

November 1, 2023

Subject: Notification of Funding Opportunities (NOFO-2.1) to Promote Sustainable Livelihoods in Non-Urban Areas.

Dear Interested Applicants:

1. Introduction

Through this Notification of Funding Opportunities (NOFO), the USAID Responsible Investment and Trade Activity (the Activity) aims to identify Myanmar organizations and companies interested in seeking the Activity's assistance to promote sustainable livelihoods in non-urban areas.¹ The proposed solutions should align with the Activity's objectives outlined on page 2 under "Activity Description."

The Activity will review and evaluate concept notes through a two-stage process outlined in section 6, "Selection and Co-Design Process." Interested applicants must submit a response as outlined in section 7, "Submission Instructions." The Activity will send a Request for Application (RFA) only to those applicants who successfully pass the due diligence process.

Summary

Objectives	<p>The USAID Burma Responsible Investment and Trade Activity (the Activity) is a five-year (July 2020–June 2025) USD 18.7 million activity that will help promote sustainable livelihoods in non-urban areas. The Activity will increase the sustainability of micro-enterprises, business service organizations (BSOs), and community support organizations (CSOs) in non-urban areas. It will also seek to empower women to participate more fully in the economy and build resiliency in Myanmar's agribusiness value chains as well as in other sectors.</p> <p>Selected applicants would receive assistance through (a) one or a combination of the Activity's grant mechanisms (in-kind; fixed amount; or cost-reimbursable grant) or (b) direct technical assistance to support interventions where the applicants' objectives align with those of the Activity.</p>
Submission Requirements	Interested applicants should submit concept notes using the template in Annex 1 as per the instructions outlined in section 7, "Submission Instructions."
Deadline for Receipt of Questions and Virtual Q/A Session	<p>The Activity may host three virtual Question and Answer (Q&A) sessions to answer questions about the NOFO-2.1 from interested applicants on the following tentative dates at 10:00 a.m. (Myanmar time):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 28, 2023 • February 22, 2024 • July 3, 2024 <p>Applicants must email RITA_Support@dai.com to receive the registration link to attend any of the above tentative virtual Q&A sessions before November 20, 2023, February 15, 2024, and June 26, 2024, for the respective session by submitting the complete name of the attendee, NRC number, date of birth, citizenship, gender, organization/company name, and the designated position. Applicants may also submit written questions in advance to the same email address. It is important to note that meeting slot is limited, and registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis.</p>

¹ Non-urban areas are defined to include all townships in Myanmar except those within the Mandalay and Yangon regions.

Competition Period and Deadline for Responses	<p>The Competition Period for this NOFO-2.1 will be from November 1, 2023, to October 31, 2024.</p> <p>Interested applicants should respond by email to RITA_SupportRequest@dai.com with the subject line: <i>[your organization name] NOFO-2.1.</i></p> <p>At DAI's sole discretion, concept notes received will be considered on a rolling basis throughout the Competition Period. All available funds for this NOFO may be allocated to awards from the first round of evaluations.</p>
Anticipated Engagements	DAI anticipates the start date upon award with a period of performance of up to one year.

2. Activity Description

The USAID Burma Responsible Investment and Trade Activity (the Activity) is a five-year (July 2020–June 2025) USD 18.7 million activity that promotes sustainable livelihoods in non-urban areas. The Activity will increase the opportunity for micro-enterprises in non-urban areas to access finance and increase their resiliency. The Activity will also increase the ability of the private sector, BSOs, and CSOs to support vulnerable communities, empower women to participate more fully in the economy, and build resiliency in Myanmar's agribusiness value chains as well as other sectors through support for livelihood opportunities.

The Activity contributes to USAID Burma's Development Objective 2, "Inclusive economic growth strengthened," and Intermediate Result 2.2, "Responsible and transparent private sector expanded." The Activity also contributes to USAID's Private Sector Engagement Strategy, Indo-Pacific Strategy, and the Integrated Country Strategy.

3. Purpose of the NOFO

The purpose of the NOFO is to identify Myanmar organizations and companies that are interested in seeking the Activity's assistance to promote sustainable livelihoods in non-urban areas. While the proposed initiatives and solutions must align with the Activity's objectives of increasing the sustainability of micro-enterprises, BSOs, and CSOs in non-urban areas, the Activity is ideally, but not exclusively, seeking initiatives that will positively contribute toward one or more of the following initiatives:

- Increasing the opportunity for micro-enterprises in non-urban areas to access finance.
- Building capacity of (MFIs) and select (NBFIs) that operate in non-urban areas.
- Increasing the resiliency of micro-enterprises in non-urban areas.
- Assisting Myanmar's private sector to invest in corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects in non-urban areas.
- Supporting BSOs and CSOs to build the capacity of non-urban micro-enterprises.
- Supporting the private sector, BSOs, CSOs, and vocational training opportunities to improve non-urban communities' resiliency.
- Building capacity of solar energy project developers to expand into non-urban areas.
- Raise awareness of gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) with non-urban micro-enterprises.
- Build resiliency in Myanmar's agribusiness value chains and other sectors.

