GUIDING QUESTIONS

USAID is seeking feedback on the concept detailed below. The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to determine the soundness and robustness of the conceptual design, as well as to incorporate new, innovative ideas into the design. This is a RFI and not a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Please submit your feedback regarding the desired results outlined in the concept (the “what”) rather than describing how your organization would propose to achieve the results (the “how”). Questions below are guiding questions, and as such, not all questions need to be answered in your feedback. Conversely, incorporation of any feedback is subject to internal Mission discussions and approval.

1. Are the proposed objectives and intermediate results strategic and relevant to increase transparency and accountability at the national level and in targeted areas in Colombia?
2. Are the proposed objectives and intermediate results measurable and achievable?
3. Are there any results that you would suggest the Mission consider changing or eliminating? Why?
4. Are there any results omitted that you would suggest the Mission consider including?
5. Does the proposed concept allow for flexibility, adaptation, and innovation?
6. Are the proposed objectives achievable in a five-year period?
7. What do you consider the strengths of the concept and why?
8. What do you consider the weaknesses of the concept and why?
9. Do you have any comments regarding geography or suggestions for alternate geographies and why?
10. Are there any key non-traditional stakeholders not mentioned in the concept that you would recommend to include?

RFI FORMAT

Interested parties should provide a short document addressing the issues and considerations discussed in Attachment A. Responses are limited to five (5) pages. Do not submit any proposals at this time; only information requested in this RFI will be reviewed. Responses will be treated as confidential. Any organization interested in participating in this activity should also include a short Expression of Interest (EOI) in the response.
Deadline for questions (if any) and responses to this RFI is **November 18, 2019 @ 17:00 Local time**. Please send your questions (if any) and responses (by email only) to bogotausaidofficeaa@usaid.gov before this deadline. Questions (if any) and responses in English and/or Spanish are allowed. The subject of each email should read as follows:

**Request for Information 72051419RFI00002 – Partners for Transparency – e-mail 1 of #**

You will receive only an electronic confirmation acknowledging receipt of your response, but will not receive individualized feedback or suggestions. No basis for claims against the U.S. Government shall arise as a result of a response to this request for information or from the U.S. Government’s use of such information. Specific questions about this RFI should be directed only to the email addresses identified above.

This RFI can be downloaded from [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=7205141RFI00002](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=7205141RFI00002). Interested parties who are not able to retrieve the RFI from the Internet can request a copy from the email addresses identified above.

Please note that release of this RFI in no way obligates USAID to release an RFP or RFA for this proposed activity. USAID is not responsible for any costs incurred in responding to this RFI.

Thank you for your interest in USAID/Colombia programs and we look forward to your comments.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Banco  
Contracting Officer  
Office of Acquisition & Assistance  
USAID/Colombia
1. BACKGROUND

Context: In the last twenty years, the Government of Colombia (GOC) has taken important steps to foster greater integrity and transparency, including undertaking legal reforms, creating new government institutions, adopting international best practices, and releasing open government data. Despite progress, the GOC’s Comptroller General estimates that the cost of corruption (in its various forms) amounts to approximately US$17 billion per year. A recent Gallup poll found that nearly 90 percent of the Colombian population considers corruption to be a widespread problem. According to Transparencia por Colombia, over half of corruption cases between 2016 and 2018 were reported in the health, education, and infrastructure sectors.1

Purpose: As part of a long-term strategy, and in a country characterized by a free and active civil society, USAID will leverage Local Partners’ expertise, relationships, and unique position of influence to promote transparency and accountability - while increasing the capacity and sustainability of Partner organizations. Working with and through Local Partners, this Activity seeks to foster constructive engagement and locally-driven solutions to achieve the following objectives:

(1) National-level government transparency and accountability initiatives advanced;
(2) Local-level civic participation, collaboration and oversight of public management enhanced;
(3) Ability of key institutions to prevent, oversee, and prosecute corruption strengthened; and
(4) Culture of transparency and accountability promoted.

