



May 31, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Subject: Request for Applications - Farmer-to-Farmer Agriculture Volunteer Opportunity Project (AVOP) Small Grants Program

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed please find the Request for Applications (RFA) to implement a small grant under the Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) Agricultural Volunteer Opportunity Project (AVOP). Each grant will be issued by the F2F AVOP Program administered by Partners of the Americas (Partners). The total amount of funding available under this RFA for all awards combined is \$1,839,000 over 3 years.

All funding is contingent upon the availability of funds. Partners expects to award up to three (3) grants under this RFA, but reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Partners also reserves the right to make additional award(s) under this RFA at a later date if funding becomes available.

Grant funds awarded under this RFA are intended for fielding and supporting F2F volunteers. Please feel free to share this announcement with other parties. Any questions concerning this RFA should be addressed via email by June 27, 2019 to the AVOP Competition Manager at: [AVOP@partners.net](mailto:AVOP@partners.net).

**Absolutely no telephone calls will be accepted regarding this RFA.**

Concept Papers should be submitted using the online form [here](#).

Thank you for your consideration of this USAID initiative.

Sincerely,

Partners of the Americas Competition Team

*Enclosure: Request for Applications*



**PARTNERS** *of the* **AMERICAS**  
Connect • Serve • Change Lives

## **REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

***Farmer-to-Farmer  
Agricultural Volunteer Opportunity Project (AVOP)  
Small Grants Program***

*A program established by US Agency for International  
Development (USAID) Bureau for Food Security*

**Administered by:**

Partners of the Americas  
1424 K Street NW, Suite 700  
Washington D.C. 20005  
Email: [AVOP@Partners.net](mailto:AVOP@Partners.net)  
**AVOP RFA 2019-2**

## Table of Contents

1	Definitions and Acronyms	1
2	Solicitation and Award Information	2
2.1	Application and Submission Information	2
2.2	Solicitation Information	2
2.3	Planned Award	3
2.4	Anticipated Start Date	3
2.5	Period of Performance	3
3	Eligibility Information	3
3.1	Eligible Entities	3
4	Funding Opportunity Description	4
4.1	Introduction	4
4.2	The Farmer-to-Farmer Approach and Volunteer Program Management	5
4.3	Small Grants Program Description	5
4.4	Eligible Countries and USAID Mission Interest	6
4.5	Application Requirements and Selection Criteria	7
4.5.1	Phase I: Concept Papers	7
5	Application Review Information	9
5.1	Application Review Process:	10
5.1.1	Basic Eligibility Screening	10
5.1.2	Technical Review Panel	10
5.1.3	USAID Review	10
5.1.4	Concept Paper Evaluation Criteria:	10
6	Invitation to Submit Full Application	12
7	Full Application	12
	Attachment A: Budget Template and Related Questions	13
	Attachment B: Select Life-of-Project F2F Performance and Impact Illustrative Indicator Targets	14

## 1 Definitions and Acronyms

Item or Acronym	Definition
ADS	The Automated Directive System details USAID policies, procedures, and regulations, which apply to all USAID funded assistance agreements and contracts. They may be found on USAID’s <a href="#">website</a> . USAID often issues policy changes or interim guidance pending ADS updating by means of Acquisition & Assistance Policy Directives (AAPDs).
AVOP	Agricultural Volunteer Opportunity Project – grants program to award smaller F2F projects to new organizations
Core Country Implementing Partners	Organizations currently implementing large F2F programs under “core” awards directly with USAID
F2F	<u>Farmer-to-Farmer Program</u>
Host	Organizations or individuals that request volunteer services and work most directly with the volunteers—essentially, the volunteers’ “clients.”
NICRA	Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement – governed by 2 CFR 200, <u>Indirect Cost Rate Guide</u>
OMB	Office of Management and Budget – The U.S. Congress, through OMB Budget, controls all policies and procedures for grant-making by any of the U. S. Government agencies, including USAID. OMB Circulars are referenced in this RFA, specifically those found on USAID’s <a href="#">website</a> . They apply wherever specified in this RFA.
Partners	Partners of the Americas – The U.S.-based non-government organization which holds a cooperative agreement from the USAID to support international agricultural volunteer programs and is responsible for managing small grants under F2F AVOP.
PDP	Program Development Project – Two to four year F2F programs that were implemented in one or two core countries, similar to the core programs, and were intended to enable organizations to develop capacity to compete for future core program implementation.
RFA	Request for Applications – The document used for advertising competitive assistance programs. An RFA contains eligibility and qualification requirements, a general description of the program and range of activities, evaluation criteria, and other relevant information.
USAID	United States Agency for International Development – the funding agency for AVOP
Volunteer	An individual who provides technical assistance under a volunteer program, receiving no direct salary from the assignment.