Applicants seeking funding for equipment must consider the following:

- Only new, unused equipment is eligible for consideration.
- Applicants are expected to have adequate purchasing policies and procedures (that follow best practices for ensuring transparency, competition, and price reasonableness and preventing conflicts of interest).² and purchasing systems in place to conduct their own procurement to identify a supplier on a competitive basis and bear the upfront cost of the equipment. At a minimum, applicants should be fully prepared to adopt such procurement policies and procedures for procuring and managing the proposed goods and services.

² Applicants need to procure goods and services through adequate competition, which is established when offerors respond to identical requirements specified in the applicant's solicitation, when offers received meet the requirements defined by the applicants in the solicitation, and when two (or more) responsible offerors competed independently of each other. Price reasonability for quotes received must be established and can be based on other proposed prices received in response to the solicitation or on market research on published commercial prices.

- Total Grant Award/Funding for each applicant should include all costs related to equipment, custom-build-out, accessories, spare parts, shipping, importation, tax, delivery to the applicant location, installation, training, after-sales service, and warranty. Applicants take full responsibility for ongoing maintenance and must use the equipment for the intended purposes.
- Applicants are expected to bear the upfront cost of the equipment. Once the equipment is delivered, installed, and operational as specified as milestones under the grant, the recipient is eligible to receive equipment funds from the Activity.

4. Who May Apply?

Ideal applicants will be organizations or companies with the capacity of project implementation, execution, and access to finance. Ineligible applicants include any sanctioned entity or organization, political parties, and organizations that advocate or promote anti-democratic policies or illegal activities; entities that have misused USAID funds in the past; entities whose name appears in the System for Award Management (SAM) with an active exclusion; and entities included in any supplementary information concerning individuals and entities that USAID may prohibit.

5. Application Evaluation Criteria

Concept notes should present challenges and solutions with an implementation time limit that would end no later than February 2025. The Activity may choose to fund all or parts of the proposed solution. The following are the primary criteria that the Activity will use to assess all concept notes, with the understanding that factors other than cost hold greater significance when considered together:

1. The proposed initiative addresses the Activity's objective of promoting sustainable livelihoods in non-urban and ethnic areas.
2. The proposed initiatives promote the increased sustainability of micro-enterprises and/or BSOs/CSOs in non-urban areas and ethnic areas.
3. Degree of logical fit between the problem and solution and expected results.
4. A well-defined implementation strategy that includes practical activities, allocated resources, and a realistic timeline.
5. Past experience.
6. Challenges and risks identified, and recommended mitigations and solutions.
7. Existing management expertise and capacity.
8. Return of investment based on cost of solutions and projected outcomes.
9. Demonstrated institutional capacity to manage (technically, administratively, and financially) the proposed initiatives and has potential for sustainability.

6. Selection and Co-Design Process

The Activity uses a two-stage process to identify and design support for applicants that will contribute to achieving the Activity's objectives:

- **Stage 1. NOFO Review and Selection:** Activity staff will review and evaluate submitted NOFO concept notes based on the criteria set forth above and prioritize the order in which selected applicants proceed to Stage 2. Prioritized applicants will be contacted during this process for additional post-NOFO concept notes for required information and documentation prior to selection for Stage 2. The Activity reserves the right not to review any incomplete, inaccurate responses, or those that do not meet the Activity's requirements. Due to the expected considerable number of submissions, the Activity will inform applicants if they are rejected but are unable to provide detailed information to each applicant on their submissions.
- **Stage 2. RFA, Grant Application Review, Selection, and Award:** The Activity anticipates issuing a Request for Application (RFA) to the applicants selected from Stage 1 to submit a full grant application (cost and technical) per the terms of the RFA. The full application is reviewed by a selection committee and accepted if it meets the eligibility and selection criteria set forth in the RFA. The grant will require USAID approval for the award. Once grant applications are selected, the Activity will co-design the application prior to approval submission to USAID and conduct a Pre-Award Assessment. The applicant will also be notified type of grant that will be applied (Fixed Amount Award, Standard Grant, Simplified Grant, or In-Kind Grant).

