

**Subject:** Annual Program Statement (APS) Number: APS-WATIH-923  
**Title of Opportunity:** Covid-19 Rapid Response in the Sahel (Burkina Faso & Niger)  
**Issue Date:** December 22, 2020  
**Deadline for Questions:** February 28, 2021 5:00pm West Africa Time (WAT)  
**Deadline for Submitting EOIs:** March 31, 2021 5:00pm WAT

The West Africa Trade and Investment Hub Activity (herein referred to as “the Trade Hub”) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is accepting Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from eligible applicants to fund a program entitled *Covid-19 Rapid Response in the Sahel (Burkina Faso & Niger)*. To be eligible for award, the applicant must meet the eligibility requirements detailed in Section C of the APS. Awards will be made to eligible and responsible applicants submitting EOIs and, subsequently, full applications that best meet the program objectives and evaluation criteria contained in Sections A and E of Attachment 1 respectively. Only applicants submitting EOIs approved by the Trade Hub will be invited to submit full applications.

For purposes of this APS, “Grantee” is synonymous with “Recipient”. Eligible applicants interested in submitting an EOI are encouraged to read this funding opportunity thoroughly to understand a) the type of program sought; b) the EOI and full application submission requirements; and c) the evaluation process. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that it has received the APS from the internet in its entirety. The Trade Hub bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from the transmission or conversion process.

Each applicant must submit its EOI using the form available at <https://smart.fluxx.io/apply/watihcovid>. The form requires each applicant to provide general information about its organization, contact details for its authorized representative and project point of contact, and a summarized description of its proposed activity for initial consideration by the Trade Hub, including the estimated amount it is requesting from the Trade Hub in grant funding and the amount it will provide in leverage/cost share. Regarding the latter, please note the minimum 1:1 match requirement (a match of up to 5:1 or more is preferred). Once the EOI form is submitted, a notification will appear on the screen confirming it was received by the Trade Hub.

If you face any difficulties submitting an EOI, please contact the Trade Hub’s grants department at [grants@westafricatih.com](mailto:grants@westafricatih.com). Any guidance provided to an applicant by the grants department or any Trade Hub staff prior to EOI submission will be strictly limited to technical issues with SMART only. After submission, the Trade Hub will only contact applicants who submit EOIs that it considers practical for further development/negotiation. EOIs must be received no later than the APS expiry date stated above.

Any questions concerning this APS must be submitted in writing to [grants@westafricatih.com](mailto:grants@westafricatih.com). Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Trade Hub nor does it commit the Trade Hub to pay for any costs incurred by a potential applicant while preparing/submitted comments, questions, or a full application. All preparation/submission costs are at the applicant's expense. Each EOI and full application submitted is at the risk of the applicant.

Thank you for your interest in this opportunity.

Sincerely,



Michael Clements  
Chief of Party  
West Africa Trade and Investment Hub

**Attachments**

**Attachment 1:** Annual Program Statement

**Attachment 2:** EOI Submission Template

**Attachment 3:** Trade Hub Performance Indicators Table

**Attachment 4:** Guide on Gender and Youth Integration for Applicants

**Attachment 5:** Trade Hub Leverage & In-Kind Contribution Policy

**Attachment 6:** Provisions

**Attachment 7:** Certifications

## **Attachment 1: Annual Program Statement (APS)**

### **A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

#### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of the Trade Hub activity is to promote and expand employment, trade, and investment opportunities both within the West Africa sub-region and international markets. This APS focuses specifically on advancing this purpose in Burkina Faso and Niger within the context of Covid-19.

#### **2. Background**

The USAID-funded Trade Hub activity is a five-year trade and investment facilitation intervention that seeks to improve private sector productivity, profitability, and competitiveness in West Africa. By co-investing with the private sector and other organizations through its grant fund, the Trade Hub will encourage additional private-sector investment and growth in strategic sectors including but not limited to: agriculture, services, water/sanitation, clean renewable energy, and light manufacturing.

