a clear methodology, supported by evidence, justifying how they prioritized and selected their approach/interventions to respond to the identified underlying causes of food, nutrition, and economic insecurity.

BHA requires applicants to present a list of every proposed individual intervention organized by purpose and sub-purpose in a table similar to the illustrative table below. The Interventions Table should be no more than one to two pages in length.

Table 2: Interventions Table

Purpose 1		Purpose 2	
Sub-purpose 1.1	Sub-purpose 1.2	Sub-purpose 2.1	Sub-purpose 2.2
Intervention 1	Intervention 1	Intervention 1	Intervention 1
Intervention 2	Intervention 2	Intervention 2	Intervention 2
Intervention 3	Intervention 3	Intervention 3	Intervention 3
Intervention 4	Intervention 4	Intervention 4	Intervention 4

BHA would not expect applicants to invest in each purpose equally. Rather, applicants should target investments toward interventions that can realistically achieve transformational and sustainable improvements in FNES. It would be appropriate for applicants to prioritize interventions that specifically target the greatest constraints to long-term FNES for each targeted sub-population, rather than attempting to target every single constraint identically without regard to how limiting that factor may be. Applicants should explain in their review of the context and in the development of the TOC, how their organizational strengths are well suited to interventions that address the most limiting factors of each desired outcome.

Proposed interventions should align with the BHA Strategy and Programming Principles described on pages 4 and 16. Applicants should provide sufficient detail to allow USAID to assess their operational and technical appropriateness and feasibility. While developing the technical approach, applicants should review [BHA’s RFSA Technical References](#).

Applicants must include direct participant data by purpose in Table 3 to help BHA understand how the applicant plans to integrate multi-sectoral interventions at the household level. Please use the following table to present the number of unique direct participants targeted under each purpose.

Table 3: Number of Direct Participating Households Targeted by Purpose

	Total Unique Direct Participant Households (A)	Purpose 1 only (B)	Purpose 2 only (C)	Purpose 1 & 2 (D)
Total Number of Unique Direct Participant Households	=(B+C+D)			



The numbers in each column must be mutually exclusive. For example, Column B would include the number of participating households that will receive interventions only for Purpose 1 and from no other purpose, while Column D would include the number of participating households that will receive interventions for Purposes 1 and 2.

#### (a) Proposed Implementation Plans for Construction Activities

RFSA applicants proposing construction activities do not need to provide full implementation plans at the initial application stage. At initial application, RFSA applicants must provide, at a minimum:

- A construction section within the budget and budget narrative, describing the total estimated cost of construction activities with an anticipated cost breakdown by infrastructure type (this may include rough estimates of material and labor costs).
- Geographic location of proposed construction at the territory level.
- A clear strategy to provide quality assurance and quality control of the proposed infrastructure, and to ensure worker and participant safety, including both technical staffing and planning.
- Description of existing local systems for infrastructure asset management, and a strategy for engaging community capacity in infrastructure operations, maintenance, and financing after handover. Applicants are highly encouraged to build off of and leverage existing local systems to the extent possible.
- Inclusion of construction-related staff in the organizational chart or staffing plan, including technical qualifications of proposed sub-award staff. Applicants must ensure that staffing qualifications are commensurate with the technical design requirements.
- A plan in the application narrative for conducting feasibility assessments, alternative assessments, and/or community visioning processes to determine final type and scope of construction activities.
- A description of proposed construction activities (as available) within the technical narrative, including initial scope and types of infrastructure and summary of potential climate and environmental risks that may affect construction or infrastructure sustainability.

Apparently successful applicants will work with BHA throughout the refinement period to revise infrastructure plans, including infrastructure listed in the activity-specific Initial Environmental Examination (IEE). Awardees will be required to provide bills of quantities, and technical drawings for construction activities, and site-specific implementation plans prior to BHA providing clearance for construction implementation.

BHA will not fund construction activities proposed on contested lands.

#### (b) Social and Behavior Change

SBC is the systematic application of iterative, theory-based, and research-driven processes and strategies for change at the individual, community, and society levels. BHA recognizes that social and behavior change cuts across all sectors and is therefore critical to achieving the overall goal and objectives of RFSAs. Applicants should develop SBC programming through an evidence-based, participant-centered process. This process will include, at minimum, a behavior-focused element and a social change element.

The behavior element should include the identification of a *manageable* number of key behaviors and audiences (at individual, family, and community levels); selection of a behavior change

theoretical framework to guide programming; discernment of the behavioral factors that influence each behavior; and development of a variety of evidence-based interventions that address multiple levels in the system. The design must be informed by initial analysis of the structural, social (cultural and gender related), and internal factors that may prevent or support the practice of the prioritized behaviors. A heavy reliance on messaging to address participants' knowledge is inadequate to achieve lasting change. Applicants are strongly encouraged to take inspiration from the [USAID Accelerator Behavior Profiles](#) and [USAID's Guidance on Prioritizing Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Behaviors](#), which can be adapted for multiple sectors. Deeper analyses such as formative research, if needed, should be described, including the proposed methodology.

The social change element may build on local knowledge and facilitate community problem-solving, engaging local stakeholders and multi-disciplinary local expertise. SBC interventions should leverage existing community networks, and any formative research should use audience-centered, participatory methods. BHA requires applicants to clearly articulate realistic benchmarks and processes to track quality and measure progress in SBC. Finally, applicants must describe how they plan to address SBC capacity gaps of implementing staff, host government, local civil society members, community leaders, and community members.

By the end of the refinement phase awardees will draft a cross-cutting SBC strategy that lays out a roadmap to achieving the activity's behavioral outcomes. The strategy should also include updated benchmarks to track progress and inform implementation in alignment with the overall monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan, along with plans to assess and/or strengthen staff capacity. The SBC strategy will be used to update the project TOC, LogFrame, and corresponding indicators. See [Report on a Review of Social and Behavior Change Methods and Approaches within FFP Development Food Security Activities](#) (FANTA, 2018) for more information on multi-sectoral SBC strategy development, intervention design, implementation, and evaluation. Applicants are strongly encouraged to take into consideration the findings and recommendations of the FANTA review.

#### (c) Community and Public- and Private-Sector Engagement and Sustainability

Applicants are strongly encouraged to incorporate local capacity strengthening in all areas of the proposed activity. Local capacity engagement includes the amount of resources managed by local entities; formal engagements (sub-awards, sub-contracts, partnerships, research, etc.); and capacity building efforts with local civil society and the private sector, such as NGOs, cooperatives, universities and private companies, among other entities. Acceptable local capacity engagement can be a combination of any of these approaches. Integration of local capacity engagement must be context appropriate, reflected at every phase of the activity, and expected to increase over the course of the award. Given capacity constraints, RFSA applicants will need to consider the extent to which local government entities are able to contribute to their sustainability strategies and propose innovative ways to help them do so. As applicable and appropriate, BHA encourages applicants to partner with local organizations and have local organizations directly manage resources to the extent they have the technical and financial management capacity to do so.

Applicants must review [the USAID private sector engagement](#) and the [Locally Led Development Spectrum](#) sites. In those areas where the interests of private sector entities overlap with community priorities, BHA expects applicants to explore strategic opportunities to produce outcomes and critical services delivery that can be sustained into the future. Consistent with USAID PSE approaches, interventions may include a range of engagement. Activities may include consulting, strategizing,

aligning, collaborating, and implementing with the private sector for greater scale, sustainability, and effectiveness of outcomes.

BHA encourages applicants to review the sustainability section of this RFA, which identifies the four factors (resources, capacities, motivation, and linkages) that are critical to sustain service delivery, access, and demand and that contribute to sustained development outcomes. Applicants should highlight how they will establish linkages between community-based organizations and existing public and private institutions to access capacity strengthening support. Applicants should:

- Identify and specify the private, public, and community structures they will engage within the defined TOC for long-term FNES outcomes.
- Describe the operating environment for each purpose, why the applicant selects the actors and how they will partner with them, and when and how they will transition this partnership.
- Define the results of the engagement or partnership with the selected actors.
- Identify constraints to engagement with the public sector and clearly describe what resources (such as transport/per diem costs for public sector extension workers) are proposed.

#### (d) Sequencing, Layering, and Integrating

Applicants should aim to utilize three approaches – SLI – in their activity designs to further the objectives of each program to a greater extent than by implementing in isolation. BHA anticipates activities will strategically and operationally work in line with relevant national and local government policies and systems; leverage and link with other actors working to address the drivers of food and nutrition insecurity; and create opportunities for positive change. This requires coordination and joint planning with a broad set of stakeholders to ensure activity complementarity, impact, and sustainability and a focused understanding of the potential impact of SLI activities and interventions with other actors.

- Sequencing is the intentional organization of phased program interventions to maximize program impact.
- Layering is the strategic coordination of overlapping interventions across stakeholders, sectors, funding streams, and humanitarian and development programs.
- Integrating is the intentional layering and sequencing of multi-sectoral interventions. Strategic integration can address both emergency needs and longer-term development issues at the same time in places where shocks are frequently recurring. It counters the assumption that emergency and development activities take place on a chronological continuum.

SLI represents different synergistic programmatic approaches used in order to maximize the impact and sustainability of the proposed interventions. How various interventions are appropriately layered with other investments, integrated within a household and community, and sequenced in time will create longer-term potential for success.

BHA recognizes that RFSAs require a collaborative approach, not only across BHA and other USAID activities, but also with humanitarian assistance programs and development work funded by a range of donors and foundations. BHA is committed to promoting HDP coherent approaches that maximize collective impact by engaging in joint planning between humanitarian and development actors, including donors, UN organizations, UN-led coordinating structures, the World Bank Group, and host governments.

The extreme poor and chronically vulnerable are exposed to multiple deprivations, recurrent shocks, and chronic stresses. Creating transformational change for this target group requires carefully designed interventions addressing the multiple interrelated barriers these populations face. Individual projects cannot address every sectoral need of a target population, and interventions should thus be prioritized and focused to address the most critical and impactful needs. Applicants will need to articulate how they will coordinate with other stakeholders and actors to meet other needs necessary to improve FNES.

Applicants should also keep in mind that the extreme poor and chronically vulnerable are not a homogeneous population, and applicants should clearly explain how they will tailor a package of interventions for the different targeted individuals/groups. Additionally, it is necessary to describe how the package of interventions will be:

- Appropriately sequenced to facilitate utilization of services provided and skills and capacities strengthened.
- Strategically layered with interventions implemented by other projects or organizations in the same area.
- Effectively integrated with other projects to overcome the various impediments to FNES.

The sequencing of interventions should consider when to engage participants appropriately in a particular activity and receive a particular kind of support. The SLI of interventions under this award must consider and explicitly identify work being done by the host country government, other humanitarian and development implementing organizations, other USAID bureaus or offices, other entities of the U.S. Government, and non-U.S. Government donors.

Applicants should provide information relevant to understanding the relationship(s) and integrated nature of the sectors under a multi-sectoral program. Depending on the nature of the activity, these may include targeting of participants, how the various components of the activity will address the identified needs, and assistance gaps beyond the proposed interventions.

Applicants should consider layering their RFSA design with ongoing and forthcoming USAID programs, should timing and geographic targeting allow. For example:

- Financial inclusion activities that increase access to credit through donor-supported loan guarantees with financial institutions.
- If awarded, the DRC Peri-Urban and Rural Sanitation activity will implement transformational solutions to the persistent challenges that prevent sustainable access and use of sanitation services. This activity may provide opportunities to link households to affordable WASH products and services in rural and peri-urban areas of Tanganyika and Kasai Central.

Applicants should also look to build on central government efforts such as the 145 Territory program, the World Bank Multi-Sectoral Nutrition program, and the African Development Bank Asset Creation program as well as the efforts of other donors and actors in the geographic area.

BHA activities should draw on learning from past and ongoing food security and nutrition programming to strengthen program quality and capacity. This approach will help to build upon and apply knowledge from past development and emergency activities in order to gain a holistic understanding of the context-specific social, political, economic, cultural, and climatic factors that affect stability, resilience, and growth.

#### (e) Addressing Knowledge and Evidence Gaps in the Refinement Period

BHA will use the Refine and Implement (R&I) approach, a post-award co-creation process, to ensure the activities are highly focused, tailored to the context, and adaptively managed, thereby increasing overall effectiveness. The refinement period will be a maximum of one year and BHA encourages it to be shorter. During the refinement period, BHA expects applicants to conduct start-up activities and begin implementation of evidence-based interventions (including evidence from prior research or that collected in the R&I period). As part of the initial application, applicants must describe how they will effectively use the refinement period to better understand the:

- Needs, priorities, opportunities, aspirations, norms, and behaviors at the household and community levels.
- Non-material and material obstacles to FNES.
- Location-specific root causes of food, nutrition, and economic insecurity including relevant shocks and stressors.
- Capacities and gaps in local formal and informal institutions, and the power dynamics surrounding them.
- Viability of proposed approaches in the specific geographic areas.
- Opportunities for complementarities with other actors working toward sustainable improvements in FNES for the most vulnerable.
- Other factors that may influence activity design and implementation.

In this section, applicants should summarize known evidence gaps and lines of inquiry to be explored during the refinement period, how these questions link to the TOC, and how they may influence changes to targeting and the overall technical approach. Management processes to support R&I must be detailed under Management and Staffing, while further detail on learning questions and refinement period activities and milestones must be expanded on in Annex 11: Plan for Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA). Applicants are not required to conduct research during the refinement period or throughout implementation. Any proposed research should be operational-level research intended to improve implementation.

The [R&I Overview and FAQ](#) contains additional information about the R&I model and illustrative activities that may take place during the refinement period.

#### (f) Sustainability

Applicants must consider sustainability throughout all aspects of the design. This should be discussed in the Program Description and addressed in Annex 19: Sustainability Plan.

Applicants should integrate the sustainability strategy within each technical sector and intervention in addition to presenting a separate, stand-alone strategy in Annex 19. BHA expects applicants to include a vision of sustainability and an exit strategy from the inception of the program. The sustainability strategy should identify outcomes to be sustained after the LOA and include elements such as key practices promoted by the RFSA, infrastructure construction or repairs, and continued access to high quality inputs. The plan should also identify critical services and systems that are necessary to sustain project outcomes and strategies to strengthen the service delivery systems to ensure that they continue into the future.

BHA encourages applicants to review the [Sustaining Development: A Synthesis of Results from a Four-Country Study of Sustainability and Exit Strategies among Development Food Assistance Projects](#) paper and the four case studies to develop the sustainability strategy. The study identifies four factors (resources, capacities, motivation, and linkages) that are critical to sustain service delivery and access to and demand for services that contribute to sustained development outcomes. The study highlights the importance of the linkage between community-based organizations and existing public and private institutions that provide capacity strengthening support.

Applicants' sustainability and exit strategies should include interventions to build the capacity of host country entities, whether public or private. This support can help promote continued availability of important goods and services. BHA expects applicants to demonstrate a clear understanding of local, regional, and national systems and to explain how the program will invest resources to produce the desired outcomes in a sustainable manner. Applicants' TOC should display the interventions and outcomes, not only to show how the outcomes will be achieved, but also to explain what interventions and mechanisms will sustain them.

BHA believes that the impact and sustainability of RFSAs are best measured when community members are not only active stakeholders in the design, implementation, monitoring, and adaptation of interventions but also contribute to their sustainability. There are many approaches to implementing the community-visioning and engagement process. Applications must demonstrate the methodology by which awardees will engage with communities. BHA supports methodologies that are inclusive and demonstrate buy-in and support of RFSAs interventions by community members during and after the conclusion of the activity. Applicants should demonstrate linkages with local authorities or nearby communities in order to promote sustainable outcomes. Applicants must also articulate how their community engagement methodology provides a safe space for the voices of marginalized groups to be both heard, and incorporated, into plans. Additional guidance may be found in Section E: Application Review Information and Annex 19: Sustainability Plan.

The sustainability and exit strategy should encourage communities, private sector actors, government entities, and participants to take ownership of their development processes, to continue important services, and ideally to improve upon programmatic outcomes. Efforts to achieve ownership and sustained outcomes should be incorporated into the activity design at multiple levels. For any commodity and resource transfers, applicants should incorporate sustainability efforts as applicable and practical. To this end, BHA encourages applicants to consider potential approaches for transition from direct USAID-funded partner service delivery to one in which the community itself plays a more prominent role. Likewise, the applicant may want to consider the role that the private sector, local government authorities, and/or other actors may be able to play in order to establish sustainable and self-financing service delivery systems that can continue post award.