## 2 Solicitation and Award Information

### 2.1 Application and Submission Information

**Date of Issuance:** May 31, 2019

**Due Date for RFA Questions:** June 27, 2019 by 12 PM (noon)

**Due Date for Concept Papers:** July 15, 2019 by 6 PM EST

**Questions:** All technical questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail by the specified due date to [AVOP@partners.net](mailto:AVOP@partners.net). No phone calls or faxes will be accepted. Partners will confirm receipt. Questions and answers will be posted on a rolling basis and can be viewed at: [AVOP RFA 2019-2: Questions/Answers](#). The final update to this site will be posted on July 1, 2019. Partners will also be hosting a live webinar and Q&A on June 28, 2019. Details will be posted on the [AVOP RFA 2019-2: Questions/Answers](#).

**Concept Note Submission:** Concept Note applications must be submitted using the online form [here](#). No phone calls will be accepted. Application documents sent by fax will NOT be accepted. All application documents should be uploaded via the online form as Microsoft Word files. Partners will confirm receipt.

### 2.2 Solicitation Information

Partners, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is **seeking applications from parties interested in the F2F AVOP Small Grants Program**.

This RFA will be conducted in two phases:

Phase I: Competitive Concept Paper (described in this RFA)

Phase II: Collaborative Development of Full Application (details provided to organizations who are selected to advance to Phase II)

Each applicant will initially provide Partners with a Concept Paper. **Only one Concept Paper per organization/institution will be accepted.** Each Concept Paper will be competitively evaluated against pre-determined evaluation criteria (see Section 5.1.4). Applicants with the highest scoring Concept Papers will be invited to collaboratively develop Full Applications with Partners. It is anticipated that approximately five Concept Paper Applicants will be selected to develop Full Applications, of which Partners expects to award up to three (3). *Being invited to develop a Full Application is not a guarantee of funding.* Applicants must meet all Full Application requirements and address all weaknesses, deficiencies, and uncertainties identified in the competitive Concept Paper phase, as well as receive approval from the necessary USAID agencies and pass a risk assessment before they can be eligible to receive an award.

Partners reserves the option to request that applicants who are not initially invited to submit Full Applications extend the period of validity of their Concept Papers by up to one year to facilitate

consideration for later awards. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in a timely manner and provided feedback upon request.

As mentioned, Partners expects to award up to three (3) small grants under this RFA, depending on the availability of funds and applications received. Grants will be awarded only to qualified and responsible applicants that have the skills, experience, institutional capacity and mandate necessary to implement the program within the terms set forth in this RFA.

Partners reserves the right not to make any awards under this RFA or to make an additional award(s) under this RFA at a later date up to one year after the closing date for applications, if funding becomes available. Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of Partners or USAID, nor does it commit either entity to pay for costs incurred in the submission of an application. Partners reserves the right to reject any and all applications, or to award a grant without further discussion or negotiations if it is considered to be in the best interests of Partners and/or USAID.

### ***2.3 Planned Award***

The total amount of funding available under this RFA for all awards is \$1,839,000. Applicants may submit proposals for three (3) year projects limited to a maximum budget of \$613,000.

### ***2.4 Anticipated Start Date***

Partners anticipates making grant awards as a result of this RFA on or about January 1, 2020. Partners may, at its discretion, issue awards before or after this date.

### ***2.5 Period of Performance***

Grants will be awarded to fund programs implemented over three years from the start date of award. Grant funded activities must be fully completed within this time period.

## **3 Eligibility Information**

The USAID Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) Program encourages applications from organizations that have not implemented F2F projects before to increase the diversity, innovation, and effectiveness of program implementation.