Issuance of the NOFO and RFA do not constitute an award or commitment on the part of the Activity, nor does it commit the Activity to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Any expenses or

costs that are associated with the project or activity described in the grant application that are incurred before the grant agreement is signed will be excluded, and not considered as part of the grant. The Activity reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Further, the Activity reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this NOFO and RFA.

Please see Annex 2 for information on the USAID award and administration information.

7. Submission Instructions

Interested applicants must fully and accurately complete the concept note Template in Annex 1 and submit it to RITA_SupportRequest@dai.com no later than **October 31, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. (Myanmar Time)**. Entries must be in English, using Calibri font size 11. The content should not exceed 1,100 words. Please submit your response in both the MS Excel Response Template and as a PDF, using the identical Excel template for consistency. There may be no other accompanying documentation besides the concept note Template and a valid business registration as applicable.

Should there be questions regarding the submission, applicants may send them by email to RITA_support@dai.com.

The Activity will protect and securely store responses per DAI's Code of Business Conduct and Ethics and the Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Policy. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of DAI, nor does it commit DAI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of responses. DAI reserves the right to fund any or none of the submissions. DAI reserves the right to make no engagements because of this NOFO.

Applicants should be ready to provide any requested documentation at each stage of the process to support their application. If you are interested and think you are eligible, we look forward to receiving your application.

Very truly yours,



John Go
Grants and Administration Director
USAID Responsible Investment and Trade Activity

Annex 1. Concept Note Template

Please see the MS Excel file named “NOFO concept note template.xlsx” included in the package.

Annex 2. Award and Administration Information

a. Administration of Award

Awards to U.S. organizations will be administered in accordance with 2 CFR 200 Subpart E, ADS 303, and USAID Standard Provisions for U.S. non-governmental organizations. For non-U.S. organizations, USAID Standard Provisions for non-U.S. non-governmental organizations apply. Applicants may obtain copies of the referenced material at the following websites:

- 2 CFR 200 – <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=0a5b7fee6378930cce72564449dd8bb7&mc=true&node=sp2.1.200.d&rqn=div6>
- Standard Provisions for US Non-governmental Recipients – <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/303maa.pdf>
- Standard Provisions for Non-US Non-governmental Recipients – <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf>

b. Important USAID Compliance Information

Branding - All USAID-sponsored assistance awards are required to adhere to branding and marking requirements in accordance with ADS 320. ADS 320 may be found at the following website: www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/320.pdf. Notwithstanding Section 3.3(b) and Section 4.7 of the Engagement Letter, the Activity's Branding and Marking Plan allows for co-branding with the grantee and USAID. The Activity must approve all communications materials produced under this grant before printing or publication.

Environmental Procedures - The impact of USAID's activities on the environment and environmental sustainability must be a central consideration when designing and implementing an activity. The grantee must comply with the host country's environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between the host country and USAID regulations, the latter will govern. ADS 200 may be found at the following website: www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200.

Reporting Requirements - Project implementation reporting will be determined based on the planned activities and the delineation of roles and responsibilities. A performance monitoring and evaluation plan and measurable targets and indicators will also be agreed upon. Grant recipients will be expected to facilitate monitoring by making relevant information available to DAI staff. Financial reporting will be in accordance with the requirements of the obligating document.

Certifications, Assurances, Other Statements of the Recipient, and Solicitation Standard Provisions - In accordance with ADS 303.3.8, DAI will require awarded grant partners to submit signed copies of required certifications and assurances. ADS 303 may be found at the following website: www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303.pdf.

Unique Entity ID (SAM) - Effective April 4, 2022, entities doing business with the federal government will use the Unique Entity Identifier (SAM) created at (www.sam.gov). The Unique Entity ID (SAM) is a 12-character alphanumeric value managed, granted, and owned by the U.S. government. This allows the government to streamline the entity identification and validation process, making it easier and less burdensome for entities to do business with the federal government. All U.S. and foreign organizations that receive a grant with a value of USD 25,000 and above are required to obtain a Unique Entity ID (SAM) prior to the signing of the agreement. Organizations are exempt from this requirement if the gross income received from all sources in the previous tax year was under USD 300,000. DAI requires that grant applicants sign the self-certification statement if the applicant claims an exemption for this reason.

Bank Account, Payments, and Use of Funds - Awarded grant partners must establish a separate bank account in Myanmar to house all funds provided under the grant, as well as all interest income. The Activity will make grant payments in local currency. The grant recipient must use the provided funds exclusively for activities specified in the Program Description section. Diversion of grant funds to other uses will result in the cancellation of awards and retrieval of funds disbursed to the grant recipient.