Certain changes to implementation approaches and staffing requirements may be appropriate in order to accelerate a transition from direct implementation to increased facilitation and support to local actors. To the degree possible and practical, applicants should plan for a gradual transition of certain program interventions and services with the aim of having parts of implementation transferred to other entities when it makes the most sense during the award. Thus, the implementing partner can take on more of an indirect implementation role in support of community organizations and local actors during the award. This indirect role can help build the capacity of community groups and service providers while promoting linkages within the community, and enhancing motivation and resources. To some degree, program staff would look to step back and allow community groups and service providers to

work more independently as conditions permit. The role of program staff would shift to monitor the progress, effectiveness, and challenges the strengthened groups face and to provide appropriate support. By the end of the award, community groups and service providers would ideally be empowered and prepared to operate without assistance from the applicant or USAID.

***d) Management and Staffing (12 page maximum)***

***(1) Staffing Structure***

Applicants must provide a comprehensive staffing plan that demonstrates the ability to recruit highly qualified, technical, managerial, M&E, commodity management, and program learning staff that will be sufficient to implement the proposed interventions outlined in the Technical Approach and Management Approach sections. The staffing plan must demonstrate:

- Staff with substantive experience in implementing both development activities and RFSAs. Necessary technical staff skills should include adaptive management, stakeholder engagement, community level governance and planning, SBC, workshop or training facilitation, and conflict mitigation.
- Technical expertise facilitating access to credit, preparing participants to be investment ready, and working with financial institutions to develop appropriate products for potential RFSAs participants.
- Planning for recruitment and training of field agents to ensure staff have skills in community level engagement, adaptive management, and working along feedback cycles.
- How staff, and consultants as required, will be encouraged to work collaboratively across teams.
- How R&I will be supported with the appropriate technical expertise, including the increased need for specialized skills during the refinement period for formative research, context assessment, implementation research, and participatory community consultation.
- How the activity will adjust staffing support based on learning during refinement.

The application must detail a management structure that ensures the efficient use of resources, as well as effective and adaptive management; strong technical implementation; and logistical, operational, financial, and administrative support. The management structure must demonstrate the necessary technical competencies to implement the technical interventions proposed. The applicant must explain the management structure presented in the organizational chart including the structure of the prime, all members of the consortium, and sub-awardees as applicable; personnel management of expatriate and local staff; and lines of authority and communication between organizations and staff.

If sub-awardees or a consortium management model are proposed, applicants must describe how the partnerships will be structured, organized, and managed to use complementary capabilities most effectively. Applicants must specify the responsibilities of all principal organizations and the rationale for their selection (i.e., organizational strengths and weaknesses, technical expertise); propose staff and reporting relationships within and between each of these organizations; and explain how the consortium will be structured to ensure cohesive and coordinated knowledge sharing, planning, decision-making, and implementation across roles and organizational boundaries.

The applicant must demonstrate the degree to which the applicant and all proposed consortium members or sub-awardees possess the depth and breadth of institutional capacity, technical expertise, and management systems to plan, implement, and support the pathways and interventions described in the Technical Approach.

During the five-year period of performance, implementers will refine the activity design during an initial refinement period. BHA expects awardees to utilize robust adaptive management and learning following the initial refinement. Applications must outline how partnerships will support R&I, including the possible role of any research partners, if applicable. Applications must also detail how, in the case of major changes to the TOC, changes to management, staffing, and partnerships will be managed to better address capacity needs under a revised technical approach.

## *(2) Key Personnel*

**Seven** key personnel are required under this RFA: 1) Chief of Party (COP); 2) GYSI Lead; 3) M&E Lead; 4) Strategic Learning Advisor (SLA); 5) Commodity Manager; 6) Purpose One Lead; and 7) Purpose Two Lead. Each key personnel position requires USAID approval as noted in the substantial involvement provision, Section B: Federal Award Information. All key personnel must be full-time positions (40-hour work week) and be based in the province where the project will be implemented. Required attributes for all key personnel include strong management and interpersonal skills, mentoring and facilitation skills, and field experience in low-resource environments.

### *(a) Chief of Party*

The COP is responsible for the overall management and representation of the activity. The COP must have proven leadership skills managing projects of a similar size and scope in developing countries facing complex, volatile, and uncertain contexts. The COP must have prior experience effectively managing USAID development or resilience activities involving Title II commodities and implementation by multiple sub-awardees. The COP must have demonstrated experience in managing program implementation, financial reporting, programmatic reporting procedures and systems, and staff. The COP should demonstrate experience in recruiting and developing program staff, and should have prior experience working in the DRC and technical expertise in FNES. The COP should be familiar with the country's social, political, economic, and cultural landscape, and have demonstrated ability to build and maintain relationships with host governments, donors, and other stakeholders. The COP should understand and demonstrate commitment to the importance of gender and youth dynamics in FNES programming. BHA highly encourages demonstrated experience in adaptive management and learning techniques. The COP should have proven success serving in a leadership role for a project addressing issues related to food security, nutrition, resilience, agriculture, natural resource management, livelihoods, or similar, preferably in the DRC. Fluency in English and French is required, and professional proficiency in the Congolese national language specific to the region is preferred. Experience with USAID and U.S. Government regulations is preferred. The COP must have either:

- A master's degree in development studies, international relations, agriculture, nutrition, public health, business administration, or a related field and a minimum of seven years of increasing management responsibility in international development projects.
- An undergraduate degree in a related field and 10 years of increasing management responsibility in international development projects.



Additionally, the COP must have at least five years of field experience.

(b) Strategic Learning Advisor

The SLA will work closely with all staff to ensure principles of CLA are recognized and acted on as core elements of RFSA programming. This staff member will ensure active, intentional, and adaptive learning within and across interventions, and will play a critical role in incorporating refinement activities and learning into implementation. Additionally, the SLA will improve community engagement; peer-to-peer learning; knowledge capture, sharing, and application; activity-based capacity strengthening; and evidence and data utilization. The SLA, working with the COP and technical staff, will also ensure appropriate and continued coordination and joint-planning with other relevant USAID bureaus and missions and other relevant donor activities, host-government initiatives, and private sector actors.

The SLA must have demonstrated experience in facilitating learning and knowledge sharing processes, in establishing and managing dynamic feedback systems to capture experiential learning and unintended consequences, and in fostering collaboration across teams and organizations. Fluency in French is required, and professional proficiency in English and in the Congolese national language specific to the region is preferred. The SLA must have either:

- A master's degree in development studies, international relations, agriculture, nutrition, public health, or a related field and a minimum of three years of relevant work experience.
- An undergraduate degree in a related field and five years of relevant work experience in international development projects.

Additionally, the SLA must have at least three years of field experience.

(c) Gender, Youth, and Social Inclusion Lead

The GYSI Lead will ensure that the social dimensions of FNES are effectively addressed across all activity components and at all levels throughout award implementation. This person will work to ensure vulnerable and marginalized populations are considered in targeting approaches.

The GYSI Lead must have an in-depth understanding of gender, age, and other locally significant socio-cultural and inclusion factors in the context of FNES programming, and a demonstrated capacity to lead the collection, analysis, and utilization of information from a broad range of sources. The GYSI Lead must have skills in FNES programming, participatory learning and action, and facilitating collaborative problem-solving. The GYSI Lead must also have the ability to foster commitment and build capacity among activity staff and in-country actors to ensure gender and youth integration, empowerment, and social inclusion. Fluency in French is required, and professional proficiency in English and Congolese languages is highly desirable. The GYSI Lead must have either:

- A master's degree in a social science discipline such as development studies, international relations, gender studies, or a related field and a minimum of five years of experience implementing gender and social inclusion programming at the community level.
- An undergraduate degree in a related field and seven years of relevant work experience implementing gender and social inclusion programming at the community level.

Additionally, the GYSI Lead must have at least five years of field experience.

#### (d) Monitoring and Evaluation Lead

The M&E Lead will provide technical expertise and leadership to generate and analyze quality evidence and data through monitoring, assessments, and evaluations.

The M&E Lead must demonstrate experience building or strengthening monitoring systems, conducting quantitative and qualitative analysis, designing survey methodology, and promoting evidence-based program management. Additional required qualifications include demonstrated experience in leading the M&E of a large, multi-year development or resilience award; knowledge about TOCs, logic models, food and nutrition security indicators, M&E plans, data quality assurance, data utilization, and gender and youth integration into M&E; and experience developing and operationalizing a comprehensive M&E plan. The M&E Lead should demonstrate the ability to network and engage with necessary stakeholders. Fluency in French is required, and professional proficiency in English and in the Congolese national language specific to the region is preferred. Experience with USAID and U.S. Government regulations and reporting procedures and systems is preferred. The M&E Lead must have either:

- A master's degree in a quantitative field (economics, agricultural/development economics, statistics, biostatistics, nutrition, applied sociology, or other relevant subject) with significant training in quantitative methods and seven years of relevant experience leading the M&E of multi-year development or resilience awards.
- An undergraduate degree in a related field and 10 years of relevant work experience leading the M&E of multi-year development or resilience awards.

Additionally, the M&E Lead must have at least five years of field experience.

#### (e) Commodity Manager

The Commodity Manager is responsible for the logistical management of Title II commodities. The Commodity Manager is responsible for establishing accurate commodity tracking systems, managing risks (including fraud and corruption), and ensuring accountability throughout the supply chain.

This individual must show extensive experience managing in-kind food commodity supply chains from point of origin through to food distribution points and end recipients in developing countries. The Commodity Manager should also have experience maintaining commodity quality and safety, managing warehouses (including fumigation and testing), coordinating transportation (port, road, rail, etc.), monitoring, and reporting. Experience specific to Title II is highly desired. The Commodity Lead should demonstrate the ability to network and engage with necessary stakeholders to manage food commodity supply chains. Experience working in the DRC is preferred. Fluency in French is required, and professional proficiency in English and in the Congolese national language specific to the region is preferred. Knowledge and experience with USAID and U.S. Government regulations are preferred. The Commodity Manager must have a bachelor's degree in a relevant academic area—e.g., supply chain management, food science, etc.—plus seven years of relevant experience. Additionally, the Commodity Manager must have at least five years of field experience.

#### (f) Purpose One Lead

The Purpose One Lead will provide oversight and guidance to the design and implementation of activity interventions. This person must have demonstrated experience effectively leading large-scale

agriculture and livelihood programming intended to improve FNES through agricultural production and household resilience. Experience specific to the DRC is highly advantageous. The individual must have technical familiarity with all three sub-purpose themes (savings and capital, IGAs, and agricultural production) and be considered a technical expert in at least two thematic areas, one of which must be agriculture. Demonstrated experience creating effective private sector linkages is highly valued.

The Purpose One Lead must have an in-depth understanding of all components of livelihoods development including selection, planning, and management of small businesses; livelihood resilience and diversification strategies; establishment of market linkages; and engagement with the private sector. The Purpose One Lead should also have agriculture experience (crop and livestock) with seed systems, market systems, and environmental and cultural constraints to agriculture. This person should demonstrate experience with the development and enhancement of sustainable livelihood interventions including on-farm, off-farm, and/or non-farm livelihoods, from self-employment to small business creation. The Purpose One Lead should demonstrate the capacity to lead the collection, analysis, and utilization of information from a broad range of sources.

The Purpose One Lead should demonstrate the ability to network and engage with a wide range of stakeholders. Fluency in French is required, and professional proficiency in English and in the Congolese national language specific to the region is preferred. Experience with USAID and U.S. Government regulations and program administration, management, and reporting procedures and systems is preferred. The Purpose One Lead must have either:

- A master's degree in a relevant academic area—e.g., agrobusiness or agronomy—plus five years of demonstrated experience in market-sustained livelihood interventions and relevant experience with increasing technical responsibility leading to senior level expertise.
- An undergraduate degree in a related field and eight years of relevant work experience with increasing technical responsibility leading to senior level expertise.

Additionally, the Purpose One Lead must have at least five years of field experience.

#### (g) Purpose Two Lead

The Purpose Two Lead will provide oversight and guidance in the design and implementation of activity interventions. This person must have demonstrated experience effectively leading nutrition, WASH, and SBC programming intended to improve FNES. Experience specific to the DRC is highly advantageous. The Purpose Two Lead must have experience leading the development and implementation of evidence-based, multi-sectoral nutrition and WASH programming. This person should also have an in-depth understanding of food and nutrition security. Additionally, the Purpose Two Lead should demonstrate capacity to lead the collection, analysis, and utilization of information from a broad range of sources. The candidate must have a strong understanding of a range of SBC theory and approaches that address changes in social norms, structures, and individual behaviors. The Purpose 2 Lead should possess proficiency in capacity strengthening, including experience with effective adult education approaches. The Purpose Two Lead should demonstrate the ability to network and engage with a wide range of stakeholders. Fluency in French is required, and professional proficiency in English and in the Congolese national language specific to the region is preferred. Experience with USAID and U.S. Government regulations and program administration, management, and reporting procedures and systems is preferred. The Purpose Two Lead must have either:

- A master's degree in a relevant academic area—e.g., nutrition, public health, or a related social science discipline—plus five years of relevant experience with increasing technical responsibility leading to senior level expertise.
- An undergraduate degree in a related field and eight years of relevant work experience with increasing technical responsibility leading to senior level expertise.

Additionally, the Purpose Two Lead must have at least five years of field experience.

### *(3) Management Approach*

Applicants must explain how their management approach will ensure holistic, integrated, and adaptive management. This must include a description of:

- Planned consortium management approaches and processes that will foster integrated activity planning, implementation, and coordination within the proposed award.
- Approaches to collaborate with other USAID funded activities, as applicable, and with other external stakeholders, including government partners, other donor funded activities, private sector actors, local partners, and other change agents.
- Efforts to coordinate, link, and leverage complementary activities implemented by other actors to improve FNES for the target population. This must include a description of how the proposed activity will leverage existing public, private, and donor investments to achieve the goal and how it will complement the activities of the local government and donor-facilitated interventions as appropriate.
- Adaptive management approaches that will enable feedback cycles that foster experiential learning and utilization of data from assessments, surveys, research, and routine monitoring. This should include:
  - Planned approaches to identify and address unintended consequences.
  - Scenario planning around activity responses to anticipated shocks and/or changes in the political, social, environmental, and/or market context.
  - Processes for continued refinement of the TOC.
- How the applicant will monitor, identify, and link performance management and adaptive management strategies throughout the life of the award.
- How the applicant will integrate feedback and share monitoring results and programmatic shifts, where appropriate, with target communities.

Adaptive management is expected to continue throughout the LOA. The summary description in the main application text may be further detailed in Annex 11: Plan for CLA.

### *(4) Resource Management*

Applicants must include a logistical management overview of the proposed food distributions and, if applicable, proposed cash or food voucher distributions. Applicants are not permitted to propose local, regional, or international food procurement under this RFA.

#### *(a) Title II In-Kind Commodity Distributions*

Applicants must provide a description of the ration including the amount of each commodity being proposed. Applicants should explain the full supply chain and commodity management process including transportation (port, road, rail, etc.), warehousing (including fumigation), certifications, and

contractual specifications. Applicants should include potential commodity substitutions (in the event the proposed commodities are not available). Applicants must include an [Annual Estimate of Requirements and Executive Summary Table](#) as part of the application.

BHA may request a Commodity Pipeline during the application review and negotiation process. Requests for containerization or through-bills of lading will be reviewed, and if necessary, approved, at the time awards are made. Commodity distributions need to be planned and implemented in accordance with [BHA Functional Policy 20-02, Procedure to Complete Market Assessment to Inform USAID's BHA Activity Design and Determine Compliance with the Conditions of the Bellmon Amendment](#).

#### (b) For Applicants Proposing Cash Transfers or Food Vouchers

Applicants must provide details on the respective delivery mechanism(s) per modality. This must include details on the transfer and/or ration amount, how this amount was derived, use of conditionality, frequency of transfers, and how the applicant will manage respective risks. Applicants should consult the [Modality Decision Tool for Humanitarian Assistance](#) for further guidance. Specific consideration must be given to the proximity of distribution sites (including retailers or cash outlets) and adequate staffing to support technical delivery of resource transfers.

Applicants proposing cash transfers or food vouchers must also provide the following information for each modality proposed:

- Average transfer value (USD)
- Frequency of distributions
- Number of distributions
- Number of participants receiving distributions

For each modality proposed, applicants should also provide the following:

- Total transfer costs
- Total support and operating costs
- Total modality cost

If proposing unconditional assistance, applicants should use a do no harm approach that avoids disincentivizing engagement in Purpose 1 activities and that does not contribute to aid dependency. Additionally, applicants proposing unconditional assistance must obtain provincial government concurrence with planned interventions prior to implementation.