2. THEORY OF CHANGE

IF public sector efforts to increase transparency and accountability in Colombia are strengthened;
AND Local Partners actively participate, collaborate and ensure accountability;
AND social and behavioral accountability norms are adopted;
THEN government will be more responsive to citizens and deliver key public goods and services;
LEADING TO greater citizen trust in government and better use of public funds.

1 Semana, El Tiempo and Gallup.
2 Transparencia por Colombia, “Así se mueve la corrupción. Radiografía de los hechos de corrupción en Colombia 2016 - 2018”.
3 Defined as non-state actors, including civil society organizations (CSOs), media, business associations, trade unions, chambers of commerce, think tanks, universities, and advocacy groups, among others. It bears emphasis that the private sector should be well represented among the Local Partners selected.
3. OBJECTIVES

**Objective 1. National-level government transparency and accountability initiatives advanced.**

Under Objective 1, this Activity supports targeted Local Partners in advocating for public sector transparency and accountability at the national level, with an emphasis on health, education and infrastructure sectors. Local Partners will strategically and constructively engage GOC decision-makers, including Congress, to represent citizen interests and advance an informed and strategic reform agenda. Based on their own priorities, Local Partners also will support GOC entities in implementing existing regulations and procedures, as well as complying with international commitments on transparency and citizen participation (e.g., commitments made under the Open Government Partnerships and the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative). While assistance will be tailored to each Local Partner’s objectives, the Activity assists Local Partners to advocate effectively, develop networks and deploy collective impact strategies, and strategically engage and influence the GOC.

Preliminary expected results:

- **Result 1:** Increased effectiveness of Local Partner advocacy related to transparency and accountability.
- **Result 2:** Local Partners influence the legislative and normative agenda to enhance transparency and accountability in targeted sectors.
- **Result 3:** Local Partners engage4 the GOC to adopt and implement transparency and accountability public policies, frameworks, and other measures.

**Objective 2. Local-level civic participation, collaboration, and oversight of public management enhanced.**

Under Objective 2, this Activity promotes a bottom-up engagement of leaders and grassroots organizations in selected municipalities to enhance the inclusion of citizens in local policy-making, implementation, and monitoring of governance procedures. Local Partners will constructively engage the GOC to advance shared priorities in targeted municipalities with an emphasis on greater transparency and accountability in the health, education and infrastructure sectors. The Activity promotes civic collaboration in implementing and monitoring Open Government initiatives, national laws on transparency, access to information, and related policies. The Activity assists Local Partners and actors to more effectively achieve their goals in the long term, including developing relationships, networks, collective impact strategies, experience, and organizational capacity to maintain and update relevant efforts over time.

Preliminary expected results:

4 To include assistance, collaboration, monitoring, oversight, and other measures.
• **Result 1**: Citizens participate and collaborate in policy-making and implementation, of public expenditures, goods and services at the local level.

• **Result 2**: Local Partners collaborate with sub-national governments to implement Open Government initiatives and national laws on transparency, access to information and related regulations.

• **Result 3**: Local Partners conduct monitoring and oversight of target sectors at the sub-national level.

**Objective 3. Ability of key institutions to prevent, oversee and prosecute corruption strengthened.**

Under Objective 3, the Activity supports Local Partners to develop collaborative relationships with key GOC institutions (e.g., Attorney General’s Office, Comptroller General’s Office, Inspector General’s Office) in the prevention, detection, prosecution, and sanctioning of corruption. The Activity analyzes and strengthens institutional systems, strategies, frameworks, procedures, etc. It also strengthens inter-agency coordination and information sharing to track, process and resolve corruption cases effectively.

The Activity increases GOC understanding of corruption trends, while distinguishing corruption from unintentional mismanagement of funds. To the extent it is applicable and appropriate to advance specific cases, Local Partners also monitor, analyze, and report on cases to the institutions and the public to initiate and follow such cases through the system. Use of Information and Communications Technology and data analytics to more effectively and efficiently analyze information under this objective is highly encouraged, provided such approaches can be sustained by Local Partners and/or target institutions.

The Activity promotes internal mechanisms in key GOC institutions to detect and sanction misconduct and unethical behavior.