A current priority of the Trade Hub is supporting West African small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) vulnerable to the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19)—a public health crisis projected to have the largest economic impact since the Great Depression. The pandemic has severely affected all social and economic sectors, including the agricultural sector. In Africa, economic models predict it will derail the economic growth of many countries, negatively impacting production and consumption, disrupting supply chains, and restraining private sector investment, thus compromising millions of livelihoods and reducing economic gains registered by many African countries over the past decades.

Though the full impact of Covid-19 on the economies of Burkina Faso and Niger is not yet known, the pandemic is expected to negatively impact growth. Early estimates predict Burkina Faso's GDP will contract by 4%. In Niger, the hotel and transport sectors have laid off 70% and 50% of their employees respectively. Household demand has dropped significantly and government revenue from tax collection has been impacted. Apart from the short- and medium-term impacts of Covid-19, both countries have confronted insecurity resulting from increased violent extremism and food insecurity driven by population growth, climate change and variability, and production deficits. Approximately one third of Nigeriens and a fifth of Burkinabe face chronic food insecurity. Levels of acute food insecurity are particularly high in volatile regions bordering Mali and surrounding Lake Chad.

Through its co-investment grant facility, the Trade Hub will co-invest a total of \$1.44M with the private sector to support projects that mitigate the financial and economic impacts of the pandemic. Such projects will provide companies in Niger and Burkina Faso, including SMEs, access to funding opportunities that help them stabilize their business and ensure continued growth during and after the pandemic. To this end, the Trade Hub will accept Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from the private sector through a rapid review process. Applicants submitting EOIs that are deemed practical for further development/negotiation will be invited to co-create a full application with the Trade Hub team for a co-investment project that may lead to a grant award valued between \$100,000 to \$500,000. Applicants must demonstrate financial commitment towards their project at a minimum 1:1 ratio (with higher leverage ratios preferred) of the funding requested from the Trade Hub. The Trade Hub may allow these co-investments to be timed later in the grant period after markets and trade recover from crisis. Co-investments should target the following sectors:

- Agriculture
- Livestock
- Finance & Investment (banks, advisory firms, private equity, etc.)
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Transportation
- Renewable Energy

Applications from a variety of geographic areas, sectors, and agricultural value chains are welcome per the objectives stated in the section below. However, supply chain actors in targeted value chains (cowpea, poultry, and livestock) who are active in USAID Sahel's RISE 2 zones (Centre Nord and Est in Burkina Faso and Tillaberi, Maradi, and Zinder in Niger) will be prioritized.

### 3. Objectives

The Trade Hub's primary objectives for its Covid-19 response in Niger and Burkina Faso are to:

- 1) Ensure access to finance during the Covid-19 crisis
- 2) Retain employment during the Covid-19 crisis
- 3) Leverage the private-sector in the response to Covid-19

#### **Objective 1: Ensuring Access to Finance During the Covid-19 Crisis**

There is currently limited access to investment and working capital for new projects or expansions and for sustaining ongoing operations in the face of Covid-19 related cash flow disruptions. Virtually all companies in West Africa are suffering from significant cash-flow disruptions and financial institutions are reluctant to extend credit to distressed companies without some form of risk mitigation.

The Trade Hub is therefore offering:

- Risk mitigation grants (first-loss) to financial institutions to expand the availability of working capital for SMEs.
- Grants to firms that assist companies in restructuring distressed financing lines or in obtaining new financing lines to support their operations.

#### **Objective 2: Retaining Employment During the Covid-19 Crisis**

Combined with reduced demand and revenues resulting from Covid-19 related operational closures and shifts in the types of products being demanded in the market, companies also face increased costs to implement new health procedures to protect their employees and customers. Companies have already made, or will need to make, difficult decisions related to reducing their workforce and compensation or potentially closing altogether.

The Trade Hub is therefore offering:

- Grants to companies for equipment and/or vocational training required to pivot to new types of production in order to sustain their workforce/employees.
- Grants to companies to implement physical and operational changes to their operations and processes that will allow them to safely operate at reduced capacities.
- Grants to companies to allow firms to maintain large formal workforces and/or extensive sourcing operations for a time-limited period.

#### **Objective 3: Leveraging the Private-Sector in the Response to Covid-19**

There are significant supply shortages for both critical medical supplies and services as well as for agricultural inputs and food staples given border closures and export restrictions.