#### (c) Commodity Quality and Safety for Food Voucher Activities

Applicants proposing food voucher activities will be expected to ensure that commodities purchased by participants with food vouchers will meet the commodity standards of the recipient country. If proposing food voucher activities, the awardee will be required to identify what procedures will be in place to ensure that vendors provide proof of acceptable quality.

#### (5) Risk Management

Applicants must discuss the local market factors and potential risks, such as criminal activities, that

may result from distribution of U.S. in kind commodities and cash/vouchers, if applicable.

Applicants must demonstrate that due consideration has been given to the security and protection of all participants [including the risk of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse], especially with respect to timing and location of distributions; amount of food and cash or value of vouchers; person(s) responsible for pickup; distance to distribution sites for participating families; and other logistics of the movement and distribution of commodities. For commodity and seed distributions, applicants must address movement between warehouses and distribution points. Applications must also address aspects such as warehouse management, tracking, and physical security. Applicants must include a risk mitigation statement that describes risk mitigation such as accidents, damage, diversion, and theft of commodities. For all interventions, applicants should demonstrate adequate staffing (including division of responsibilities) and warehousing and transport policies and procedures to ensure adequate commodity management.

#### ***e) Business (Cost) Application***

The Business (Cost) Application is a separate component from the Technical Application. While no page limit exists for the full cost application, BHA encourages applicants to be as concise as possible while still providing the necessary details. The cost application must illustrate the entire period of performance. Please see Annexes 2 - 4 for additional information regarding cost application requirements.

#### ***f) Environmental Compliance and Climate Risk Management***

Environmental degradation, climate change, and natural disasters are well-known challenges that can have negative impacts on development assistance, humanitarian aid, sustainable development, and resilience. As environmental and climate challenges have grown in the past several decades, BHA programming has adapted its strategy to meet the complexities and sustainability required to “do no harm” while ensuring efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. Government assistance resources. In this context, BHA’s environmental procedures complement BHA programming while ensuring that Agency environmental regulations are met. Complying with environmental safeguards in BHA projects can lead to more positive food security and environmental outcomes (e.g., safe and available water, improved natural resource management, reduced hunger and malnutrition). To address and adaptively manage climate risks, BHA projects must also incorporate a climate-sensitive approach that is appropriate to the context and reflected at every phase of the activity.

USAID requires both an Environmental Impact Assessment (as codified in [22 CFR 216](#), Agency Environmental Procedures) and Climate Risk Management assessment for USAID projects and activities (as required by [ADS 201mal](#)). A robust and inclusive Environmental Impact Assessment that draws on the voices of diverse stakeholders improves the outcomes of the RFSAs. BHA requirements for this solicitation are defined in the [FY23 BHA RFA-level Initial Environmental Examination \(RFA-IEE\)](#). In addition, applicants should reference the Climate Risk Profile in Appendix III to identify climate risks and refer to [climatelinks.org](https://climatelinks.org) for additional tools, guidance, and resources for completing the Climate Risk Management assessment.

At the pre-award stage, all applicants must submit a summary of how their proposed activity will meet these requirements in a four-page Environmental Safeguards Plan, as elaborated in Annex 9. Please note that per IEE guidance, applicants need to include all environmental compliance and

climate risk management costs, including personnel and non-personnel costs, in the detailed budget, and budget narrative.

***g) List of Required Application Annexes***

- Annex 1. Executive Summary Table and Annual Estimate of Requirements
- Annex 2. Comprehensive Budget
- Annex 3. Detailed Budget
- Annex 4. Budget Narrative
- Annex 5. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)
- Annex 6. SF-424 Forms
- Annex 7. TOC Diagram and TOC Narrative/ Complementary Documentation
- Annex 8. Gender Analysis Summary
- Annex 9. Environmental Safeguards Plan
- Annex 10. Logical Framework (LogFrame) and M&E Plan
- Annex 11. Plan for CLA
- Annex 12. Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan
- Annex 13. Intervention Area Maps
- Annex 14. Organizational Chart
- Annex 15. Curricula Vitae (CVs) of Key Personnel
- Annex 16. Letters of Commitment
- Annex 17. Glossary and Acronyms
- Annex 18. Participant Financial Analysis
- Annex 19. Sustainability Plan
- Annex 20. Code of Conduct
- Annex 21. Code of Conduct Implementation Details
- Annex 22. Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)
- Annex 23. Personnel Compensation Policy

***h) Annex Requirements***

Annexes do not have page limits, unless specifically noted. Applicants should not submit annexes, appendices, or supplemental materials not specifically requested in the RFA.

***Annex 1. Executive Summary Table and Annual Estimate of Requirements***

An Executive Summary Table and Annual Estimate of Requirements must be submitted as part of the application. These capture U.S. dollar amounts of the proposed Title II commodity resources and other funding sources for the life of the award.

***Annex 2. Comprehensive Budget***

The comprehensive budget must incorporate all planned costs by object class category and funding type [i.e., Section 202(e), Section 202(e) Enhanced, ITSH, and cost share] broken down by sector<sup>10</sup> for each year of the activity. The comprehensive budget must include financial and in-kind contributions, including potential contributions from non-USAID or private commercial donors. The comprehensive

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<sup>10</sup> BHA sectors include WASH, nutrition, agriculture, DRR policy and practice, M&E, economic recovery and market systems, and food assistance. Please refer to the Emergency Application Guidelines ([EAGs](#)) for more information.

budget must also include LOA totals for each cost category by funding type. All values in the comprehensive budget must be indicated in whole dollars. Comprehensive budgets are required for the applicant and all sub-awardees.

Object class categories are logical groupings of costs, such as staff salaries, fringe benefits, non-employee labor, travel and transport, supplies, staff training, equipment, sub-awards, contracts, audits, construction, other direct costs, and indirect costs. Please see the [suggested budget format](#) available on the BHA website.

### *Annex 3. Detailed Budget*

The detailed budget must list and account for individual line items within each object class category. Each line item must be allocated by funding type [i.e., Section 202(e), Section 202(e) Enhanced, ITSH, and cost share] and sector. The detailed budget should include a breakdown by year for the entire implementation period. Detailed budgets must include financial and in-kind contributions, including potential contributions from non-USAID or private commercial donors. Additionally, detailed budgets should include the: 1) breakdown of all appropriate costs by headquarters, regional, and country offices, as applicable; 2) costs associated with external, expatriate technical assistance and those associated with in-country technical assistance; and 3) costs associated with robust monitoring, evaluation, and environmental compliance.

Applications must include detailed budgets for the prime applicant and all proposed sub-awardees and contractors<sup>11</sup>. Please see the [suggested budget format](#). These sample budgets are strictly illustrative; applicants must use their own dollar figures, rates, and cost allocation methodologies. All budgets submitted as part of an application should be in the same format.

Each 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 year. Files must not contain any hidden or otherwise inaccessible cells. Budgets with hidden cells lengthen the cost analysis time required to make an award, and may result in a rejection of the cost application.

All proposed costs, including cost sharing, must comply with [2 CFR 200](#), [2 CFR 700](#), Office of Management and Budget, USAID, and BHA policies. Applicants must express cost sharing as an amount in USD.

If applicants expect to earn program income during the award period, the application must specifically state how the applicant will apply the income. The definition of program income is located in [2 CFR 200.80](#), and income application suggestions can be found in [2 CFR 200.307](#).

The detailed budget must contain the following budget categories and information, as applicable:

#### (a) Personnel

These costs must be 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. Salaries and wages may not exceed the applicant's established written personnel policy and practice, including the applicant's established pay scale for equivalent classifications of employees,

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<sup>11</sup> Contractor means an entity that receives a contract as defined in [2 CFR 200.22](#).



which must be certified by 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 the supporting market research.

Base pay, or base salary, is defined as the employee's basic compensation (salary) for services rendered. Taxes, which are a responsibility or liability of the employee, are inclusive of, and not additive to, the base pay or salary. The base pay excludes benefits and allowances, bonuses, profit sharing arrangements, commission, consultant fees, extra or overtime payments, overseas differential or quarters, and cost of living or dependent education allowances.

In accordance with [ADS 303.3.12](#) USAID will review proposed costs, including salaries, for reasonableness. USAID uses the top salary on the Mission's Local Compensation Plan as one indicator of reasonableness for the base salaries of locally employed staff, and the Contractor Salary Threshold as one indicator of reasonableness for the base salaries of U.S. and third country national staff.

Annual salary increases and/or promotional increases must be justified and supported by appropriate documentation and may be granted in accordance with the applicant's established written personnel policy and practice.

Non-employee labor is for short-term employees. Applicants must provide the following details for non-employee labor: rate of pay (daily rate), hours worked in a day, and length of employment.

#### (b) Fringe Benefits

If applicable, allowances, when proposed, must be broken down by specific type and by position. The applicant must specify any overseas allowances provided to staff and the corresponding rate or fixed amount per staff.

If the applicant has a fringe benefit rate approved by an agency of the U.S. Government, the applicant must use this 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.

#### (c) Travel and Transportation

The applicant must:

- Identify total domestic and international travel as separate items.
- Specify the estimated number of trips, number of travelers, position of travelers, number of days per trip, point of origin, destination, and purpose of trip.
- Itemize the estimate of transportation and/or subsistence costs, including airfare and per diem for each trip. Per diem must be based on the applicant's normal travel policies and practices. However, proposed per diem (lodging, meals, and incidentals) must not be in excess of that authorized by [Department of State Standard Regulations](#).
- Provide supporting documentation, such as the applicant's travel policy, to justify these costs.

(d) Procurement or Rental of Goods (Equipment and Supplies), Services, and Real Property

Applicants must include information on estimated types of equipment and supplies and the cost per unit and quantity.

In accordance with [2 CFR 200.33](#), in a brief description, “equipment” means tangible nonexpendable personal property, including exempt property charged directly to the award having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. The applicant must:

- Itemize the type of equipment and briefly justify the need for the items to be purchased as they relate to the applicant’s technical approach.
- Specify the model, estimated unit cost, and number of units for each item to be purchased.
- Provide the basis for the cost estimates, e.g., pro forma invoice or published price lists.

There are statutory constraints relating to the purchase of agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, and more with USAID program funds. Applicants may obtain specific information on these regulations on the [USAID Website](#), particularly [ADS 312](#). Additional information for motor vehicles is found on page 77, Motor Vehicle Procurement Table.

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.94, “supplies” means all personal property excluding equipment, intangible property, debt instruments, and interventions. The applicant must specify the supply items and briefly justify how they relate to the applicant’s technical approach.

(e) Sub-Awards

In accordance with [2 CFR 200.92](#), “sub-award” means an award provided by a pass-through entity to a sub-awardee for the sub-awardee to carry out part of a Federal award received by the pass-through entity. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual that is a participant of a Federal program. The applicant must specify the budget for the portion of the program to be passed through to any subrecipients. Applicants should reference [2 CFR 200](#) for assistance in determining whether proposed sub-tier entities are subrecipients or contractors. Subrecipient budgets must align with the applicant’s budget, including requirements related to fringe and indirect costs. The applicant must:

- Identify any sub-awards or contracts (other than the purchase of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services) and provide this information in a chart that includes their total value.
- Provide sub-award or contract budgets and accompanying budget narratives in the same format as submitted by the prime applicant and with the same exchange rate for all members of the consortium.

(f) Construction

Per ADS303 ([USAID Implementation of Construction Activities](#)), construction activities should be detailed as an explicit section within the detailed budget and budget narrative. Applicants must clearly describe the proposed scope and types of construction activities within the technical narrative. BHA recognizes that the scope, costs, and locations of construction activities may not be known at the initial application stage. In these cases, applicants must provide best estimates of costs within the detailed budget and

provide justification for these estimates within the budget narrative. See [ADS 303.3.30](#) for more details on construction requirements under cooperative agreements.

#### (g) Other Direct Costs

This may include other costs not elsewhere specified, such as report preparation costs, office costs, communication costs, and any other miscellaneous costs that directly benefit the program proposed by the applicant. The applicant must:

- Identify other direct costs and briefly explain and justify the need for each cost item as they relate to the applicant's technical approach.
- Specify the estimated unit cost and number of units for each item proposed.
- Provide the basis for the cost estimates.

The applicant must specify any training and workshops provided to staff and the cost break down for each training provided. Applicants should clearly indicate how the proposed staff training will contribute to achieving the goal of the award. Additionally, if applicable, the applicant should 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.

#### (h) Audits

The applicant must specify any costs associated with the required single audit, as defined at [2 CFR 200.501\(b\)](#), for a non-Federal entity that expends \$750,000 or more in Federal awards during the non-Federal entity's fiscal year.

#### (i) 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](#). The application must identify the approach being utilized and provide the applicable supporting information.

These are the most commonly used indirect cost rate methods:

- Method 1 - Direct Charge Only  
*Eligibility:* Any applicant  
*Initial Application Requirements:* See above on direct costs.
- Method 2 - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement  
*Eligibility:* Any applicant with a NICRA issued by a U.S. Government Agency must use that NICRA.  
*For Initial Application Requirements:* Please see Annex 5.
- Method 3 - De Minimis Rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs  
*Eligibility:* Any applicant that does not have a current NICRA  
*Initial Application Requirements:* Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. Once chosen, this methodology must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate an indirect rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time. The applicant must describe which cost elements it charges indirectly vs. directly. See [2 CFR 200](#) for further information.

- Method 4 - Indirect Costs Charged As A Fixed Amount  
*Eligibility:* Non U.S. non-profit organizations without a NICRA may request this method, but approval is at the discretion of the AO  
*Initial Application Requirements:* Provide the proposed fixed amount and a worksheet that includes:
  - Indirect costs: These are common costs that benefit the day-to-day operations of the organization, including categories such as salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting, or that benefit and are identifiable to more than one program or activity (such as depreciation, rental costs, operations and maintenance of facilities, and telephone expenses). Applicants must provide this information for the previous fiscal year and estimates for the current year.
  - Proposed method: This is how the organization will prorate the indirect costs equitably and consistently across all programs and activities. Organizations should use a base that measures the benefits of that particular cost to each program or activity to which the cost applies.

If the applicant does not have an approved NICRA and does not elect to utilize the 10% de minimis rate, the AO will provide further instructions and may request additional supporting information, including financial statements and audits, should the application still be under consideration after the merit review. USAID is under no obligation to approve the applicant's requested method.

Applicants without NICRAs must provide sufficient information for USAID to determine the reasonableness of the rates. This information includes:

- A breakdown of labor bases and overhead pools and the method of determining the rate.
- The percentages and amounts used for the calculation of indirect costs.
- The basis for the proposed indirect cost rates, as appropriate.
- Copies of the applicant's financial reports for the previous three-year period, which have been audited by a certified public accountant or other auditor satisfactory to USAID.
- The projected budget, cash flow, and organizational chart.
- A copy of the organization's accounting manual.

(j) Other Budget Notes

- All items in the budgets must be listed in English.
- Per [ADS 312](#), applicants must ensure that restricted commodities are identified in each budget for explicit approval, as required. A procurement plan for equipment and other restricted items as defined by [2 CFR 200.34](#) and [ADS 312](#) may be incorporated into an existing or new annex in the cost application.
- Applicants may include travel and per diem costs for Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (GDRC) staff, but may not propose incentive payments, consistent with [USAID policy](#).
- Applicants must include in the budget costs for appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for relevant activities (e.g., construction or for-work activities, use of natural pesticides, and commodity fumigation).
- The applicant must ensure the budgeted costs address any additional requirements identified in the RFA such as branding and marking. Applicants must specify the unit cost and number

of units for all branding and making activities. USAID branding guidelines can be found on the [USAID Website](#).

- BHA encourages applicants to consider budgeting for costs pertaining to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), as discussed in Annexes 21 and 22.
- Budgeting for environmental compliance requires integration of IEE findings with the project budget. This process must be transparent to ensure that adequate funds are budgeted and remain available over the life of the project for implementation and monitoring of the required environmental compliance measures. Dedicated, full-time, qualified environmental staffing at the project or field management levels is necessary to implement USAID environmental regulations and address site-specific issues. USAID also recommends budgeting for and holding capacity building workshops for other staff who will support effective environmental safeguarding.
- Budgeting for climate and environmental safeguards can follow the [USAID Environmental Budgeting toolkit](#) established through the Food Security Network (FSN) consultation.
- Applicants may include costs for studies and operational research conducted as part of R&I.