Preliminary expected results:

• **Result 1**: Local Partners engage GOC institutions to create more effective and efficient intra-and inter-institutional systems for preventing, detecting, investigating, prosecuting, and sanctioning corruption.

• **Result 2**: Increased public and GOC understanding on corruption patterns, typologies, and cases.

**Objective 4. Culture of transparency and accountability promoted.**

Under Objective 4, the Activity develops a comprehensive Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) approach towards promoting a culture of transparency and accountability, and a greater social sanction of corruption in Colombia. In keeping with SBCC principles, this approach uses data and works with a diverse set of local stakeholders, including the Activity’s Local Partners, to develop and validate contextualized activities. This Activity focuses nation-wide, as well as on target populations, such as those municipalities engaged under Objective 2, and the institutional cultures within key GOC
entities also included in Objectives 1, 2, and 3. It also focuses on the private sector to change culture and practices within companies, as well as leverage their private sector influence and engagement to advance change.

The Activity supports public outreach - and non-traditional outreach mechanisms such as music and arts - to influence broader understandings and attitudes around integrity and accountability. The Activity supports high-level investigative journalism and academic-led analysis on accountability at national and sub-national levels.

Preliminary expected results:

- **Result 1**: Public sector transparency and accountability culture promoted in key GOC entities.
- **Result 2**: Private sector leveraged to promote accountability and transparency measures.
- **Result 3**: Evidence-based and academic-led analysis at national and sub-national levels on corruption-related issues developed.
- **Result 4**: Citizens report increased rejection of corruption.

**Objective 5. Local Partner Capacity and Sustainability Enhanced.**

As the Activity focuses on working with and through Local Partners, increasing their organizational and technical capacity is essential for achieving and sustaining results. The Activity tailors capacity development efforts to the needs and objectives of each individual Local Partner, to be determined jointly with the Partner. Example focus areas may include: policy analysis; oversight; advocacy; communications; monitoring; strategic planning; internal governance and policies; security policies and strategies; and monitoring, evaluation and learning.

- **Result 1**: Local Partners have increased organizational capacity, as measured by the Organizational Capacity Assessment or comparable tool.
- **Result 2**: Local Partners improve their performance, as measured by the Organizational Performance Index.

4. **OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES**

- **Leveraging local expertise**: USAID expects extensive collaboration with Local Partners under this Activity. At least one sub-award to a local partner must be awarded under each component. Local Partners bring special resources, influence, skills, and capacities to the table that will be leveraged for impact and sustainability.

- **Support coalitions**: This Activity supports collective impact and social accountability mechanisms, such as coalitions or platforms.
• **Harness innovation:** Capitalizing on the Duque Administration’s priority to bridge the digital divide and provide equitable access to the internet, this Activity promotes the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and new approaches for data exploration and insight, including machine learning and artificial intelligence.

• **Be prepared for complexity:** The Applicant is encouraged to undertake strategic analysis - including comprehensive Political Economy Analysis (PEA) - to better understand how social, political and economic dynamics affect the implementing environment and inform programming adjustments and decisions to scale up or terminate interventions. The Applicant should include ways in which it will use windows of opportunities to nurture “non-traditional” coalitions of partners with shared interests and incentives in addressing specific problems and opportunities.

• **Maintain a flexible, iterative approach that embraces collaboration, learning and adapting (CLA):** This Activity will remain flexible and be ready to adapt to changes on the ground due to the volatile and dynamic nature of the operating environment. The Activity also will adapt programming based on dynamic learning, enabling the project to focus on programming that is having real impact and halt programming that is not. This is particularly important in efforts to strengthen local institutions and systems.

**5. GEOGRAPHY**

The implementation of this Activity requires work at both national and sub-national levels. The Applicant will propose no less than five target sub-national areas for advancing programmatic goals based on a multivariable approach. Factors may include: political will, level of perceived corruption, and risk for state capture. Selected areas will be subject to USAID approval in the Activity’s first-year Work Plan. USAID envisions that target municipalities could be in the departments of Antioquia, Bolivar, Cauca, Cordoba, Tolima and Guajira.

[END OF REQUEST FOR INFORMATION]