The Trade Hub is therefore offering:

- Grants to companies to scale-up companies engaged in the direct response to COVID-19, including in areas such as manufacturing of medical apparel/PPE.
- Grants to companies that supply agricultural and other products in short supply in local and regional markets as a result of the impacts of COVID-19.

Applicants must propose activities and solutions that:

- Respond to at least one of the above three objectives
  - Help mitigate the economic and financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic
  - Practically and rapidly implement solutions to preserve continuity of operations
  - Offer a co-investment fund of at least 1:1 using private funding. (*Note: Co-investments with an up to 5:1 leverage ratio or higher are preferred.*)
  - Seek grant funding between \$100,000 and \$500,000 for projects that are preferably implemented during a 12-month period as an effort to quickly curb the effect of Covid-19.
- ❖ Note that the duration of grant awards made under the APS are subject to the program requirements and negotiations. Further, the start date of any award resulting from this APS will be upon signature, but all awards are anticipated to be approved and signed by late August 2021.

To be considered for funding, an applicant must be an eligible organization as described under Section C.1: Eligible Applicants.

#### **4. Illustrative Activities**

Illustrative examples of entities and activities that may be supported by the Trade Hub through this APS include:

##### **Ensuring Access to Finance during the Covid-19 Crisis**

- A venture capital or private equity fund providing critical capital to finance SMEs' innovation, value creation, and expansion plans. The fund may be seeking a risk mitigation grant from the Trade Hub to de-risk and multiply its portfolio of investments during Covid-19.
- An investor interested in making debt and equity investments with the Trade Hub focused on identifying and providing technical assistance to firms affected by Covid-19 that require help unlocking their financing capabilities.

##### **Retaining Employment during the Covid-19 Crisis**

- A medium to large size agribusiness that was forced to lay off employees in its Ougadougou/Bobo Dioulasso/Niamey factory due to curfews and market closures that occurred during the height of the pandemic. The applicant would like to rehire laid off employees to restart production of animal feed, eggs, maize, rice, and seeds as demand normalizes and the 2021 planting season approaches.
- An irrigation equipment distributor in Ougadougou/Niamey whose market has been impacted by the pandemic would like to pivot its production to introduce an integrated irrigation system using solar energy that limits water waste and optimizes crop yields (millet, Sorghum, groundnuts, horticulture) for producers cooperatives. The company needs the co-investment to retrain and hire new workers to pursue this opportunity.

##### **Leverage the Private Sector in Response to Covid-19**

- A cooperative of seamstresses that began making masks for the Niamey market from cuttings of local fabric who would like to expand its production to reach a larger market in Niger and Burkina Faso.
- A company that wants to increase its processing line to manufacture hydroalcoholic gel.
- A horticultural producer from the oasis region of Agadez/Ouahigouya whose market was negatively impacted by road closures at the height of Covid-19. The producer would like to recapture its market in Niamey/Ouagadougou and requires a co-investment to recapitalize its network of growers.
- An animal feed/seed producer in Niamey impacted by Covid-19 who would like to reopen its distribution network of sellers in rural areas of Tillaberi, Maradi, and Zinder to provide farmers/agropastoralists with inputs they require for the upcoming planting season.

#### **5. Authorizing Legislation**

Awards are authorized in accordance with Creative Associates International, Inc.'s contract with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

## 6. Additional Information

- a. **Monitoring requirement:** Potential grantees will be required to detail how they will monitor the impact of their proposed activity, notably the resources that will be required to ensure a high standard of data is being recorded and reported based on set indicators in adherence to the Trade Hub's Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. (See Attachment 3: Trade Hub Performance Indicators Table)
- b. **Gender:** Activities under the Trade Hub seek to reduce gender disparities in access to and benefits from investments. To that end, potential applicants will be expected to outline how their activities will increase access to technologies to improve production, expand access to and enhance women's skills and access to better paid opportunities. Applicants who demonstrate the potential for large scale impacts on women will be prioritized.