#### *Annex 4. Budget Narrative*

The budget narrative justifies and explains the costs proposed in the detailed budget and describes the methodology and assumptions used to develop the cost estimates. It must demonstrate that all costs are reasonable, allowable, and allocable. It is not sufficient to just restate the information listed in the budget. Applicants must provide sufficient information and details to explain what the costs are, how they contribute to project goals, and how individual costs were calculated, including sources used to determine the cost basis or “Unit Cost,” (e.g., published salary tables, internal policies, local labor laws, local market rates, actual costs incurred, historical costs, cost estimates obtained through tenders or bids, or catalog prices). Narratives should provide sufficient information to determine the appropriateness of cost allocations between Section 202(e) and ITSH funding. Narratives should also explain all lump sum costs and any exchange rate calculations. All items in the budget narrative should be in English.

Applicants must provide budget narratives for the prime applicant and all proposed sub-awardees and contractors. For ease of review, budget narratives should follow the order of line items in the detailed budget (top to bottom), rather than by purpose(s)/sectors (left to right). Applicants should use consistent naming of items in the detailed budget and budget narrative.

Please see the suggested [budget narrative format](#) available on the BHA website. These narratives are strictly illustrative and are based on the sample detailed budgets. Applicants must use their own rationale based on their proposed activity design, associated inputs, and detailed budget. Applicants must submit budget narratives as a Microsoft Word document or compatible equivalent. BHA will not accept budget narratives submitted in Microsoft Excel. The budget narrative includes the motor vehicle procurement table, which addresses information listed in the Motor Vehicle Procurement Table section on page 77.

Applicants must explain all fringe benefit 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. If applicants do not have a fringe benefit rate approved by an agency of the U.S. Government, the budget narrative must include a detailed explanation/breakdown comprising all items of fringe benefits, such as unemployment

insurance, workers' compensation, health and life insurance, retirement, the Federal Insurance Contributions Act and the cost estimates for each, expressed in dollars and as a percentage of salaries. The applicant must specify if paid leave is included in fringe benefits.

The applicant must specify fringe benefits for local employees as a separate item of cost, providing a detailed explanation/breakdown. The applicant must specify which fringe benefits for local employees are required by local law and which are applied in accordance with the applicant's compensation policy.

In the budget narrative, applicants must provide details to explain the purpose of any domestic and international travel, the number of trips, the origin and destination, the number of individuals traveling, and the duration of the trips. When appropriate, applicants should provide supporting documentation as an attachment, such as company travel policy.

The budget narrative must include the purpose of the equipment and supplies and the basis for the estimates. The 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.

Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407: Inclusion of an item of cost in the detailed application budget does not satisfy 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 in the budget narrative. See [2 CFR 200.407](#) for information regarding which cost elements require prior written approval.

#### *Annex 5. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement*

Applications must include a copy of the organization's U.S. Government NICRA and the associated disclosed practices for the prime awardee and all sub-awardees, as applicable. If the NICRA was issued by an Agency other than USAID, applicants must 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. Please see [ADS Chapter 303.3.21](#) and [USAID's Indirect Cost Rate Guide for Non-Profit Organizations](#) for additional information.

#### *Annex 6. SF-424 Forms*

The applicant must sign and submit the cost application using the SF-424 series. Standard Forms can be accessed electronically at <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.

#### *Annex 7. TOC Diagram and TOC Narrative/ Complementary Documentation (maximum 5 pages)*

A TOC is the conceptual foundation of the RFSA design. Before designing interventions, the applicant must develop a TOC that maps out the hypothesized series of changes expected to occur within a specific target population in a given context as the result of specific interventions. BHA requires a TOC diagram accompanied by complementary TOC documentation submitted with application.

Applicants should not include additional or revised goals, purposes, or sub-purposes. Applicants should expand the existing TOC detailed on pages 8-16 to include activities, outputs, outcomes, assumptions, and rationales. The complementary information in narrative or table format clarifies assumptions, contributions of other activities (outside the proposed activity), evidence and rationales that explain the pathways to achieve sustainability of outcomes, and associated risks that may not be readily apparent in the TOC diagram. The TOC must be developed based on independently confirmed evidence and not strictly based on project reports. A few common research repositories include [3ie Impact Evaluation Repository](#) and [J-PAL's library of randomized evaluations](#). Papers published in peer-reviewed journals could also be used as sources. For more information, please see the [BHA's Policy and Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for RFSAs V2.0](#) and [TOPS' TOC Curriculum](#). As described in the Programming Principles section, applicants are encouraged to prioritize a limited number of pathways that are most relevant to achieving the activity goal. The TOC is the basis for developing the LogFrame (see Annex 10). The TOC will be modified throughout the activity, reviewed annually, and updated whenever there is new evidence or when there are changes in the context that affect assumptions or hypothesized pathways of change.

*Annex 8. Gender Analysis Summary (maximum 5 pages)*

Consistent with [USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy \(USAID 2020\)](#), RFSAs are required to complete a gender analysis within the first year to inform design and strengthen programming. The gender analysis is separate from any operational-level research applicants wish to propose as part of the R&I period. Operational research does not supplant the gender analysis requirement. Applicants should refer to [ADS 205: Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle](#).

At the application stage, BHA expects applicants to integrate gender throughout each section of the Activity Design. Integration of gender-informed and responsive approaches must be context appropriate and reflected throughout the RFSAs application. Female empowerment—promoting women and girls' self-determination—and transforming gender relations for the better are equally vital for attaining equitable FNES that will be sustained over time. Applicants are strongly encouraged to take into consideration the interplay of gender and other social dimensions such as age, ethnicity, origin, and social cohesion that play a role in determining both opportunities and constraints for women, men, girls, and boys throughout their life cycle. Applicants are also encouraged to consider how proposed interventions could affect women and girls' time use, autonomy, safety, or authority, and how the applicant will take this into account in planning interventions. Applicants are encouraged to consider how they will achieve equitable participation, availability, and access to all program resources.

In addition to incorporating gender throughout the activity design, applicants are required to submit a separate gender analysis summary as part of the application. Applicants will not be restricted to the specific details discussed in the summary should the application be funded, but it must be evident from the summary that the applicant has:

- An understanding of what a gender analysis entails within the context of a BHA activity.
- The capacity to carry out the gender analysis.
- The intention to incorporate the analysis findings into the TOC as appropriate, and a practical means to do so.

The summary should identify the team that will conduct the gender analysis, discuss the tools they will use for data collection, provide an estimated budget, and identify the process for incorporating analysis findings into the TOC and implementation plan. In the summary, the applicant will include illustrative examples (three or four) of specific gender norms or dynamics that could facilitate or impede progress towards results within the TOC framework. Applicants should provide examples of information to be collected that will help to clarify the issues identified. The summary should also include a detailed outline of how the applicant plans to engage women and girls in activities that result in lasting outcomes, and how the applicant plans to track and monitor outcomes and impacts of equitable participation. Additionally, the summary should indicate how applicants will monitor the effects of interventions on exacerbating protection risks such as GBV at the household and community levels. Applicants should summarize the steps the activity will take to prevent or mitigate the occurrence of GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse (refer to the [USAID PSEA Policy](#)). The applicant should detail how they will 1) track interventions over time to ascertain any unintended consequences related to gender and GBV, 2) close feedback loops and respond to feedback received from the community, and 3) address GBV issues linked to interventions.

*Annex 9. Environmental Safeguards Plan (maximum 4 pages)*

Identifying, considering, and addressing environmental and climate risks as an integral part of program design and implementation has multiple benefits and provides the potential to significantly impact community resilience, biodiversity, and FNES. The goals of BHA's environmental and climate procedures are to:

- Make USAID's work more climate resilient by:
  - Anticipating, preparing for, and adapting to changing climate conditions.
  - Withstanding, responding to, and recovering from disruptions.
- Avoid maladaptation such as development efforts that inadvertently increase vulnerability of social groups, particularly those who are marginalized, to shocks and stressors.

In accordance with USAID's [Environmental Procedures \(22 CFR 216\)](#) and [Climate Risk Management \(ADS 201mal\)](#) guidance, BHA programming must properly consider and minimize the potential for environmental impact and susceptibility to climate risks. For this RFA, applicants are encouraged to build on existing work and/or scale up proven approaches and solutions to address environmental and climate risks that are locally-led, inclusive, and participatory. Applicants may also propose new, innovative approaches for environmental and climate risk reduction that address underlying inequities affecting vulnerable communities. Inclusion of diverse stakeholders, particularly those that are marginalized and/or have historically been underrepresented in decision-making processes, in program design and the environmental and climate assessment processes is key to equitable and sustainable project outcomes.

The Environmental Safeguards Plan must thus summarize:

- How strategies to reduce both environmental impacts of the activity and climate risks to the activity have been integrated into activity design, including management of packaging waste from commodity distribution;
- How funds for environmental and climate risk management have been allocated in the detailed/comprehensive budgets and described in the budget narrative;
- How staffing for oversight of environmental compliance requirements will be carried out over the life of the activity; and



- How outcomes of the Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) will inform performance as monitored through the Logical Framework and Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) in M&E systems.

A wealth of analysis and guidance on climate change, environmental degradation, and environmental performance practices is available to inform the development of RFSAs. At minimum, BHA applicants should refer to the [FY23 BHA RFA-IEE](#) for direction on environmental compliance and climate risk management procedures for both pre-award (i.e., Environmental Safeguards Plan) and post-award [e.g., Supplemental IEE, Climate Risk Management screening, Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plans (PERSUAPs), Environmental Status Reports] requirements. The RFA-IEE is a mandatory reference for environmental compliance and climate risk management of RFSAs.

Successful applicants will be required to ensure they have sufficient capacity to address the conditions outlined in the RFA-IEE. USAID encourages new applicants to understand the full suite of responsibilities upon award and carefully review and assess the various conditions of the RFA-IEE.

One of the requirements described in the RFA-IEE will be to conduct a Supplemental IEE drawing from the RFA-level IEE, with the objective of providing a deeper understanding of current environmental impact and degradation issues at the country, regional/watershed, community, and household levels, as well as the environmental threats and opportunities in the project's operating context. An element of the Supplemental IEE will be a climate risk management screening in accordance with ADS 201mal. These analyses are only required for successful applicants.

#### *Annex 10. Logical Framework and M&E Plan*

##### (a) Logical Framework

All applicants must submit a brief LogFrame in their application and a detailed LogFrame matrix as an annex. The LogFrame should include at least one indicator for each result and may include qualitative inquiries (i.e., qualitative monitoring or qualitative studies), if relevant at the application stage. The indicators to monitor and evaluate the performance of the RFSAs should derive from the list of required (R) and required if applicable (RiA) performance indicators for RFSAs outlined in the [BHA Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for Resilience Food Security Activities V2.0](#). For the application, only outcome indicators are required for the LogFrame. However, if an applicant chooses to include output indicators, the use of BHA output indicators is preferred. For target setting, applicants are only required to establish targets for higher level impacts - usually key baseline indicators. All LOA targets should be ambitious yet achievable and indicate the type of survey (i.e., randomized control trial, population based) and activity objectives. Note: BHA does not require applicants to submit an IPTT as part of their application. Additionally, BHA will require the full logframe post award. Successful applicants develop these tools during and after the M&E workshop. The M&E workshop typically takes place within two months after the inception workshop.

For more information on the LogFrame, see [BHA Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for Resilience Food Security Activities V2.0](#).

##### (b) M&E Plan (maximum 5 pages)

Applicants must submit an abridged M&E plan that describes the applicant's planned M&E approach. Building upon the TOC and LogFrame, the M&E plan must illustrate the applicant's approach to:

- Monitoring interventions, outcomes, and resilience.
- Staffing M&E personnel (with M&E staff included in the organizational chart - see “Management and Staffing” section on page 39).
- Strengthening M&E capacity of activity monitoring staff.
- Engaging with the BHA-managed external evaluation, potential mid-term evaluation partner, and BHA third party monitors.

The M&E plan should also include a short summary budget that includes staffing, monitoring, data quality assurance, and the database that will be used during M&E activities. The M&E Plan not only demonstrates to BHA that an applicant or partner has a rigorous system for monitoring and evaluating activity performance that produces accurate, meaningful, and useful data for decision making but is also incorporating participant feedback throughout the activity.

The guidance for the required elements related to the M&E plan can be found in the [USAID BHA Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for Resilience Food Security Activities v2.0](#). Applicants should note that BHA will require quarterly programmatic reporting under these awards.

BHA strongly encourages applicants to develop a database that will allow the activity to identify each participant and link the participant to the household. BHA requests that the applicant use cost-effective and existing open source or widely available platforms (such as Google or Microsoft) to develop such a database. BHA will not approve developing a database/management information system (MIS) using proprietary codes.

The M&E plan should illustrate the following:

***(1) Monitoring Strategy***

A Monitoring Strategy must be submitted with the application as part of the M&E Plan. This should include a broad description of monitoring processes, such as how the awardee will establish the base values and targets. The Monitoring Strategy should also include how the awardee will collect, transfer, store, manage, safeguard, and use data. The Monitoring Strategy should also include a description of the feedback mechanism structure and how the activity will collect, monitor, and address feedback in a timely manner. This should also include how participant feedback will be incorporated and inform the activity throughout implementation. The plan should articulate 1) how the activity will use quantitative and qualitative performance monitoring data to track the activity’s performance and 2) how it will use secondary data or information to monitor conditions external to the activity such as environmental, security, and cultural factors that may affect implementation. It should also describe how an activity will monitor the implementation of the sustainability plan. Post-award, awardees will update the Monitoring Strategy.

***(2) Evaluation Plan***

Evaluation plays an important role in fulfilling BHA’s obligation to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources and as a tool for both accountability and learning. The purpose of evaluations is to ensure accountability to stakeholders and to improve design and implementation, and thus inform BHA policy and guidance. Evaluations provide opportunities to review both planned and unplanned results and to reexamine activity design.

All activities awarded under this RFA will require an evaluation. BHA intends to conduct an external impact evaluation (IE) using an experimental [e.g., randomized control trial (RCT) or quasi-experimental design]. If BHA determines that an IE is not feasible, a performance evaluation may be conducted. BHA will contract and manage a third-party firm to conduct the evaluation. BHA intends to conduct a cost analysis as part of any IE, consistent with USAID policy. Regardless of the evaluation design, the successful applicant agrees to transparently share costing data with the evaluation team. In certain circumstances, a partner may be asked to revise its budget and plan for an internal evaluation.

The evaluation plan is an overview of the anticipated evaluations, including timing and anticipated engagement with the external evaluation team on the design and management of all the evaluative efforts (baseline study, midterm evaluation, and interim/final evaluation, as applicable). It should demonstrate the applicant's willingness to participate in and collaborate with BHA and the external evaluation team in the process of designing and implementing an evaluation.

If BHA chooses to do an IE, this engagement will include identifying evaluation/research questions of interest, selecting target communities and/or intervention package treatment arms, and making adjustments to project implementation plans to support an IE. Should BHA decide to design a RCT, the research firm will randomly select the treatment and control groups and the successful applicant will commit to:

- Selecting the communities and eligibility criteria within which the randomized selection occurs.
- Providing a list of approximately twice as many communities as those in which the awardee intends to work. This will facilitate the randomization of people into treatment (RFSA participants) and control/comparison groups (non-RFSA participants).
- Restricting the implementation of any individual, household, and/or community level interventions in the 'ring-fenced' control communities, for the duration of the study.

### ***(3) M&E Staffing and Budget***

BHA requires applicants to submit a detailed description of M&E staffing and a basic plan for M&E training for those who will participate in data collection, analysis, or use.

Applicants will also be required to submit an itemized budget for M&E, which should include as appropriate: key monitoring staff, data collection, MIS development and management, feedback mechanism, logistics, key partner-led evaluations, software, hardware, supplies, capacity building, and any other costs related to M&E. Studies or formative research to be conducted as part of R&I should not be included in the M&E section of the budget. The M&E budget also should not include costs for baseline, final, or interim evaluations unless partner-led. BHA expects that applicants will allocate 3%–5% of the total LOA value to the M&E budget.

For more information on the M&E Plan, see [BHA Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for Resilience Food Security Activities V2.0](#).

#### **(4) Expected Performance Indicators**

BHA required and required-if-applicable indicators for RFSAs are not specified in this RFA but will be derived from the [RFSA Indicator Handbooks I and II](#). If an applicant opts not to include a RiA indicator that is applicable to the proposed intervention, the applicant must include a justification for its omission. Applicants may refer to the Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS) template and the Qualitative Inquiry Planning Sheet (QUIPS) template in the Annex V of the [BHA Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for Resilience Food Security Activities V2.0](#) for additional information.