### ***3.1 Eligible Entities***

Entities eligible to receive U.S. federal grant awards under this RFA include: non-profit organizations, for-profit firms, cooperatives, colleges and universities. In addition, applicants must meet all criteria below:

- IS a US-based organization

- Is NOT implementing a Core Country F2F program (as prime) at time of award
- Is NOT currently implementing a sub-award under the AVOP program

Applications from organizations that do not meet all eligibility criteria listed above will not be evaluated. Please note, implementing organizations that are sub-awardees to current core F2F implementers are eligible under this RFA, but must propose a project substantially different from their currently held sub-award. Implementing organizations that were small grantees or Program Development Project (PDP) holders during the FY14-FY18 phase or FY09-FY13 phase of the F2F program are eligible for small grants under this RFA. U.S.-based entities are encouraged to work with non-U.S.-based partners to implement F2F small grants. All proposed partnerships must be clearly identified in the grant application.

## **4 Funding Opportunity Description**

### ***4.1 Introduction***

The F2F Program goal is to generate sustainable, broad-based economic growth in the agricultural sector through voluntary technical assistance. A secondary goal is to increase the U.S. public's understanding of international development issues and programs and international understanding of the U.S. and U.S. development programs. F2F introduces innovation and develops local capacity for more productive, profitable, sustainable and equitable agricultural systems while providing opportunity for people-to-people interaction in agricultural development activities. Programs build institutions and transfer technology and management expertise to link small farmers with markets that exploit comparative advantages in production, processing and marketing. Activities are varied and conform to country needs and strategic objectives. Specific F2F projects align with or support USAID Mission strategies and objectives or those of other USG programs in a given country.

Applicants responding to this RFA should propose projects that focus on one or more of the four main objectives of F2F:

- Increase agricultural sector productivity and profitability;
- Improve conservation and sustainable use of environmental and natural resources;
- Expand agricultural sector access to financial services; and/or
- Strengthen agricultural sector institutions.

Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their concept papers and proposals tie into larger US Government development strategies, including but not limited to those listed below:

- [Feed the Future Initiative \(FTF\)](#)
- [USAID Country Strategies](#)
- [US Government Global Food Security Strategy](#)
- The U.S. Farm Bill

Applicants should consider planned results and impacts, as well as unintended consequences, especially as they may relate to USAID policy issues of importance to the F2F programs. Issues requiring special attention by the Applicant include:

- **Gender:** The Applicant shall provide systematic consideration of gender issues and impacts in the proposed program and shall seek to promote gender equity.
- **Environment:** The Applicant shall ensure systematic consideration of the implications of proposed program activities on environmental and natural resources and should seek to mitigate any adverse impacts.
- **Restricted Sub-sectors and Activities:** The Applicant shall not propose a program that supports activities that are restricted by USG policies and regulations. USAID policies and regulations restrict support for certain activities involving: tobacco production and processing; African oil palm production or processing; degradation or conversion of tropical forests; agricultural products in surplus on world markets; assistance to activities or projects of communist countries; assistance to military, police or prisons; luxury goods; alcoholic beverage production or marketing; export of U.S. jobs, relocation of U.S. businesses or restrictions on internationally recognized workers' rights; or production of agricultural products that compete with U.S. products in international markets.

#### ***4.2 The Farmer-to-Farmer Approach and Volunteer Program Management***

While applicants are encouraged to propose projects that utilize their unique expertise to pursue overall F2F program objectives, concept papers and proposals should incorporate key recommendations and best practices in international agricultural volunteer program management. Both the key recommendations and best practices in international agricultural volunteer program management can be found in the [Farmer-to-Farmer Program Manual of Good Practices](#). For the Concept Note stage, applicants should review key recommendations in sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.6, 3.2, 3.5, 4.2, 4.3, and relevant annexes.

#### ***4.3 Small Grants Program Description***

AVOP Small Grant Projects will test innovative approaches to use U.S.-based volunteers, draw from non-traditional sources of volunteers, and increase the capacity of organizations to effectively implement international agricultural development volunteer programs. Organizations implementing these small grants will focus on one or more of the main F2F objectives: 1) Increase agricultural sector productivity and profitability; 2) Improve conservation and sustainable use of environmental and natural resources; 3) Expand agricultural sector access to financial services; and 4) Strengthen agricultural sector institutions.