If selected to submit a full application, applicants will be expected to participate in a training that the activity will provide on gender and work with Trade Hub designated staff in the co-creation phase to ensure gender is adequately addressed in the proposal. (See Attachment 4: Guide on Gender and Youth Integration for Applicants).

- c. **Youth:** In addition to promoting gender equality, the Trade Hub also strongly promotes integrating a growing youth population within the workforce (age 15 to 29). Applicants should describe how youth will benefit from the grant and serve as agents for sustained business growth. Applicants that include elements to promote vocational training and internship programs, offer technical training to facilitate youth integration, and/or target private-sector investment to meet workforce demand of the youth will be prioritized. (See Attachment 4: Guide on Gender and Youth Integration for Applicants).
- d. **Environmental considerations:** All activities implemented under the Trade Hub must adhere to 22 CFR 216 on environmental compliance. Please refer to the following links for additional information:

Environmental compliance background information:

<https://www.usaid.gov/our-work/environment/compliance>

Information on how the Agency will ensure environmental soundness and compliance in design and implementation when required by the 22 CFR 216 determination (ADS 204):

<http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agency-policy/series-200>

- e. **Source Nationality:** Grantees will be required to procure all commodities and services in accordance with 22 CFR 228 "Rules on Procurement of Commodities and Services Financed by USAID Federal Program Funds." The authorized source for procurement is Geographic Code 937, which means that the procurement of commodities and/or services can be from the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source.

See ADS 310 for further details (<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1876/310.pdf>).

- f. **Profit/Income:** Grantees must account for all income earned under the implementation of the grant in accordance with 2 CFR 200.307 (or the Standard Provision entitled Program Income for non-U.S. organizations). Income earned under the implementation of a grant shall be added to the Activity. According to 2 CFR 200.80, Program Income means gross income earned by the recipient that is directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the award (see exclusions in 2 CFR 200.307 (f) and (g)). Program income includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed, the use or rental of real or personal property acquired under the award being implemented, the sale of commodities or items fabricated under the award being implemented, license fees and royalties on patents and copyrights, principal and interest on loans made with funds received from the Trade Hub. Interest earned on advances of funds received from the Trade Hub is not program income. Except as otherwise provided in Federal statutes, regulations or the terms and conditions of the award, program income does not include rebates, credits, discounts, and interest earned on any of them. See also 2 CFR 200.407.

## B. AWARD INFORMATION

### 1. Application Process

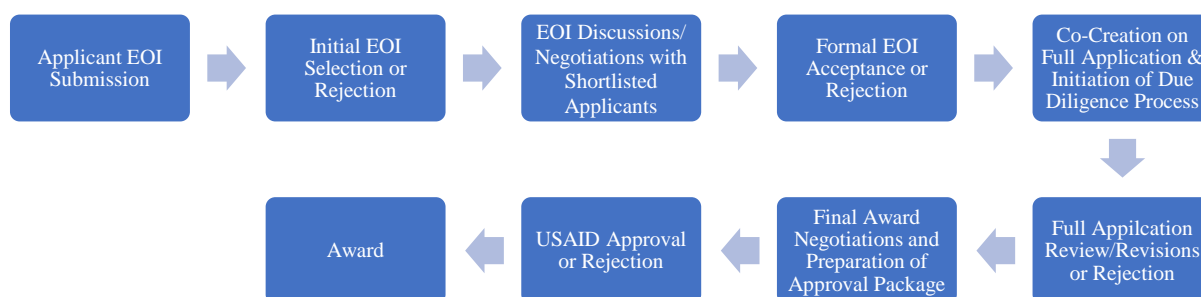
An applicant interested in this opportunity must submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) electronically to the Trade Hub using the form available at <https://smart.fluxx.io/apply/watihcovid>. The form requests the applicant to provide general information about its organization, contact details for its authorized representative and project point of contact, and a summarized description of its proposed project for initial consideration by the Trade Hub, including the estimated amount it is requesting from the Trade Hub and the amount it will co-invest in leverage/cost share.