Please note: The USAID [gender](#) and [youth](#) policies require all USAID activities to collect appropriate sex and youth disaggregates, as described in the PIRS for each indicator. All proposed indicators should be necessary and sufficient to demonstrate results along TOC pathways and inform decision making. Additional indicators may include:

- Mission indicators: Post-award, BHA will inform the partner about required Mission indicators and provide the partner with the associated PIRS. BHA does not expect applicants to include Mission indicators at the application stage.
- Custom indicators: Applicants are encouraged to create custom indicators to measure key activity Outputs, Outcomes, and context for which there are no corresponding BHA or Mission indicators. Useful indicators that may be adopted or adapted for use as custom indicators might be found among other U.S. Government standard indicators (e.g., the [USAID Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index](#)) or indicators defined by others (e.g., the UN or other donors or professional organizations).
- Context indicators: Context indicators measure factors in the activity context that are not expected to be influenced by the activity but may affect activity outcomes. These factors may be identified as LogFrame assumptions and are not included in the IPTT (which will be developed post award). Context monitoring can be done through secondary data and reports, using qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions, and surveys.

Please refer to the [Technical Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting for Resilience Food Security Activities](#) for more information.

#### *Annex 11. Plan for CLA (maximum 5 pages)*

Applicants must develop a CLA plan that identifies how the activity will ensure robust cycles of learning, both during the initial refinement period as well as throughout the life of the award. The plan must articulate known evidence gaps and anticipated lines of inquiry and link these to improved activity design, strengthened implementation planning and quality, and better preparedness and responsiveness to local context. The CLA plan must elaborate on management approaches to support collaboration, learning, and adaptive management.

Applicants must describe specific approaches, practices, and planning that will enable the activity to:

- Coordinate, collaborate, and consult with key stakeholders, which may include communities, local government, civil society, other Mission and donor funded projects, private sector actors, and local researchers and academics.

- Systematically identify, prioritize, and fill known and emerging knowledge gaps, including ongoing efforts to understand and assess context, community needs and capacities, unintended consequences, and possible new approaches and interventions.
- Manage adaptively, including capturing, analyzing, sharing, and applying results, new evidence, lessons learned, reflections, and promising practices.
- Anticipate and plan for potential changes in context and integrate scenario planning into the activity's ongoing learning.
- Operationalize learning in annual work planning.

In addition, the CLA plan should contain a consolidated plan for the refinement period, including a clear learning agenda and timetable of key milestones during the refinement period.

*Annex 12. Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan*

Applicants must examine any potential risk related to local market factors, criminal activities, fraud, corruption, and/or mismanagement. Applicants must complete a risk assessment as it relates to the proposed modalities and physical security of participants. The risk assessment should also include relevant risk mitigation measures. This assessment must demonstrate that due consideration has been given to prioritizing the security and protection of all participants.

A sample risk matrix from The Remote Cash Project can be found on the [CALP website](#). Additionally, the USAID Office of Inspector General has a [fraud prevention and compliance guide](#). Please refer to the [USAID BHA Emergency Application Guidelines \(EAG\) Common Requirements: Risk Assessment and Management Plan](#).

*Annex 13. Intervention Area Maps*

Applicants must submit a list or map clearly identifying targeted geographic areas, either as part of the technical narrative or as a separate annex. Maps must show any proposed areas of implementation at the territory and health zone levels.

*Annex 14. Organizational Chart*

The organizational chart includes the structure of the prime and sub-awardees, as applicable. If possible, it should include locations, supervisory hierarchies, and relationships between all organizations.

*Annex 15. Curricula Vitae (CVs) of Key Personnel*

The application must include CVs of the individuals proposed for the seven key personnel positions: the COP, GYSI Lead, M&E Lead, SLA, Commodities Manager, Purpose One Lead, and Purpose Two Lead. BHA requires applicants to base all of these key personnel in the province where the activity will be implemented.

*Annex 16. Letters of Commitment*

BHA encourages letters of commitment from consortium partners and staff, if applicable.

*Annex 17. Glossary and Acronyms*

Please include a glossary of any application-specific terms and acronyms with definitions, as needed.

*Annex 18. Participant Financial Analysis (maximum 12 pages)*

BHA requires applicants to outline the financial impact of on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm livelihood interventions, where the primary purpose is to increase income. BHA requires the Participant Financial Analysis (PFA) - Initial Financial Analysis to identify, in a simplified manner, how each proposed livelihood intervention is expected to increase participants' incomes. BHA will require a more detailed PFA from awardees during the Refinement Phase (referred to as PFA - Refined Financial Analysis).

BHA requires the PFA - Initial Financial Analysis is required at the application stage. Applicants should complete it from the perspective of the typical RFSA farmer (for on-farm livelihoods) and worker or entrepreneur (for off- or non-farm livelihoods). The minimum requirements are outlined below. There are two levels of requirements: livelihood interventions that applicants definitely plan to support, and those that are tentative. For interventions that are definitely planned, applicants must include those livelihood strategies that will be implemented in the first year of programming. Tentatively planned livelihood interventions require additional research during the refinement period or beyond before making a final decision. This analysis should be a maximum of two (2) pages per definite livelihood intervention and a maximum of one (1) page per tentative livelihood intervention, not to exceed a total of 12 pages. It is the applicant's decision which of the specific livelihood interventions in the application are definite versus tentative; the different requirements are below.

The PFA - Initial Financial Analysis must consider the following three key components: initial investment, net income, and risks. Please justify all assumptions wherever possible, including links to source material, if available. The minimum requirements are outlined below, and a [guidance document](#) is available should applicants need further information to complete this analysis.

Table 4: Participant Financial Analysis

Components	Definitely-Planned Livelihood Interventions	Tentative Livelihood Interventions
Initial Investment	<p>For each:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What materials, equipment, time (including unpaid time), or other initial investments are necessary for the farmer or entrepreneur to start (or continue) participating in this livelihood?</li> <li>2. What materials, equipment, or initial investments will be covered by the activity (cash, in-kind, etc.) and what will need to be provided by the participant?</li> <li>3. Why does the applicant believe the participant will be able to afford the costs detailed in number two (2) (whether obtained through cash or credit)?</li> </ol>	<p>For each:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the estimated needs for start-up (materials, equipment, time, etc.)?</li> <li>2. Why does the applicant believe this initial investment will yield additional profits that</li> </ol>

Components	Definitely-Planned Livelihood Interventions	Tentative Livelihood Interventions
	4. Why does the applicant believe this initial investment will yield additional profits that exceed the initial investment over time?	exceed the initial investment over time?
Net Income	<p>For each: How is net income (revenues minus costs) expected to change <i>compared to current practices</i>? This section should explain the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase in revenues (e.g., through increased production, increased quality, new markets, value-added processing, etc.)</li> <li>2. Changes to operating costs (e.g., through reduced losses, bulk purchasing, increased or decreased labor, etc.)</li> </ol> <p>Include numerical figures and percentages. To the extent available, provide an explanation for the assumptions, and note the time period implicated.</p> <p>There is no specific template required; applicants may use a tool such as BHA’s <a href="#">Simple Profitability Tool</a> or another tool.</p>	<p>For each: Provide a brief narrative as to why this is a promising livelihood strategy and why revenues are expected to exceed costs. Specific numerical figures are not required.</p>
Risks	<p>For each: What are the major risks to the success of promoting this livelihood. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shocks</li> <li>● Pests</li> <li>● Weather or environmental trends</li> <li>● The ability to maintain equipment or other risks to the sustainability of investments or livelihoods</li> <li>● The Availability of inputs</li> <li>● Demand</li> <li>● Prices)</li> </ul> <p>Applicants do not need to identify every possible risk or describe how the activity might mitigate these. Applicants should only characterize the major risks specific to each livelihood.</p>	<p>For each: What are the major risks specific to this livelihood?</p>

*Annex 19. Sustainability Plan*

BHA requires applicants to submit a Sustainability Plan as part of the application. BHA expects applicants to think about sustainability and transitioning to local communities and actors throughout the life of the award. Applicants should not wait until the end of the award to begin stepping back into a more indirect

implementation role. Applicants should evaluate what activities can be transitioned to local actors and when it makes the most sense to do so.

A well-conceived sustainability plan reflects the TOC, and describes, based on realistic assumptions, the resources, technical and managerial capacities, motivation, and linkages that will sustain activity outcomes and/or interventions after the activity ends. As necessary and sufficient to achieve overall outcomes, the applicant should provide a detailed plan for transitioning each activity or input from direct delivery to local actors. Applicants will include a table or chart, similar to Table 5, which includes:

- Column A: A list of key outcomes (i.e., practices, infrastructures, access to inputs) to be sustained. Applicants are not required to list separate indicators specific to the sustainability plan and should align key outcomes with those indicators provided in the LogFrame (Annex 10).
- Column B: A list of services, management systems, and input provisioning that must continue beyond the life of the activity in order to sustain the outcomes
- Column C: A brief description of the proposed sustainability approach for each outcome that describes:
  - Community and public- and private-sector engagement needed for each outcome to be sustained
  - Sources of motivation for the service providers/community groups/public or private sector actors
  - Necessary resources for continued service delivery, and how relevant parties will ensure their availability post-award
  - Sources of continued capacity strengthening and knowledge acquisition
  - Linkages for how inputs will be available and accessible to the target communities
  - If construction activities are proposed, describe who will be responsible for infrastructure operations, maintenance, and management including how the infrastructure will be maintained, what sources and types of resources are necessary to operate and maintain the infrastructure and, if users will be charged a fee, how the fee will be calculated.
- Column D: Brief description of when the sustainability approaches will be implemented
  - When the RFSA will identify the service and input providers
  - When the RFSA will develop business plans for these local service providers, if applicable
- Column E: Risks or potential obstacles for those interventions that will continue post award



Table 5: Illustrative Sustained Outcomes

A	B	C	D	E
List of outcomes that need to be sustained	For each outcome, identify the necessary services and inputs to be available and accessible to communities	Brief description of the proposed sustainability approach - how these services and inputs will be made available and accessible to communities	Brief description of when the proposed sustainability approaches will take place	For each input/service describe potential risks or obstacles

*Annex 20. Code of Conduct*

BHA requires organizations receiving funds to adopt a Code of Conduct providing for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian activities. Among BHA’s primary programming concerns is that participants are adequately protected from sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian programs. BHA is equally concerned with discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse perpetrated against aid workers. The [USAID Agency PSEA Policy](#) outlines further Agency-wide commitments.

Applicants must submit a copy of the organization’s Code of Conduct, ideally with a dedicated section on PSEA or PSEA Policy, as an annex. Additionally, sub-awardees receiving BHA funds must adopt a Code of Conduct. Awardees will be responsible for ensuring that sub-awardees have a Code of Conduct.

The applicant’s Code of Conduct must be consistent with [Inter-Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\) Task Force on PSEA in Humanitarian Crises](#), which includes the following core principles:

- Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are grounds for termination of employment.
- Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behavior is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to participants.

- Any sexual relationship between those providing humanitarian assistance and protection and a person benefiting from such humanitarian assistance and protection that involves improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
- Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same aid agency or not, s/he/they must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
- Humanitarian workers must create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of the Code of Conduct. Managers at all levels have a responsibility to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.

If the Code of Conduct is in a language other than English, applicants must submit an accompanying summary in English.

Applicants are not required to submit copies of the Code of Conduct for any planned sub-awardees. However, applicants should be aware that award agreements will require that sub-awardees have adopted a Code of Conduct consistent with the [IASC Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises](#).

BHA encourages applicants to consider budgeting for PSEA costs to ensure systematic implementation across the organization. Applicants must have pre-existing PSEA protocols in place as part of their organizational costs.

For more information on PSEA, and sample codes of conduct see the following resources:

- [IASC PSEA Six Core Principles](#)
- [InterAction Toolkit and Course Materials on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#)
- [IASC Results Group 2 on Accountability and Inclusion](#)

*Annex 21. Code of Conduct Implementation Details (maximum 1 page)*

Applicants must also submit implementation details for the Code of Conduct that are specific to the DRC. Applicants should submit these details as an annex, not to exceed one page, describing:

- How the organization trains or makes employees aware of the Code of Conduct.
- How the organization makes participants aware of the Code of Conduct and mechanisms to report any violations.
- The systems that are in place to prevent, detect, and respond to allegations and instances of sexual exploitation and abuse, and who in the country is responsible for ensuring an appropriate and accountable response.
- How these systems are safe, accessible, confidential, and survivor-centered.

*Annex 22. Accountability to Affected Populations (maximum 2 pages)*

BHA requires applicants to place affected communities, especially the most vulnerable individuals, at the center of the RFSA. It is critical to ensure that applicants design activities and approaches to reach and include the voices of the most vulnerable groups, considering gender, age, ethnicity, language, and other factors of exclusion. Applicants are encouraged to refer to the [IASC Four Commitments to](#)

[AAP](#) as well as the [Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability](#). BHA will require evidence that applicants are addressing AAP throughout the program cycle by submitting an AAP plan that is specific and contextualized to the interventions included in the Technical Approach.

The AAP plan should not exceed two pages, and describe how the:

- Targeted population, including marginalized or vulnerable groups, will participate in and play an active role in decisions related to the activity design and implementation.
- Applicant's feedback mechanism is organized (describe all proactive and reactive communication channels).
- Applicant will ensure that feedback and information mechanisms are safe, accessible, and the preferred mechanism for participants, especially marginalized or vulnerable populations.
- Organization's feedback mechanism will collect, monitor, address in a timely manner, and incorporate participant feedback throughout the activity and be integrated into performance monitoring, with specific plans to share monitoring results with participants.
- Feedback is categorized and how applicants will ensure confidentiality and respond to any critical or sensitive program irregularity or protection issues that arise.
- Feedback mechanism functionality is tested.
- Feedback is referred (when appropriate) as well as the standard operating procedure to close the feedback loop.
- Organization's feedback mechanism feeds into a governmental collective accountability mechanism if applicable.

*Annex 23. Personnel Compensation Policy*

BHA requires all prime applicants to provide written policies on personnel compensation. Applicants are not required to submit personnel compensation policies for proposed sub-recipients, but are expected to ensure sub-recipient policies are sufficient to comply with the terms and conditions of the award.

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## Section E - Application Review Information

### 1. Review and Selection Process

Consistent with the requirements set forth in the FFP Act, BHA shall determine whether to accept an application no later than 120 days after receipt of a complete application (subject to availability of funds). BHA is committed to meeting this mandate. However, its ability to do so depends upon the quality of applications and their responsiveness to the standards and requirements set forth in this RFA.

Once an application is deemed complete, BHA will review it based on the evaluation criteria and BHA policies. Following its review of a complete application, BHA may accept the application, deny the application, or withhold a decision on whether to accept or deny the application pending resolution of outstanding issues. BHA may send issues letters to applicants with an opportunity to revise applications.

### 2. Criteria

The merit review criteria prescribed here are tailored to the requirements of this particular RFA.

USAID will conduct a merit review of all received applications that comply with the instructions in this RFA. A Selection Committee will score the technical application in accordance with the criteria shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Possible Points
<b>a) Activity Design</b>	<b>75</b>
<i>Context Analysis, Targeting, and Conceptual Framework</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Appropriate Design of Interventions</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Community and Public- and Private-Sector Engagement</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Sustainability</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Gender, Youth, and Social Inclusion</i>	<i>10</i>
<b>b) Operations, Management, and Staffing</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>Logistics and Operations</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Management and Staffing</i>	<i>15</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **a) Activity Design (75 points)**

Seventy-five (75) points are dedicated to activity design and specifically dedicated to five subcategories as essential elements of a strong activity design: Context Analysis, Targeting, and Conceptual Framework (15 points); Appropriate Design of Interventions (30); Community and Public- and Private-Sector Engagement (10 points); Sustainability (10 points); and Gender, Youth and Social Inclusion (10 points). Additional information regarding these subcategories is set forth below.

*(1) Context Analysis, Targeting, and Conceptual Framework (15 points)*

The context analysis must demonstrate a deep understanding of the social, political, economic, climate, and cultural landscape; opportunities, strengths, and needs of the targeted participants and communities; and the constraints they face relating to FNES. The context analysis is data-driven and specific to the proposed territory and/or health zones and goes beyond providing generic, high-level contextual information that is widely known and not specific to the geography, participants, and activities being proposed. If only national or provincial level data and evidence are available, the applicant must explain why the data can be generalized to the sub-national level.