Because AVOP is designed to encourage and test innovation, Small Grants Projects have flexibility to incorporate new approaches and implementation strategies. However, projects should work within the F2F approach described above, focusing on agricultural activities that improve food security and economic development through safe and impactful volunteer assignments. In particular, Applicants should be sensitive to the following aspects that are common to most F2F activities:

- **Demand-driven** – volunteers work with hosts to assist them in activities that *the hosts have identified and desired*, rather than implementing a program motivated or conceived by the F2F implementing organization.
- **Focused on technical assistance or advisory services** – Projects must emphasize the

transfer of skills to project beneficiaries, rather than materials or funds. F2F funds are used for implementing the F2F program, primarily the recruitment, placement, and support of volunteers to provide technical assistance or advisory services in the field. The program can not provide equipment, supplies, and operating costs for local host organizations, although implementers may use F2F funds for limited costs of demonstrations and presentation materials. F2F-funded activities should directly and/or indirectly benefit smallholder farmers.

- **Aligned with other USG strategies or programs in the target country** – Description of how the project would align with USAID or other USG development activities in a country. No letters of support or other communications are necessary.

Applicants are encouraged to explore opportunities for leveraging funding through co-financing or other innovative ways of programming volunteers. Applicants should also demonstrate, however, that F2F funds will be used exclusively on new and/or complementary volunteer activities and will neither duplicate nor offset administrative costs of activities that have existing sources of funding.

#### **4.4 Eligible Countries and USAID Mission Interest**

As per USAID guidelines, AVOP will be global in scope. Sub-awards can target specific countries and/or thematic areas. Eligible countries are listed below. Countries listed in **bold** are eligible for small grants and do not have current F2F programs. While listed as eligible, some countries in bold below are *not recommended* due to potential safety concerns for US volunteers. AVOP reserves the right to not fund projects in areas that pose significant security issues.

Countries not listed in bold are eligible but have current F2F programs. AVOP does not recommend proposing projects in these countries. If a country with a current F2F program is proposed for a small grant, the applicant must specify how their proposed project is substantially different from the current F2F program. Further, a “no-objection” from the F2F Core Country Implementing Partner will be required prior to approval of a full application, and potential sub-award recipients may be asked to modify their proposal to ensure their activities support or align with F2F Core Country Implementing Partners’ country strategies and/or incorporate a formal role or collaboration with these organizations.

##### Eligible Countries:

**Albania, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burma, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cote d’Ivoire, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Gabon, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Laos, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Moldova, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Palau, Paraguay, Peru, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Tanzania, The Bahamas, The Gambia, Timor-Leste, Togo,**

**Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Zambia, Zimbabwe**

The following USAID Missions have shown particular interest in hosting F2F programs, and applicants are encouraged to pursue opportunities in these areas:

Belarus, Belize, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Haiti, Liberia, Montenegro, Niger, Serbia, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Togo

Eastern and Southern Caribbean – Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Suriname (applicants encouraged to work in more than one country)

#### ***4.5 Application Requirements and Selection Criteria***

Each applicant shall submit a Concept Paper to Partners. **Only one Concept Paper per organization/institution will be accepted. Organizations/institutions with multiple departments and/or centers should coordinate to ensure that only one concept paper is submitted. If more than one concept paper is submitted by an institution/organization, only the paper submitted closest to (without going past) the submission deadline will be considered.** Partners will convene an evaluation committee to competitively evaluate and rank Concept Papers according to the criteria outlined below. Applicants with the highest scored Concept Papers will be invited to develop Full Applications. In the event of a tie, priority will be given to new implementers, who have never held a F2F Core Award or Sub-Award.

All Concept Papers (and Full Applications) must meet eligibility criteria and the requirements outlined below. Submissions that do not meet the eligibility criteria or requirements will not be evaluated. In addition, Full Applications must address all weaknesses, deficiencies, and uncertainties identified in the competitive Concept Paper phase.