EOI submissions will be received on a rolling basis from the date of issuance up until the closing date stated on the cover page of this APS. The Trade Hub will only contact applicants who submit EOIs considered practical for further development/negotiation. Therefore, applicants should not contact the Trade Hub after their submission. Please note that EOIs submitted after the closing date will be marked “late”. See Section D.6 for the Trade Hub’s policy on late submissions.

EOI submissions will be evaluated by the Trade Hub against the objectives in Section A.3 and the evaluation criteria in Section E.1. If an applicant’s EOI is selected for further consideration, the Trade Hub will contact the applicant to initiate negotiations and seek clarification on the proposed project. If, following these discussions, the Trade Hub determines that the project should be developed further, the EOI will be formally accepted and the applicant will begin co-creating a full application in collaboration with technical staff from the Trade Hub. Concurrently, the Trade Hub will request information (e.g., registration documents, audited financial statements) from the applicant(s) and require evidence (e.g., a fully executed loan agreement and/or an investment commitment) from the financial institution(s) or outside investor(s), including their contact details, to complete its pre-award due diligence process and determine the applicant’s viability as a grantee and co-investment partner. This will also help inform a final pre-award assessment that determines the appropriate award mechanism.

The commencement of co-creation and work on a full application does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Trade Hub. Once a full application is received from the applicant, it will again be evaluated against the objectives in Section A.3 and the evaluation criteria in Section E.1. After evaluations and any necessary revisions to the application, the Trade Hub will work with USAID to make a final determination on whether to award a grant agreement.

The graphic below illustrates the Trade Hub’s pre-award process from EOI submission to award:



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

Subject to the availability of funds, the Trade Hub plans to issue up to 7 awards under this APS. The total estimated amount of funding available is USD1,400,000. The total value of each award is estimated to range from USD100,000 to USD500,000. As the amount of an award is subject to negotiation, a final negotiated award amount may or may not fall within this range. Furthermore, the Trade Hub is not obligated to issue awards up to the amount of funds available.

**The Trade Hub reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted against approved Expressions of Interest.**

### 3. Period of Performance

The duration of grant awards made under the APS are subject to the program requirements and negotiations. Further, the start date of any award resulting from this APS will be upon signature, but all awards are anticipated to be approved and signed by late August 2021.

### 4. Award Mechanisms

It is expected that all grants awarded under this APS will be performance-based with appropriate means of verification for agreed upon milestones. These milestones will be determined in collaboration with the applicant prior to signing the grant agreement. However, the Trade Hub's final determination on award mechanism will be based on its assessment of an applicant's risk prior to award. If the Trade Hub's assessment identifies weaknesses or deficiencies that call into question the applicant's ability to manage an award, the Trade Hub may elect to remove the applicant from consideration under this funding opportunity or select a mechanism more appropriate for the applicant's current financial, administrative, and operational capacity.

## C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

### 1. Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for award under this opportunity, an applicant must demonstrate that it falls into one of the grantee categories below:

- a. Private Sector Companies – both local and international firms.
- b. Foreign Organizations (referred to as non-U.S. NGOs): either nonprofit or for-profit organizations that meet the definition in 2 CFR 200.47.
- c. Non-profit Organizations: Organizations that meet the definition of 2 CFR 200.70.
- d. For-Profit Organizations

Government entities are not eligible to apply.

In addition, an applicant must be officially registered and working in compliance with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations, including but not limited to pertinent local laws and status. In lieu of official registration, an applicant may still be eligible for award if it shows proof of effort to secure registration, exemption from registration, or cause for why registration is not optional or practicable.

### 2. Cost Sharing or Leverage

Cost share/leverage **is required** under this funding opportunity.

All grants must include cost share/leverage of private sector resources, assets, capabilities, and expertise. The value of private sector resources, assets, capabilities, and expertise (cash and in-kind) contributed to the implementation of the grant activity must at least equal (1:1 match) the monetary resources provided by the Trade Hub; however, co-investments with an up to 5:1 leverage ratio or higher are preferred. It is strongly encouraged that companies/organizations propose private sector resources, assets, capabilities, and expertise that exceed the 1:1 match minimum. As such, proposed projects that exceed the 1:1 match minimum will be prioritized.

The Cost-Share/Leverage may be structured into grants (i.e., starting three to six months after grant award) when markets revive and trade resumes.