Applications will include a description of relevant markets and demonstrate a complete and clear understanding of the local systems, including host government institutions and extension services, that influence communities' abilities to sustainably engage in FNES solutions. Applicants proposing infrastructure activities have included a description of the status of relevant, existing infrastructure and associated governance structures.

Applications will include targeting strategies that reflect information in the context analysis and that meaningfully align with the conceptual framework. These should include wider targeting strategies for those challenges at the community level and more specific demographic targeting strategies for those interventions providing material resources. Specifically, the targeting strategy should detail how extremely poor households facing chronic food and nutrition insecurity will be selected. The targeting strategy should also clearly explain how the proposed program will provide these households with a comprehensive, cross-purpose set of interventions.

The conceptual framework will demonstrate the linkages between the underlying causes and influencing factors of food, nutrition, and economic insecurity specific to the target area and reflecting guidance on the conceptual approach on page 30. The conceptual framework includes a preliminary TOC with all required elements and that provides clear, logical steps showing how the proposed set of interventions and interactions will produce all the necessary and sufficient outcomes/conditions to achieve the stated goal based on evidence and plausible reasoning. The TOC demonstrates prioritization of the pathways that are most relevant to achieving sustainable FNES among the targeted populations, and provides evidence and rationales to support this. Interventions outlined in the conceptual framework are supported with a clear evidence base, clear description of why they have been chosen, and how they will be implemented.

*(2) Appropriate Design of Interventions (30 points)*

USAID will evaluate applications on the appropriateness of interventions to reach the goal, purposes, and sub-purposes outlined on page 8, and the extent to which applications effectively incorporate the cross-cutting themes into the design of the proposed interventions. Applications should propose evidence-based approaches that will contribute to sustainable FNES in the target areas. Applicants should prioritize approaches that will move highly vulnerable households on a path towards sustainable change.

Food, nutrition, and economic insecurity are multi-dimensional challenges and addressing these in a holistic manner requires that interventions under each purpose reinforce outcomes in the other. USAID will evaluate applications on the extent to which the proposed activities are integrated across purposes and meet the needs of the same participant population.

Proposed approaches must address participants' ability to attain sustainable, reliable, and sufficient livelihoods. USAID expects applicants to propose market-based approaches and those that build on existing institutions and local capacities. While the potential to improve livelihoods is an essential component of any successful application, USAID will evaluate applications based on how well they demonstrate that improvements in livelihoods and incomes will contribute to improved FNES. Similarly, successful applications will demonstrate how activities that promote financial inclusion and the utilization of capital not only increase profits but also improve FNES.

Agricultural production activities must incorporate climate adaptation strategies, promote sustainable production, and address the myriad factors that contribute to low agricultural production. Successful applications will clearly articulate how improved agricultural production will contribute to FNES, whether through direct consumption or the use of income to support food and nutrition needs.

For applications that include infrastructure activities, USAID will evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed infrastructure in supporting overall project goals and the potential sustainability of the proposed governance approach.

USAID will evaluate the extent to which applicants propose contextually appropriate nutrition and WASH interventions that address barriers to the adoption of appropriate behaviors; improve availability of safe, diverse, and NRF; and increase access to sustainable WASH infrastructure.

Successful applications will clearly indicate how the cross-cutting themes are integrated throughout the activity design. Applications will have a clear strategy for strengthening absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities that demonstrates how this will contribute to anticipating and reducing risks.

USAID will evaluate the depth, duration, and appropriateness of the capacity building and mentoring support applicants will provide to local community groups throughout the duration of the award. Applications must go beyond just providing initial training and demonstrate how the project will ensure governance structures are functional and self-sustaining prior to the end of award. USAID will also evaluate applicants' approaches to engaging participants fully in the design, implementation, and monitoring of activities.

Applications will include a clear discussion of how partners have factored ever-changing climatic conditions into the activity design and implementation, how these have informed adaptation efforts, and how the project will ensure not to cause additional harm as a result of implementation.

### *(3) Community and Public- and Private-Sector Engagement (10 points)*

USAID will evaluate applications on the extent to which local capacity is engaged and built in all areas of the proposed RFSA. Successful applications will demonstrate a context-appropriate commitment to meaningful community engagement. USAID will also evaluate the appropriateness of proposed public- and private-sector engagement in meeting the sub-purposes, purposes, and goal outlined on page 8. Appropriate strategies will include meaningful engagement that increases over the life of the award. Proposed actors and their specific roles should be clearly explained, including why they were selected and how they will contribute to the long-term sustainability of outcomes and relevant interventions.

#### *(4) Sustainability (10 points)*

Successful applications will demonstrate how they factor sustainability into the initial design and throughout the implementation of the award. USAID will evaluate the extent to which applications integrate sustainability considerations throughout the application, and not just in the sustainability plan. Well-conceived sustainability strategies describe, based on realistic assumptions, the motivation, resources, capacities, and linkages needed to sustain FNES outcomes and appropriate interventions after the activity ends. Sustainability strategies will demonstrate how the activity will support long-term and self-perpetuating change and continued FNES for the targeted populations. The sustainability plan will demonstrate a clear understanding of the relevant local, regional, and national systems and will include realistic expectations for the participation of local stakeholders both during and after implementation. Successful applicants will demonstrate how interventions will be sustained by public, community, civil society, or market systems. The sustainability strategy should identify the outcomes to be sustained, critical services and systems that are necessary to sustain them, and strategies to strengthen the service delivery systems and ensure that they continue into the future. USAID will evaluate how well sustainability strategies outline the gradual transition of program interventions and services to other entities during the course of the award.

For applications with construction activities, sustainability strategies will describe appropriate and realistic plans for how operations and maintenance will be achieved after the RFSA ends.

#### *(5) Gender, Youth, and Social Inclusion (10 points)*

USAID will evaluate how well applicants integrate the cross-cutting theme of GYSI and Patterns of Power throughout the RFSA design. Applications will integrate and mainstream gender, age, **disability, sexual identity, and other** social inclusion considerations throughout the activity design, ensuring the design is responsive to these issues throughout all stages of the RFSA program cycle. Successful applications will demonstrate a context-specific understanding of the norms, roles, participation, and power dynamics within households, communities, and local systems, and how these impact FNES. Applications will also demonstrate an understanding of how the intersectionality of multiple forms of exclusion may impact needs, opportunities, and interventions. Activity designs should include a recognition of the potential impact, positive or negative, of interventions on different participants and how potential negative consequences will be avoided or mitigated.

Applications must clearly indicate how the awardee will integrate the gender analysis results into the TOC and interventions. Applications must also address how changes, including unanticipated outcomes, will be tracked over time and implementation adapted accordingly.

#### ***b) Operations, Management, and Staffing (25 points)***

##### *(1) Logistics and Operations (10 Points)*

Applicants should demonstrate a clear understanding of country-specific requirements (e.g., certifications) for proposed use(s) of Title II commodities and awareness of restrictions that may hinder operations or implementation. Successful applications will demonstrate experience managing the transportation, storage, and distribution of significant volumes of food commodities in challenging environments. Logistics and operational plans will be appropriate to the commodities proposed and provide a strong understanding of port, road, rail, warehouse (including fumigation), and transportation capacities in the DRC. In addition to Title II commodities, applicants are expected to describe how they

plan to manage RFSA operations and logistics across all aspects of RFSA implementation. Applicants should describe potential contextual impediments and outline how the RFSA will overcome these challenges. Applicants must demonstrate that activity timelines and proposed interventions are planned appropriately and reflect operational realities in the DRC.

*(2) Management and Staffing (15 Points)*

The management structure and staffing should reflect efficient use of resources; effective and adaptive management; and strong technical implementation, commodity management, and operational support. Applications include required sub-awardee information, including a clear and complete discussion of consortium management that addresses management of expatriate and local staff, lines of authority, and communication between organizations and staff. Successful applications will demonstrate how consortium partners will collaborate to ensure cohesive and coordinated knowledge sharing, planning, decision-making, and implementation across roles and organizational boundaries. Applicants should discuss how consortium partners will adapt to any major changes to the TOC that arise during the refinement period, including changes to management, staffing, and partnerships. The organizational chart and staffing plan reflect the appropriate combination of skills sufficient to implement a program of this size and complexity in challenging contexts and while achieving sustainable FNES outcomes.

### **3. Review of Cost Information**

USAID will review the cost application separately from the technical application. The review of the cost application will assess whether the level of resources is appropriate for the number of participants and the degree of change being proposed. USAID will also consider (1) the extent of the applicant's understanding of the financial aspects of the program; (2) the applicant's ability to perform the activities within the amount requested; (3) whether the applicant's plans will achieve the program objectives with reasonable economy and efficiency; and (4) whether any special conditions relating to costs should be included in the award. Aspects to be considered as part of this review include the justification for activity costs: if they are reasonable, are allowed under the cost principles and according to [BHA Functional Policy \(BHAFP\) 20-01](#), and allocable in the budget.

BHA will review the cost application in conjunction with the activity application for the purpose of cost realism analysis. Cost realism analysis is the process of independently reviewing and evaluating specific elements of the proposed costs to determine whether the proposed cost elements:

- Are realistic for the work described in the activity application.
- Reflect a clear understanding of the needs.
- Are consistent with the methods of performance and materials described in the activity application.

In addition to cost realism, BHA will conduct cost analysis by applying the following criteria to the cost application:

- Are costs allowable?
  - A cost is allowable when it: a) is necessary and reasonable for the performance of the Federal award; b) conforms to any limitations or exclusions set forth in these principles or in the Federal award as to types or amount of cost items; c) is consistent



with policies and procedures that apply uniformly to both Federally-financed and other activities of the non-Federal entity; and d) is accorded consistent treatment.

- Are costs necessary?
  - A cost is necessary for the successful operation of the award.
- Are costs allocable?
  - A cost is allocable to a particular Federal award or other cost objective if the goods or services involved are chargeable or assignable to that Federal award or cost objective in accordance with relative benefits received.
- Are costs reasonable and justified?
  - A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which a prudent person would incur under the circumstances prevailing at the time they decided to incur the cost.
- Are costs correctly allocated between ITSH, Section 202(e), and Section 202(e) Enhanced?
- Are there other donor contributions?
- Is there program income?
- Are there sufficient justifications for all costs in the budget?
- Is the procurement of restricted commodities (if any) necessary?

Cost analysis is the review and evaluation of the separate elements of cost, including profit or fee, in the application to determine:

- If the projected price is fair and reasonable based on the applicant's assumptions.
- The levels of cost sharing or in-kind contributions.
- Whether the proposed costs represent what the cost of the award should be, assuming reasonable economy and efficiency.

For further information on cost sharing and program income, refer to [2 CFR 200.306](#), Cost Sharing or Matching. Proposed cost share, if provided, will be reviewed for compliance with the standards set forth in [2 CFR 200.306](#), [2 CFR 700.10](#), and the [Standard Provision "Cost Sharing \(Matching\)" for U.S. entities](#), or the [Standard Provision "Cost Share" for Non-U.S. Entities](#).

The AO will perform a risk assessment ([2 CFR 200.206](#)). The AO may determine that a pre-award survey is required to inform the risk assessment and determine whether the prospective awardee 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 per ([2 CFR 200.208](#)).

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## **Section F - Federal Award and Administration Information**

Award of the agreement outlined in this RFA cannot be made until funds have been appropriated, allocated, and obligated. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award.

USAID may (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept applications for reasons other than cost, (c) accept more than one application, (d) accept alternate applications, and/or (e) waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.

Successful applicants will find award administration information and reporting requirements in signed award documents.

The AO is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds.

USAID may award the resulting assistance award(s) based on initial applications received, without discussions and/or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application must contain the applicant's best terms from a technical and cost standpoint. However, as part of its evaluation process, USAID may elect to discuss technical, cost, or other pre-award issues with one or more applicants. Alternatively, USAID may proceed with award selection based on its evaluation of initial applications received, use an alternative process, and/or commence negotiations solely with one applicant.

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

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## Section G - Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

### 1. RFA Point of Contact

Any questions concerning this RFA or Technical References must be submitted in writing by March 14, 2023 at 11:59 a.m. ET, to [BHA.RFA.720BHA23RFA00001@usaid.gov](mailto:BHA.RFA.720BHA23RFA00001@usaid.gov) and include "720BHA23RFA00001" in the subject line.

### 2. Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) Ombudsman

The A&A Ombudsman helps ensure equitable treatment of all parties who participate in USAID's acquisition and assistance process. The A&A Ombudsman serves as a resource for all organizations that are doing or wish to do business with USAID. Please visit this page for additional information: <https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/acquisition-assistance-ombudsman>.

The A&A Ombudsman may be contacted at [Ombudsman@usaid.gov](mailto:Ombudsman@usaid.gov).

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## Section H - Other Information

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. The AO is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. 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.

### 1. 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 purposes) should mark the cover page with the following:

“This application includes data that must not be duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. However, if 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.”

### 2. Host Country Agreement

The Host Country Agreement (HCA) establishes the terms and conditions by which an applicant will be able to conduct a Title II activity in a specific country in accordance with the applicable requirements of 22 CFR 211. As such, the applicant must enter into a written HCA with the GDRC. Organizations submitting applications to work in countries for which they do not have an HCA must make arrangements well in advance to ensure that a signed HCA is prepared prior to finalization of the award. In the management and logistics section, applicants must include information on the status of the HCA.

During the review and approval process (if selected), the applicant may submit either the HCA or the Mission Director’s determination that the proposed food security activity can be effectively implemented in compliance with 22 CFR 211. Applicants should note that the Mission Director’s determination is not a substitute for an HCA. Additionally, if requesting a Mission Director’s determination, there must first be a written decision by the Mission Director that it is, "not appropriate or feasible" for the applicant to have an agreement with the GDRC at this time. Following that determination, activities may only be implemented after the Mission Director determines that the activity can be implemented without an agreement in place for the time being. If an HCA is not in place prior to finalization of the award, BHA will include the awardee’s explanation for the delay within the award language, along with a timetable for the awardee’s HCA negotiations and anticipated receipt of a signed HCA.

### 3. Motor Vehicle Procurement Table

If the prime awardee and/or sub-awardees plan to procure any motor vehicles during the award, the applicant (i.e., the prime) must include information on why procuring the vehicle(s) is less expensive than leasing the vehicle(s). In addition, for all vehicles to be procured, the prime must include a table in the budget narrative with the following information:

- Type and number of motor vehicles
- Manufacturer/make, model, and year of motor vehicles
- Planned uses of motor vehicles
- Estimated cost of each motor vehicle
- Funding source for each motor vehicle
- Fiscal year during which each procurement is planned

The applicant must specify which organizations will use the vehicles; when and how purchases and transfers to consortium members and/or sub-awardees will occur; and a rationale for the purchase or long-term lease of all vehicles (U.S. and non-U.S.) in text accompanying the table. This information must be provided at the application stage.

The requirement to purchase or long-term lease (180 days or longer) of only U.S.-manufactured motor vehicles may be waived on a case-by-case basis when special circumstances exist and those special circumstances are supported by market research and adequate documentation. Special circumstances that merit waiving the requirement include, but are not limited to:

- The inability of U.S. manufacturers to provide a particular type of motor vehicle
- The present or projected lack of adequate service facilities and supply of spare parts for U.S.-manufactured motor vehicles in the country or region within a country where the vehicle will be used

The following is a step-by-step process (to be followed in this order) of the analysis and necessary documentation to be provided in requests to purchase a non-U.S. manufactured vehicle. For all applications:

- Describe the need and intended use for the vehicle. Identify the type of vehicle that will fulfill that need, why it is the best choice for the intended use, and if appropriate, include specifications.
- Detail the efforts made to determine if the type of vehicle is produced in the U.S.
- If the applicant has an existing motor vehicle fleet in the DRC, include supporting text regarding the history of the fleet and its procurement in the DRC.

### 4. U.S. Development Open Data Policy

The U.S. Government Open Data Policy ([ADS 579](#)) establishes the requirements governing USAID's development data lifecycle from collecting data to making it accessible. Accordingly, awardees will catalog and spatially map interventions and any construction activities at a village- and/or community-level. The purpose of this requirement is to facilitate purposeful activity monitoring, as

well as to improve the use of such data/mapping efforts for learning, planning, and adaptation of RFSAs.