##### **4.5.1 Phase I: Concept Papers**

The first phase of the Application is a Concept Paper, the purpose of which is to outline the proposed project, demonstrate need and demand for proposed activities, and establish the Applicant's capacity to successfully develop a Full Application, negotiate and sign an award, and implement a safe and effective international agricultural volunteer program. Applicants should adhere to the formatting and content requirements below in preparing Concept Papers. To be considered, Concept Papers must demonstrate conformity with these criteria as well as the eligibility criteria set forth in this RFA. Only proposals for volunteer technical assistance projects are eligible for funding and will be evaluated. Concept Papers that do not include all required information or are received from organizations that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be evaluated.

##### **Concept Paper Format:**

- **Language:** English

- **Font Size:** 12 point font (except for tables and graphs)
- **Font Style:** Times New Roman or Garamond
- **Spacing:** single spaced
- **Size and Margins:** 8-1/2" x 11" paper with 1 inch margins (top, bottom, right, and left)
- **Page Limitations:** Maximum of 8 pages, not including cover page, table of contents, acronym list (if used), and Attachments
- **Attachment Page Limitations:** 3 pages total

Concept Paper Requirements:

**A. Cover Page (1 page):**

- Organization Name**
- Organization Business Status (non-profit, for profit, PVO etc.)**
- Contact Name (authorized negotiator)**
- Contact Email address**
- Contact Telephone and Fax number**
- Complete Business mailing address**

**B. Concept Description (8 pages maximum):**

Concept Papers must follow the outline below. To facilitate review, Applicants should organize their Concept Papers in the same order and with the same headings. Applicants should refer carefully to the Concept Paper evaluation criteria below and include relevant information in each section.

- **Problem Statement** – description of key problems to be addressed or opportunities to be exploited
- **Strategy and Approach** – overview of the proposed solution
- **Objectives** – description of specific, measurable, and achievable objective(s) tied to specific activities and AVOP objectives
- **Proposed Activities** – activities, potential local partners, host identification strategy, target beneficiaries, host needs assessments and planning, and estimated numbers and types of hosts and volunteer assignments
- **Volunteer Management** – recruitment strategy, plans and capacity to field and manage F2F volunteers
- **Staffing and Organizational Capacity** – overview of staff identified to lead the program in HQ and/or the field, provide evidence of sufficient organizational capacity to implement this project

**1. C. Budget Summary and Related Questions (2 pages)**

The budget information and related questions can be found in Attachment A. The Attachment must be submitted in Word or PDF. This Attachment has three sections:

- Organizational questions
- Listing of three past projects
- Summary Budget

The budget summary should be realistic for the proposed activities and demonstrate cost-effective use of USAID funds. A detailed budget and budget notes will be required at the full proposal stage.

Applicants who have a USAID Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) may include that rate in their budgets. Applicants who have never received a NICRA may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs<sup>1</sup>. Typical competitive indirect cost rates for F2F projects range from 10-30%.

**Leverage:** Leverage may include financial contributions; third-party contributions; the value of donated services and property, including intellectual property; or may be anything of value that can be measured in some form that permits evaluation of the contribution's impact on achieving desired results. For example, leveraging may involve one or more partners proposing financial contributions that will be spent in parallel to the USAID-funded activity, but not expended by the Recipient or its sub-awardees. The only leveraged resource required for the F2F Programs is the value of volunteers' services provided, currently valued at **\$522 per day** across the board. Additional sources of leverage are encouraged, but not required.

**Cost sharing** ([ADS 303.3.10](#)): Cost share refers to the resources a recipient contributes to the total cost of an agreement. Cost share becomes a condition of an award when it is part of the approved award budget. The cost share must be verifiable from the recipient's records; for U.S. organizations it is subject to the requirements of 2 CFR 200.306, and for non-U.S. organizations it is subject to the Standard Provision, "Cost Share"; and can be audited. Cost share is encouraged, but not required.

#### ***D. Life-of-Project F2F Performance and Impact Indicator Targets***

The table in Attachment B should be filled out with some basic estimated life-of-project indicator targets. The actual indicators for this AVOP Small Grant Project will be finalized later – this is just a selection of potential indicators. These are illustrative only. The purpose of this is to understand the potential size and scope of the proposed project only.

## **5 Application Review Information**

The selection of concept papers is a three step process including a: (1) Basic Eligibility Screening; (2) Technical Review Panel; and (3) USAID Review. Finalists will be invited to submit Full Applications and a risk assessment questionnaire.