Permitted Uses of Program Income – Program income earned by a recipient that is directly generated by an activity under an award or earned as a result of the award during the period of performance. The grantee will inform DAI of any program income (gross income earned by the company that is directly generated by the procured equipment (or other type of support) under the FAA or in-kind grant or earned as a result of the FAA or in-kind grant during the period of performance and agree to follow USAID's disposition requirements for such program income in accordance with 2 CFR 200.307.

Ineligible Goods and Restrictions. The grant funds provided under the terms of this agreement must not be used to finance any of the following:

- Any cost related to construction, including building renovations. DAI defines construction costs as the construction, alteration, rehabilitation, improvement, or repair (including dredging, excavating, and painting) of a variety of structures or facilities. This may include agricultural facilities, such as irrigation systems or other improvements, markets, warehouses, or other types of buildings, roads, bridges, and collection sites.
- Profit or fee, application preparation costs, or payment of debt.
- Political elections, fees for public and elected government officials, fines and penalties, or creation of endowments.
- Goods or services that are to be used primarily to meet military requirements or to support police or other law enforcement activities.
- Surveillance equipment.
- Equipment, research, and/or services related to involuntary sterilization or the performance of abortion as a method of family planning.
- Gambling equipment supplies gambling facilities or any hotels, casinos, or accommodations in which gambling facilities are or are planned to be located.
- Activities which significantly degrade national parks or similar protected areas or introduce exotic plants or animals into such areas.
- Establishment or development of any export-processing zone or designated area where the labor, environmental, tax, tariff, and/or safety laws of the country in which such activity takes place would not apply.
- Pharmaceuticals.
- Pesticides.
- Logging equipment.
- Luxury goods (including alcoholic beverages and jewelry).
- Establishing or expanding any enterprise that will export raw materials that are likely to be in surplus in world markets at the time such production becomes effective and that are likely to cause substantial injury to U.S. producers.
- Activities which would result in the loss of forest lands due to livestock rearing, road construction or maintenance, colonization of forest lands, or construction of dams or other water control structures.
- Activities which are likely to have a significant adverse effect on the environment, including any of the following (to the extent such activities are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment):
 - Activities which may lead to degrading the quality or renewability of natural resources.
 - Activities which may lead to degrading the presence or health of threatened ecosystems or biodiversity.
 - Activities which may lead to degrading the long-term viability of agricultural or forestry production (including through the use of pesticides).
 - Activities which may lead to degrading community and social systems, including potable water supply, land administration, community health and well-being or social harmony.
 - Activities which are likely to involve the loss of jobs in the United States due to the relocation or expansion outside of the United States of an enterprise located in the United States.
 - Activities which the grantee is aware of are likely to contribute to the violation of internationally or locally recognized rights of workers.
 - Activities to support the production of agricultural commodities for export from Myanmar when such commodities would directly compete with exports of similar United States agricultural commodities to third countries and have a significant impact on United States agricultural exporters.

Factors for consideration in Purchasing Non-expendable (NXP) Equipment:

- **Definition of NXP equipment:** Goods/equipment purchased under the grant with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more and a useful life of over one (1) year.
- **Equipment:** Only new, unused equipment is eligible for consideration. New means not rebuilt or refurbished/reconditioned.
- **Manufacturer's warranty /training on the use and maintenance of equipment-** provided by vendor/supplier.
- **Geographic Code-** This is a three-digit code established by the United States Federal Government which defines the countries where goods and technical services can be procured, i.e., its "source" or "nationality." When the total procurement element during the life of the award is valued at USD 250,000 or less, the authorized source for procurement of all goods and services is defaulted to geographic code 935, which is any country excluding the Prohibited Countries listed above. If the total procurement element is more than USD 250,000, then the geographic code is 933, which is any area or country including recipient country, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source", which will be provided by DAI.
- **Non-Expendable Procurement (NXP)-** USAID has additional regulations and responsibilities that apply to assets that fit the definition of non-expendable procurement (NXP), including additional pre-approvals, inventory responsibilities, and branding and marking requirements.
- **Prohibited Countries -** The U.S. Government does not do business with, i.e., purchase goods or services from, prohibited source, nationality, and origin countries. The current list of countries under comprehensive sanctions includes Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria.
- **Annual Foreign Taxes/ Value Added Tax Reporting-** For purchases valued at \$500 or more financed with US Government funds, the Activity (DAI) will consolidate the reports and submit to USAID.
- **Property/Equipment inventory reporting** is required for goods purchased under the grant with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more and a useful life of over 1 year if the equipment is the milestone/named in a milestone unless immediate disposition approval is granted by USAID to the recipient.