USAID encourages applicants to explore the suite of emerging tools that integrate geospatial data with data collection to facilitate remote monitoring in insecure environments. Such tools enable awardees to highlight needs, progress, successes, and challenges along a spatial and linear path. Additionally, applicants should propose approaches to collect, manage, and share this data in a manner that maintains the security of participants and staff.

The following data collection and mapping standards apply to the geographic data associated with the activity, including the three types of geographic data that USAID expects awardees to provide. Applicants should ensure that they have the necessary technical resources and staffing to adhere to these standards and incorporate relevant data into M&E planning and reporting. Geographic data include:

- Activity and intervention location data
  - This refers to data that records the intervention locations and includes village-level (formal or informal) Global Positioning System coordinates for individual interventions. Personally identifiable information (i.e., that which identifies individuals in data submissions) should not be submitted.
- Thematic data
  - This applies to USAID awardees who create or acquire data sets on demographic and health indicators, land use land cover, hydrology, and transportation infrastructure using USAID funds.
- Activity-specific geographic data
  - This refers to the outputs that are produced when the USAID awardee conducts geospatial analysis while implementing an activity (e.g., geographic analysis of market access).

## 5. Restricted Goods

Applicants need approval in the initial award or prior to procurement of the following items ([ADS Chapter 303](#) and [ADS Chapter 312](#)):

- Certain agricultural commodities, including livestock and seeds
- Fertilizers
- Pesticides (e.g., for agriculture, health, construction, warehouse commodity storage) and pesticide-containing materials (e.g., pesticide-embedded grain sacks for commodity storage)
- Pharmaceuticals, both veterinary and human as defined in the [USAID Glossary of ADS Terms](#), including oral rehydration salts (ORS)
- Motor vehicles manufactured outside of the United States, including leasing longer than 180 days per year
- Used equipment
- U.S. Government-owned excess property

To facilitate award and program implementation and to reduce administrative burdens, BHA requires applicants provide additional information as described in the specific sections below. Applicants must also include budget line items and justifications.

### **a) Agricultural Commodities**

[ADS Chapter 312.3](#) outlines procedures applicable to the procurement or financing of agricultural commodities. This is not applicable to Title II in-kind commodities, but does apply to other types of agricultural commodities procured under the proposed award.

BHA applies a technical review to the procurement of agricultural commodities to ensure best practices for input quality and appropriateness. The information required for technical review and clearance of controlled agricultural commodities is below and in [Sector Requirements](#). Please note that it is not sufficient to include controlled agricultural commodities as part of the application budget. BHA requires technical review and clearance prior to procurement of livestock, seeds, seedlings, cuttings, and fertilizer.

#### *(1) Required Practices for Purchase of Livestock*

When requesting financing for livestock, applicants request must affirm that:

- The suppliers or agents providing the animals have provided, or will provide prior to purchase, at least one verifiable reference for supplying healthy and productive livestock.
- The supplying farms or their agents have provided, or will provide prior to purchase, documentation that verifies parentage, health status, and compliance with required vaccination standards.
- Applicants may not purchase livestock from areas within a country identified as having current outbreaks of [World Organization for Animal Health \(OIE\) priority diseases](#). For livestock purchased from another country, applicants must comply with procedures and regulations defined by the competent national animal health authority, usually the Chief of the National Services of Quarantine and the Director of Veterinary Services in the Ministry of Fishery and Livestock.
- Imported animals will have permanent identification that cannot be altered between inspection at purchase and arrival in the importing country. If practicable, cattle must have freeze brands on the lower leg or hot brands, where necessary, supplemented with ear tags and sheep and goats must have ear and/or tail web tattoos. The animal's identification numbers must correspond to birth and vaccination records provided at the time of purchase.

Applicants must also submit the Livestock Supplier Certification letter and its supporting documentation (available on the [BHA EAG page](#)) to the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) for clearance prior to procurement.

If possible, and especially for purchases of large numbers of animals, applicants should verify at the supplier farms that the physical conditions of animals in the herd or flock are adequate, that suppliers keep records, and that the facilities are sanitary. Awardees must transport purchased animals in a safe, humane manner in a properly ventilated vehicle to ensure that they arrive at distribution points in good physical condition without bodily injury. If traveling over long distances, there must be rest stops spaced every 8 to 12 hours to allow animals to disembark, rest, feed, and receive water. Imported livestock must arrive at border crossings or airports accompanied by required documents verifying compliance with regulations. Receiving farms and organizations must have enough training from activity technical staff and have infrastructure in place to ensure that the animals can be productive and generate the activity outcomes expected.

### *(2) Quality Requirements for Seeds, Seedlings, and Cuttings*

Seeds, seedlings, and cuttings for agricultural production require technical clearance by BHA. Awardees will be required to provide documentation (including, but not limited to, seed certificates, Seed Grower's Declaration of Quality, or other quality documentation) to the AOR, whose clearance is required prior to the procurement of seeds, seedlings, and cuttings. Awardees are advised that this process can be lengthy and should be factored into the timeline for any activity involving the distribution of seeds, seedlings, and cuttings. This documentation can be submitted with the application or post-award, but applicants are reminded of the challenges in storing seed and are expected to plan procurement and distribution timelines accordingly.

Seeds, seedlings, and cuttings are restricted goods and are therefore subject to quality requirements. Where certified seed is not available and applicants cannot obtain a Seed Grower's Declaration of Quality (e.g., for seeds procured in a seed fair), applicants assume responsibility for ensuring seed quality, and must document what quality assurance practices the project followed in lieu of certification. Even where certification is available, awardees are still responsible for ensuring quality seed and documenting their quality assurance practices accordingly. Applicants should note that National Seed Service (SENASEM) documentation may not be sufficient to meet BHA quality standards and that vendors are not permitted to issue their own certificates. Awardees may be required to provide documentation from seed suppliers and/or seed multipliers or provide supplemental information to support clearance requests. This could include, but is not limited to, inspection reports and phytosanitary certificates. Additionally, awardees may need to conduct their own seed testing or inspection before obtaining clearance from BHA. BHA may request that documentation provided by awardees clearly link test results and production lots and demonstrate an appropriate sampling methodology. For seedlings, awardees may be asked to provide information on the distances and timelines for seedling transport. See the USAID Seed Grower's Declaration of Quality available on the [BHA EAG page](#) for additional information on quality assurance practices that the project must implement. Note that there is no waiver for seed quality; applicants must either use certified seed or follow quality assurance practices.

For direct distribution of seed, applicants must make all efforts to provide certified seed. Applicants must provide strong programmatic justification for provision of anything other than certified seed through direct distribution. For procurement of seed directly or through use of a voucher, applicants must indicate the use of agricultural commodities within the application. When using cash or vouchers, applicants must explain how the applicant determined that sufficient seed of appropriate quality and variety is available. For example, the seed security conceptual framework is useful to diagnose seed security using the parameters of access, availability, and quality. Established methodologies for market and consumer-based seed demand analysis, such as the seed system security assessment, can help applicants better diagnose and plan seed interventions. When distributing cash transfers to procure agricultural inputs, applicants must include training for participants on how to ensure selection and management of quality seed. Applicants must also reiterate to participants what inputs are not appropriate for purchase with BHA funds.

### *(3) Fertilizers*

Any purchase of fertilizer, regardless of where applicants procure it, requires BHA clearance. Implementers must follow the fertilizer procurement format on the [BHA EAG page](#) and include the following details: type of fertilizer, composition, amount of fertilizer, and total cost per type for the



activity. For fertilizer type eligibility, refer to the list of fertilizers in Fertilizer Financing Guidance ([ADS Reference 312mad](#)).

For the purchase of manure, applicants must purchase it within 40 kilometers of its intended use location and ensure that a reasonable level of phytosanitary safety exists.

When BHA funds an application that includes fertilizers, a special provision is included authorizing local purchase, making the awardee responsible for compliance with the specifications in the USAID Commodity Eligibility Listing ([ADS Chapter 312](#)), to the extent there are requirements for the desired type of fertilizer.

BHA rarely finances the purchase of large quantities of fertilizer for a number of reasons, including the high cost and the challenges for vulnerable farmers to establish a sustainable and technically sound use of fertilizers after an activity ends.

#### *(4) Pesticides and Pesticide-Containing Materials*

USAID classifies pesticides or pesticide-containing or incorporated materials as restricted commodities. This includes agricultural pesticides. Pesticides or pesticide-containing products used for animal dips or spraying to control ectoparasites must adhere to the [USAID Pest Management Guidelines](#) (see Pests and Pesticides section 11.3.1.4). BHA usually does not finance the purchase, use, or distribution of pesticides and will only consider such actions in response to agricultural pest outbreaks where such products are determined to be necessary and vital for the success of the activities.

Exemption, Categorical Exclusions, and Exception in relation to pesticides: As prescribed in [22 CFR 216](#) – the Agency Environmental Regulations, the Exemption of §216.2(b)(l) and Categorical Exclusions of §216.2(c)(2) are not applicable to assistance for the procurement or use of pesticides as stipulated in section [22 CFR 216.2\(e\)](#). However, the regulation notes that there may be special circumstances that would invoke the need for an Exception to Pesticide Procedures for “Projects under emergency conditions” per [22 CFR 216.3\(b\)\(2\)\(i\)](#). The Emergency conditions that may invoke an Exception, shall be deemed to exist when it is determined by the USAID Administrator, in writing that: (a) a pest outbreak has occurred or is imminent; and (b) significant health problems (either human or animal) or significant economic problems will occur without the prompt use of the proposed pesticide; and (c) insufficient time is available before the pesticide must be used to evaluate the proposed use in accordance with the provisions of this regulation.

Any application requesting funding related to pesticides or pesticide-containing materials must follow USAID Environmental Regulations as described in the Pesticide section of [ADS 312](#) and Pesticide Procedures in [22 CFR 216.3\(b\)](#). This includes any portion of the following regardless of what entity funds the pesticide:

- Handling
- Transporting
- Use
- Procuring (including pesticides, pesticide-containing products, or equipment for applying) pesticides
- Distributing
- Managing

- Disposing, including those procured with non-BHA resources, but for which applicants plan to use BHA funds to transport, distribute, store, apply, or dispose

BHA requires that only skilled and experienced people can handle, apply, transport, distribute, store, or dispose of pesticides.

BHA also requires applicants to employ appropriate PPE and tools, including when using natural (e.g., botanical or fungal-based) pesticides (e.g., neem, garlic, pepper).

BHA strictly prohibits use of empty pesticide containers for any other purpose and encourages safe collection and retention of such materials until an authorized body can dispose of them safely.

Applicants must consult with BHA and adhere to USAID Pesticide Procedures, [22 CFR 216.3\(b\)](#), addressing all 12 points listed in [22 CFR 216.3\(b\),a-1](#). Awardees will need to incorporate pesticides within the Supplemental IEE and project-specific PERSUAP submitted post award.

In consultation with the BHA Bureau Environmental Officer, USAID may provide applicants with core environmental documentation. Examples of such documentation can be found on the [BHA RFSA](#) page. Applicants will need to demonstrate their expertise in developing site specific PERSUAPs for USAID review and clearance. Note the preparation, USAID approval, and implementation of such highly technical analyses is time consuming, and specialized pesticide experts must oversee it.

BHA does not support the use of cash or vouchers for USAID-restricted pest control commodities. When applicants distribute cash and the main intent is to support procurement of agricultural inputs, applicants must clearly state to participants that they cannot use that cash to buy pesticides.

Biological pest control agents are also considered restricted commodities, and must abide by the Pesticide Procedures in [22 CFR 216.3\(b\)](#). When proposing pest control materials such as botanical agents (e.g., neem, pepper, garlic), biological control, or non-chemical pest control tools (e.g., digging trenches, trapping), applicants must also adhere to USAID Pest Management Guidelines (see Pests and Pesticides section 11.3.1.4) and clearly describe procedures to avoid or minimize any adverse effects that the use of these materials may have on humans, domestic animals, other non-target organisms (e.g., honey bees, wildlife), or the shared environment. Applicants must always promote and encourage integrated pest management as a means to prevent and control pests and diseases.

#### *(5) Veterinary Pharmaceuticals*

Veterinary pharmaceuticals include medicines and vaccines (biologicals). Veterinary pharmaceuticals are USAID-restricted commodities and must meet certain conditions before BHA approves their purchases.

Applicants must assure BHA that any veterinary pharmaceuticals purchased with BHA funds are safe, effective, and provided by vendors who adhere to internationally accepted standards: good distribution practices, good manufacturing practices, and good storage practices. Applicants should refer to the Veterinary Pharmaceuticals and other Medical Commodities sub-sector under the Agriculture Sector in [Sector Requirements](#) for complete information and instructions. BHA has provided additional Pharmaceutical and Medical Commodities guidance and templates to help applicants address the requirements (available on the [BHA EAG page](#)). Pesticides used in dipping for livestock ectoparasite control must adhere to the USAID Pest Management Guidelines.

### *(6) Motor Vehicles*

Applications that include vehicles not manufactured in the United States must include a rationale for their purchase or long-term lease of 180 days or longer<sup>12</sup>. If the AO approves non-U.S. manufactured vehicles, they will be subject to the order of preference and file documentation requirements in paragraph (b) of the standard provision titled “USAID Eligibility Rules for Goods and Services” and a supplemental descending order of preference, as follows:

- U.S.-manufactured vehicles
- Vehicles assembled in a cooperating country or a Code 937 country using a substantial number of parts and sub-assemblies manufactured in the United States
- Vehicles manufactured in any Code 935 country by a subsidiary of a U.S. manufacturer; and
- Vehicles manufactured in a Code 935 country by other than subsidiaries of U.S. manufacturers.

See [ADS Chapter 310.3](#) for additional information.

### *(7) Covered Technologies*

Applicants must ensure that proposed costs are in compliance with [2 CFR 200.216](#), Prohibition on Certain Telecommunications and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment, and USAID policy regarding acquisition and use of "covered technologies." This includes procurement, extension, or renewal of contracts to obtain equipment (e.g., cell phones), services (e.g., local internet service providers), or systems.

### *(8) Used Equipment*

BHA does not usually finance the purchase of used equipment. BHA will only approve the purchase of used equipment if applicants can ensure that activity needs will be satisfied if:

- The material purchased is used, rebuilt, or reconditioned.
- That economic considerations justify procurement of used, rebuilt, or reconditioned equipment.
- That the price is reasonable.

If the equipment is used, the justification must explain why the applicant did not purchase rebuilt or reconditioned equipment instead. In addition, applicants must arrange for inspection and appraisal of the equipment by an inspector approved by USAID with the understanding that this cost will be eligible for reimbursement only if BHA subsequently approves financing for the used equipment.

### *(9) Prohibited Source Countries, U.S. Economic Sanctions, U.S. Export Restrictions, and Other U.S. Legal Restrictions on Providing Assistance to Foreign Countries*

Geographic Code 935 does not include countries that the U.S. Government designates as “Prohibited Sources.” Geographic codes pertain to procurement of goods and services and are described in more detail in the standard provision entitled [USAID Eligibility Rules for Goods and Services \(22 CFR 228\)](#)

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<sup>12</sup> Long-term lease means a single lease of more than 180 calendar days; or repetitive or intermittent leases under an assistance agreement within a one-year period, which cumulatively total more than 180 calendar days. A single lease may consist of a lease of one or more of the same type of vehicles within the same lease term.

and [ADS Chapter 310](#). Further information is available on [Prohibited Sources](#) and [Geographic Codes](#). Applicants cannot use funds provided under BHA awards for the procurement of commodities and services from prohibited sources without specific written approval from the AO.

Prohibited sources means countries to which assistance is prohibited by the annual appropriations acts of Congress or other statutes, or those subject to other executive branch restrictions, such as applicable sanctions administered by OFAC. USAID maintains a list of prohibited sources, available in [ADS Chapter 310](#).

Remember that U.S. executive orders and U.S. laws prohibit transactions with, and provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. It is the applicant's legal responsibility to ensure compliance with these executive orders and laws.

Moreover, the U.S. Department of Commerce administers the U.S. Export Administration Regulations found in [15 CFR 730](#), et seq. Further information about export restrictions may be found on the [Commerce Control List](#) and the [Export Administration Regulations](#) websites. It is the applicant's legal responsibility to ensure compliance with these regulations.

In accordance with [22 CFR 228.13](#), foreign government-controlled organizations (i.e., firms operated as commercial companies or other organizations or enterprises, including nonprofit organizations, in which foreign governments or their agents or agencies have a controlling interest) are not eligible to be suppliers of goods or services unless otherwise approved in advance by the AO. GDRC ministries or agencies (including those at the regional and local levels) and government educational institutions, health care providers, and other technical entities of the DRC not formed primarily for commercial or business purposes are eligible to be suppliers of commodities and services.