Partners will conduct eligibility screenings and the Technical Review panel will make the final recommendation on which organizations should receive an award, with concurrence from USAID. Partners will also conduct a risk assessment to determine if the organization has the ability to effectively manage a project and if any special reporting requirements need to be

---

<sup>1</sup> Modified total direct cost mean all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, service, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each sub-award. See CFR 200.68 for full definition.

included in the Award. Partners' assessment will ensure the recipient practices mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets acquired as a result of the grant funding. Consideration shall be given to such matters as integrity, record of past performance, financial and technical resources, or accessibility to other necessary resources. The risk assessment may result in a decision not to fund the award.

Final awards will be made only to responsible applicants whose applications meet the stated goals of this program and offer the best value with technical, cost and other factors considered. The budget will be evaluated for cost realism and reasonableness, in accordance with the U.S. Government's applicable cost principles.

## ***5.1 Application Review Process:***

### ***5.1.1 Basic Eligibility Screening***

All concept paper submissions will be compiled and screened for minimum eligibility requirements, including conducting System for Award Management (SAM) and terrorist watch list checks on applicants to ensure eligibility to receive US government funds. Furthermore, submissions will be screened for alignment with US government objectives, development impacts, contribution to F2F Program objectives, country selection, and potential for promotion of sustainable demand-driven volunteer activities. Applicants will also be evaluated in accordance with the basic eligibility criteria set forth above in terms of submission date, page limits, required annexes, and other non-qualitative factors. Any concept papers that do not meet the minimum eligibility requirements will not be evaluated further.

### ***5.1.2 Technical Review Panel***

During this stage, an outside panel will evaluate concept papers for technical merit and other evaluation criteria, including to what level the proposed program has considered gender equity and demonstrates local host demand for volunteer activities. The panel will independently rank and then collectively discuss the applications and come to a consensus on the concept papers that should move forward as the apparently successful applicants.

### ***5.1.3 USAID Review***

Upon selection of finalists, Partners will communicate with USAID which concept papers are recommended for Full Application. USAID will give concurrence to the selection. If a concept paper is given USAID/Washington approval, USAID/Washington will share the concept paper with relevant USAID Mission(s) for a "no-objection" to program activities. Any question or need for follow-up from the USAID Mission will need to be discussed and resolved before any awards are signed.

### ***5.1.4 Concept Paper Evaluation Criteria:***

Concept Papers will be evaluated in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria set forth below. The

evaluation criteria serve to A) identify the significant issues which applicants should address in their Concept Papers; and B) set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated.

The following evaluation factors and maximum scores will be used to evaluate all Concept Papers. The members of the Technical Review Panel will score each Concept Paper, and those with the highest cumulative scores will be invited to submit a Full Application.

- **30 points – Problem Statement, Strategy, and Approach**

Successful Concept Papers will include a succinct summary of a project that will meet a specific development need through short-term volunteer assignments. The development need will be clearly explained and substantiated, and it will be clear that volunteer technical assistance is an appropriate solution. It should also be detailed how the use of volunteer technical assistance in the strategy and approach is innovative. Strong concept papers will clearly demonstrate and provide evidence that their proposed project is demand-driven by local beneficiaries and based on local needs. Project objective(s) at the end of the grant period should be explicit and specific.

- **30 points – Objective(s) and Proposed Activities**

Successful Concept Papers will include a clear and convincing model for how volunteer technical assistance will address the identified development need and directly and/or (in)directly benefit smallholder farmers. Objectives of the project will be specific, measurable, and achievable. Objectives will also be tied to specific activities that can logically be expected to lead to the achievement of those objectives. Details on the kind of volunteer assistance that will be provided, number of volunteer assignments, length of volunteer assignments, and location of volunteer assignments should be included. Plans to incorporate activities that are particularly inclusive to youth and women participants should be detailed here as well.

Concept papers should include information about local connections, collaborators, and potential partner organizations to demonstrate knowledge about the country and key stakeholders. The Concept Paper should also describe the process that would be used to identify and select hosts, taking host interest and needs into account. Evaluators will consider whether the proposed activities are feasible and appropriate for F2F.

- **30 points – Volunteer Management**

Successful Concept Papers will include evidence that the applicant has the capacity to recruit capable US-based volunteers and manage safe, impactful, and enjoyable volunteer assignments. Applicants should describe their experience and capacity to recruit volunteers – particularly volunteers from non-traditional sources – and provide in-country support to volunteers while they are in the field. Applicants should describe how they plan to develop clearly-defined scopes of work, insure volunteers, handle safety and security, and provide translation services when necessary.

- **10 points – Staffing, Organizational Capacity, and Cost Realism**

Successful concept papers will include evidence that the applicant has staff and administrative systems in place to successfully implement the project and meet all award requirements. Evaluators will consider staff experience and availability, quality of financial and administrative policies and systems, potential to meet all reporting requirements, the feasibility of meeting stated objectives within funding limitations, and the Applicant's previous experience managing similar programs. The Applicant's Budget Summary will be evaluated and the overall proposed costs are expected to be allowable, allocable, fair, reasonable, and solely used for volunteer technical assistance.

## **6 Invitation to Submit Full Application**

Partners will notify applicants in writing if they have been recommended to submit a Full Application. Partners may ask an applicant to submit a Full Application for a different envelope, length of project, and/or funding amount than what was indicated in the applicant's Concept Note. As mentioned above, Partners reserves the right not to make any awards under this RFA or to make an additional award(s) under this RFA at a later date up to one year after the closing date for applications, if funding becomes available. Invitation to develop a Full Application is not a guarantee of funding.

## **7 Full Application**

**Due Date for Full Applications:** 6 PM EST September 25, 2019 (subject to change)

Requirements for the Full Application (approximately 20-25 pages in length) will be similar to those in the Concept Note, but with more detailed descriptions in each section and a full budget, past performance references, listed key personnel, and required representations and certifications. Specific guidelines and instructions will be shared with the applicant upon invitation to submit a Full Application.

## Attachment A: Budget Template and Related Questions

The attachment should be 2 pages maximum and should be submitted as Word or PDF.

Question	Response
Does your organization have a Current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with a Federal Agency?	
If Yes, which agency?	
Has your organization received Federal Funds in the past ten years?	
Does your organization currently have the financial systems, policies and staff in place to successfully manage an award of the proposed size, or would additional assistance be necessary?	
What financial software does your organization use?	
Does your organization currently have the HR systems and policies (including a travel policy) in place to successfully manage an award of the proposed size, or would additional assistance be necessary?	
How many full time and part time employees does your organization have?	

Below please provide information on three projects your organization has managed in the past seven years, whether privately and/or publicly funded projects.

Project Title	Location	Timeframe	Total Value (USD)	Donor/Funder

Direct Costs	Amount in USD	Notes
Personnel		
Fringe Benefits		
Travel		
Equipment		
Supplies		
Contractual		
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>		
Overhead Rate (%)		
<b>Indirect Costs</b>		
<b>Total USAID Contribution</b>		= SUM of Total Direct Costs and Indirect Costs
<b>Leverage</b>		
<b>Cost Share</b>		
<b>Total Project Budget</b>		=SUM of Total USAID Contribution, Leverage, Cost Share

\* Please note that F2F funds are to be used exclusively on new and/or complementary volunteer activities and will neither duplicate nor offset administrative costs of activities that have existing sources of funding.

**Attachment B: Select Life-of-Project F2F Performance and Impact Illustrative Indicator Targets**

*The attachment should be 1 page maximum and should be submitted as Word or PDF.*

The table below should summarize the estimated life-of-project indicator targets for a selection of potential indicators for this AVOP Small Grant Project. These are illustrative only as the indicators will be finalized at a later date and the targets will need to be reviewed.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Projected Three Year Target</b>
Number of volunteer assignments (international trips)	
Number of volunteer days completed	
Number of assignments by women volunteers	
Number of host organizations assisted	
Number of persons trained (total)	
Number of women trained	
Number of Youth engaged	
Number of volunteer recommendations made	
Increase in host annual net income (USD)	
Increase in host annual gross sales (revenue) (USD)	
Area under improved production or natural resource management (NRM) practices (ha)	
Number of loans issued by host	
Number of new or improved products or services	