Some countries may be subject to legal restrictions under the [FAA](#) of 1961, as amended, or under acts appropriating funds for foreign assistance. These restrictions include those related to:

- A host country's delinquency in loan repayments [FAA Section 620(q) and Brooke Amendment]
- Military coups (FAA Section 508)
- Assistance to military, police, or prison forces (FAA Section 660)
- Severed diplomatic relations between the U.S. and the host government [FAA Section 620(t)]
- Repeated support for international terrorism [FAA Section 620(a)]
- Nuclear proliferation ([Arms Export Control Act](#), Sections 101 and 102)

This is not an exhaustive list. However, BHA has statutory "notwithstanding authority," which permits it to waive these restrictions when providing assistance.

## 6. Supply Chain Requirements

Please reference the section on Title II in-kind commodities for related requirements (page 16).

Apparently successful applicants who propose managing non-food commodities must submit a Supply Chain Requirements Annex detailing the supply chain management operations. BHA defines commodities and services as any purchased materials, services (including financial services), or equipment that directly benefit beneficiaries. The below requirements apply to all **apparently successful**

applications that include procuring, warehousing, or transporting non-food commodities or procuring services.

BHA recognizes that awardees develop documents addressing logistics and procurement plans in varying formats. BHA does not require a specific format, but submissions must include the specific elements associated with the below requirements. Apparently successful applicants must submit their organizational policies (e.g., procurement, warehousing) in full.

- The procurement plan should include:
  - Planned source and origin of procurement (international, regional, or local).
  - Timeframe when procured commodities, services, and equipment will be ready for distribution.
  - Quality control processes and concerns, including third-party inspection or other methods of quality control the organization will use to ensure the received commodities/services match the original specifications.
  - Steps the applicant will take to facilitate import and any anticipated importation issues.
- Apparently successful applicants must also provide:
  - A procurement policy that applies in the DRC and that was revised within five years prior to submitting the application. This procurement policy must include the bidding policy, basic details about vendor selection, and the process for approving any deviations from policies. If the organization intends to deviate from its standard organizational procurement practices under the proposed activity, applicants must outline the procurement policies that will apply.
  - A transport plan detailing the transportation of commodities from vendor to warehouse and distribution sites. The transport plan must include a risk mitigation statement that describes how the organization will mitigate risks such as accidents, damage, diversion, and theft of commodities. Awardees must comply with the [U.S. Government Cargo Preference Act](#) as described in [ADS 315](#). Awardees will be required to contact the Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance, Transportation Division (M/OAA/T) prior to contracting for ocean transportation to ship BHA-funded commodities. M/OAA/T will determine the flag and class of vessel to use for shipment.
- If apparently successful applicants plan to store commodities to support BHA-funded activities, the applicant must:
  - Submit a storage plan (number of warehouses and storage space required) detailing the adequacy and capacity of storage facilities.
  - Demonstrate that inventory oversight measures are in place to account for and secure commodities until the organization distributes them.
  - Submit a copy of the warehouse management policy that applies in the DRC and that was revised within five years of application submission.
- In addition to the motor vehicle procurement requirements noted on page 77, apparently successful applicants will also need to provide additional details about all vehicles and generators they plan to use in the proposed activity. These additional requirements include:
  - A management plan that includes servicing and maintaining vehicles and generators.
  - A current fleet management policy that applies in the DRC and was revised within five years of application submission.
- Apparently successful applicants must demonstrate concrete measures the organization will take to implement sustainable practices throughout the supply chain. These may include:
  - Implementing supply chain practices to reduce the social, environmental, and economic impacts of procurement, transport, and storage. These practices may include sourcing

responsibly and incorporating sustainability as an evaluation criteria when selecting vendors.

- Reducing packaging or substituting other environmentally friendly packaging options for commodities that involve substantial single-use primary, secondary, or tertiary plastic packaging.
- Using sustainable warehouse practices (e.g., rainwater catchment, solar panels, recycling, natural ventilation, updated air conditioners) and a waste management plan to reduce the RFSAs' environmental impact.
- Taking measures to select transportation mechanisms and types of vehicles and generators with more efficient carbon emission.
- Disposing of aging vehicles and generators (more than eight-ten years old).
- Reducing or replacing generators with sustainable energy sources where possible.

## **7. Special Provision - Mission Coordination**

Coordination with the USAID/DRC Mission will be required. This may include participation in meetings with other USAID implementers to exchange information, share programming lessons, or improve coordination and collaboration. It may also include coordination with entities responsible for designing, managing, monitoring, or evaluating the Mission's CDCS. Awardees may be required to report into relevant Mission and USAID reporting systems including, but not limited to, the Development Information Solution. Collaboration with USAID third-party monitoring (TPM) mechanisms is required, when applicable. Awardees will cooperate fully with TPM by providing full and timely access to information on project activities, locations, and indicators. Awardees will also be expected to facilitate access to project sites and provide project data maintained at headquarters, regional, and/or field offices.

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## Appendix I: Definitions

**Absorptive Capacity:** Sometimes called “coping capacity,” absorptive capacity refers to the ability to minimize exposure and sensitivity to shocks and stresses through preventative measures to avoid permanent, negative impacts. Please review the [ER4 Framework](#) for more information.

**Adaptive Capacity:** Adaptive capacity refers to the ability to make proactive, informed choices and changes in livelihood and other strategies in response to longer-term change, as well as to adjust or adapt to shocks and stresses. Please review the [ER4 Framework](#) for more information.

**Agriculture:** For the purposes of this RFA, agriculture refers, but is not limited to, crops, aquaculture, livestock, and insects.

**Climate Risk:** The potential for negative consequences due to changing climatic conditions. Climate risks are the potentially severe adverse consequences for development and resilience activities (or for humans and social-ecological systems) resulting from the interaction of climate-related hazards with the vulnerability of societies and systems exposed to climate change. For purposes of USAID’s climate risk management, risks are qualitatively categorized as high, moderate, or low.

**Climate Risk Management:** The process of assessing, addressing, and adaptively managing for climate risks that may impact the ability of awards to achieve stated objectives.

**Construction:** For the purpose of this RFA, the term construction includes construction, alteration, rehabilitation, or repair (including dredging and excavation) of buildings, structures, or other real property, including any infrastructure built or rehabilitated. Examples include, but are not limited to: a road, a building, a water harvesting structure, a drinking water point or system, and/or any continuous multiples of the same. For more information, see [ADS 303maw, USAID Implementation of Construction Activities: A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 303](#).

**Direct Participants:** Those who come into direct contact with the set of interventions (goods or services) provided by the activity. Individuals who receive training or benefit from activity-supported technical assistance or service provision are considered direct participants, as are those who receive a ration or another type of good. Note that all food recipients are participants, but not all participants are necessarily food ration recipients.

Services include training and technical assistance provided directly by activity staff, and training and technical assistance provided by people who have been trained by activity staff (e.g., agricultural extension agents, village health workers). If cooperatives or organizations receive training or technical assistance from the activity and that will directly benefit all members, then all members of the cooperative/organization are considered direct participants.

In a food-for-training intervention, the direct participants are those trained under the activity. In a food-for-work (FFW) or food-for-assets (FFA) activity direct participants do not include all of those who use or benefit from the infrastructure or asset created (e.g., a road) – only the individual or household receiving the ration or transfer. Occasionally, a FFW or FFA intervention forms part of a set of interventions (e.g., FFW to build irrigation infrastructure, accompanied by technical assistance in new cultivation techniques and water management to a targeted group of farmers). If this happens, the direct participants include FFW participants and the farmers receiving the technical assistance. In

the case of food rations, direct participants include the individual recipient in the case of individual rations, and the recipient plus his/her family members in the case of family rations.

Direct participants do **not** include those who benefit indirectly from the goods and services provided to the direct participants. Please see the definition of indirect participants for additional information.

**Direct Distribution of Food Assistance Commodities:** Food assistance commodities provided directly to participants.

**Environmental Safeguards:** Environmental safeguards are components of an activity that are developed as part of the project design to deal with mitigating potentially foreseeable negative environmental impacts of activity interventions. Additionally, they deal with maintaining ecological goods and services and promoting their sustainable management by community stakeholders. Environmental safeguards are incorporated into application design and implementation under the mandate of the USAID environmental compliance regulation, [22 CFR 216](#).

**Fiscal Year (FY):** The U.S. Government's fiscal year begins October 1 and ends the following September 30.

**Gender Analysis:** An analytic, social science tool that is used to identify, understand, and explain gaps between males and females that exist in households, communities, and countries. Gender analysis tools are also used to identify, understand, and explain the relevance of gender norms and power relations in a specific context. Such analysis typically involves examining the:

- Differences in the status of women and men and their differential access to assets, resources, opportunities, and services.
- Influence of gender roles and norms on the division of time between paid employment, unpaid work (including subsistence production and care for family members), and volunteer activities.
- Influence of gender roles and norms on leadership roles and decision-making.
- Constraints, opportunities, and entry points for narrowing gender gaps and empowering females.
- Potential differential impacts of policies and activities on males and females, including unintended or negative consequences.

More information can be found in [ADS 205, Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle](#).

**Indirect Participants:** Indirect participants are those who benefit indirectly from the goods and services provided to the direct participants (as defined above). Examples of indirect participants include:

- Members of the household of a participant farmer who received technical assistance, seeds, tools, other inputs, credit, or livestock.
- Farmers from a neighboring community who might observe the effects of the training and demonstration plots in the target community and decide to adopt or model the new practices themselves.
- The population of all of the communities in a valley that uses a road improved by FFW.
- All individuals who may have heard a radio message about prices, but who did not receive the other elements of an agricultural intervention necessary to increase incomes.



**Life of Award Value:** The life of award value is the total of all resources for all years of the award. The LOA value includes commodity and freight costs, ITSH, Section 202(e), Section 202(e) Enhanced, and cost share.

**Metric Ton(s):** The standard unit of measurement for Title II commodities. One metric ton equals 1,000 kilograms. With the exception of certain specialized food products, all Title II commodity quantities must be rounded to the nearest 10 MT.

**Patterns of Power:** Patterns of power refers to the ability and capacity of people to decide, influence, and exercise control over material, human, intellectual, and financial resources in the family, community, and country, free of coercion. Examinations of patterns of power should include whether people from marginalized groups are able to make and act on decisions about their lives including their bodies, children, occupations, household and community affairs, voting, running for office, entering into contracts, and moving about and associating with others.

**Recipient:** A recipient is a direct receiver of a food assistance ration. Each activity recipient must be counted once, regardless of the number of months they will receive food assistance. In other words, a recipient who will receive a food assistance ration for 12 months is counted once, as is a recipient who will receive a food assistance ration for three months.

**Survivor-Centered Approach:** A survivor centered-approach is one for which the survivor's dignity, experiences, considerations, needs, and resiliencies are placed at the center of the process, from the initial activity design to investigating and responding to potential incidents, with appropriate accountability for perpetrators of abuse. Consistent with the [UN Protocol on Allegations of SEA Involving Implementing Partners](#), the survivor should be informed, participate in the decision-making process, and provide consent on the possible use and disclosure of information. Those interacting with the survivor and/or handling information regarding the allegation must maintain confidentiality, ensure safety of the survivor, and apply survivor-centered principles without discrimination. When the survivor is a child, the approach must consider the best interests of the child and engage with the family/caregivers as appropriate. USAID staff and awardees should comply with host country and local child welfare and protection legislation and international standards, whichever gives greater protection, and with U.S. law as applicable.

**Transfer Costs:** The value of cash and/or vouchers to be distributed to participants. Support and operating costs are all other costs associated with the resource transfer intervention.

**Transformative Capacity:** Transformative capacity occurs when the necessary conditions or enabling environment for systemic change is in place. It refers to the ability of a household, community, or system to holistically and fundamentally change, such that their capacities can be reconstructed, reconfigured, or enhanced. Transformative capacity allows for long-term, sustainable improvements to systems and communities. Please review the [ER4 Framework](#) for more information.

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## Appendix II: Information for Apparently Successful Applicants

### 1. Past Performance Reference Questionnaire

Apparently successful applicants will submit past performance documentation. Only Apparently successful applicants will upload the completed Section A of this questionnaire to the [Application Award Management Portal](#). A successful applicant's history of performance is part of the pre-award risk assessment. USAID will complete the remaining sections.

#### A. CONTRACT/GRANT/COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT INFORMATION:

Name of Company/Organization Being Evaluated:

Address:

Contract/Award Number:

Contract/Award Value:

Contract/Award Type:

Period of Performance:

#### B. DESCRIPTION OF CONTRACT/AWARD:

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During the contract/award being evaluated, this firm was the:

Prime Contractor/Awardee

Significant sub-contractor/sub-awardee

Team Member

Other (Describe):

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Does anything other than a customer/supplier relationship exist between the firm being evaluated and your organization?

- No
- Yes

If yes, please describe the nature of this relationship:

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#### C. EVALUATOR:

Name:

Title:

Organization:

Address

Telephone No:

Email Address:

#### **D. PERFORMANCE**

Please describe and explain the applicant’s skills and abilities, in regards to performance and/or management abilities:

- How well the applicant performed
- The relevancy of the work performed under the previous award to food assistance programming
- Instances of good performance
- Instances of poor performance
- Significant achievements
- Significant problems
- Any indications of excellent or exceptional performance in the most critical areas

#### **2. Certifications and Assurances**

The apparently successful applicants must complete the following documents and submit a signed copy upon request by the AO:

- “Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient,” ADS 303mav (<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mav>)
- Updated SF 424 forms (if applicable)
- Certificate of Compliance: Please submit a copy of the Certificate of Compliance if the organization's systems have been certified by USAID/Washington's Office of Acquisition and Assistance

#### **3. Branding Strategy and Marking Plan**

Programs, projects, activities, public communications, and commodities funded under the authority of Section 641 of the [FAA](#) of 1961, as amended, and the annual appropriations acts must be identified appropriately overseas as “American Aid.” To comply with this statutory requirement, USAID requires that all assistance—such as grants, cooperative agreements, or other assistance awards—be “co-branded and co-marked.” This includes programs, projects, activities, public communications, studies, reports, activity sites, events, training courses, commodities, and other materials funded by USAID.

[ADS Chapter 320](#) and [2 CFR 700.16](#) contain the policy and regulations that govern USAID branding and marking. Applicants must use the latest USAID Standard Graphic Identity, which can be found on the [USAID Branding](#) page, which also contains information on graphic and style standards, including the relevant USAID logo files.

Only apparently successful applicants must submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan (BS/MP). In accordance with [2 CFR 700.1](#), “branding” means how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, as well as how it is promoted and communicated to participants and cooperating country citizens. “Marking” refers to affixing the USAID Identity or approved logos to activity deliverables,

such as activity materials, commodity packaging, and public communications that will visibly bear the USAID identity.

[ADS Reference 303mba](#) and [ADS Chapter 320](#) contain requirements and instructions for preparing a BS/MP.

Because USAID's branding and marking requirements have cost implications, applicants should include such costs in the application budget. This may include press conferences, media, promotional materials, photography, site visits, and all costs associated with marking, such as plaques, banners, signs, stickers, and commodity packaging. Refer to [22 CFR 211.5](#) for Title II food assistance labeling requirements.

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## Appendix III: Key Resources

The resources<sup>13</sup> in this appendix are intended to guide applicants to key technical and programmatic resources relevant to the design and objectives of this RSFA. This is not a comprehensive list of resources; additional resources are available on the [Development Experience Clearinghouse](#). Key background resources include:

1. Desk Review and Market Studies
2. Secondary Data Analysis
3. Initial Environmental Examination and Climate Risk Profile
4. Other References

### Desk Review and Market Studies

- [Tanganyika](#)
- [Kasai and Kasai Central](#)

### Secondary Data Analysis

- [Tanganyika, Kasai, and Kasai Central](#)
- [Secondary Data Analysis Metadata: Kasai, Kasai Central, and Tanganyika](#)

### Initial Environmental Examination and Climate Risk Profile

- [Initial Environmental Examination](#)
- [Climate Risks to Development and Food Security in BHA Geographies: Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)

### Other References

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- Elan RDC. Knowledge Management. <https://www.elanrdc.com/knowledge-management>

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<sup>13</sup> USAID is not responsible for the content of external websites. Links are provided only as a reference and are subject to change.

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