Cost-Share or Leverage can be either cash (e.g., from operating cash flow, donor funds or other), rate discounts, services, material or third-party contributions, such as equity investors loans from financial institutions, or a combination thereof. Other USG funding sources are not accepted for cost-share or leverage requirements. Examples of in-kind contributions that may be counted include:



- Commodities;
- Use of training or other purpose-specific facilities necessary to a program's implementation;
- Value of time donated by technical consultants or company employees whose work and expertise are necessary to a project;
- Value of salaries for staff dedicated to a project;
- Technology, communications and capital assets;
- Intellectual property rights; and/or
- Licenses.

When determining whether the private sector resources and contributions can count toward meeting the 1:1 (preferably up to 5:1 or more) matching requirement, the Trade Hub will consider the following criteria:

*Attribution and Additionality*

- The contribution must support and advance the objectives and activities of the project;
- The contribution must be based upon the active engagement of the private sector partner in the design and development of the partnership;
- The application of the resources and contributions to activities under the proposed alliance must be attributable to the private sector entity's anticipated or actual engagement with the Trade Hub; and
- The provision or application of the resources must be qualitatively and/or quantitatively different than what the entity would have done in the absence of anticipated or actual engagement with the Trade Hub.

*Nature and Origin* – The contributions and resources must be private in nature and origin, come from a critical and core partner to the partnership; and come from one or more of the following sources:

- Private for-profit entities such as a business, corporation, or private firm;
- Private equity or private financial institutions, including private investment firms, mutual funds, or insurance companies;
- Private investors (individuals or groups);
- Private business or industry associations, including but not limited to chambers of commerce and related types of entities;

*Value Proposition and Development Impact* – The resources and contributions mobilized from the private sector should, in combination with the support provided by the Trade Hub, provide the partnership with a comparative advantage in achieving significant and sustainable impact on the targeted development challenge.

*Measurability* – The resources and contributions must be something of value that can be measured in some form that permits evaluation of the contribution's impact on achieving desired results.

*Composition* – Most of the private sector resources should come in the form of cash, equity capital, with a letter of intent from the equity investor, and or debt capital with a letter of commitment from the financial institution.

*Timing of Private Sector Resource Commitments and Contributions* – The mobilization, contribution, provision and/or application of the resources can take place at any time during the development or implementation of the partnership.

Cost-share and leverage comprise resources, assets, capabilities, and expertise that are not part of the amount in grant funds contributed by the Trade Hub. They are, however, treated differently:

- a. Leverage strictly comes from the private sector, while cost-share does not;
- b. Cost-share is binding and auditable under an award agreement, while leverage is not;
- c. The determination of what constitutes leverage is based on the objectives, considerations, and criteria set forth at: [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/15396/GDA%20APS\\_APS-OAA-16-000001\\_2016-2018.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/15396/GDA%20APS_APS-OAA-16-000001_2016-2018.pdf). The determination of what constitutes cost-share is set for at 2 CFR 200.306 and ADS 303.3.10.

For further guidance, see Attachment 5: Trade Hub Leverage & In-Kind Contribution Policy.

### **3. Limit on Number of EOI Submissions**

An eligible organization may submit only one EOI. Please note that issuance of this APS does not in any way obligate the Trade Hub to pay for costs incurred by a prospective applicant to prepare and submit an EOI or subsequent full application.

## **D. APPLICATION & SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **1. Submission of Initial EOI**

As a first step, interested applicants are requested to submit an EOI using the online form available at <https://smart.fluxx.io/apply/watihcovid>. A link to a Microsoft Word EOI template titled “EOI Template (COVID)” is available at the top of the online form. The template, which contains detailed instructions specific to this APS, has also been included as Attachment 2. As the online form cannot be saved, applicants are encouraged to use the MS Word template to prepare their EOI, copy and paste their finalized language into the fields in the online form, then click “Submit”. A notification will then appear on the screen confirming that the EOI was received by the program’s grants management system, SMART. The Trade Hub reserves the right to reject any EOI not submitted via the online form in SMART.

The Trade Hub will accept and give equal attention to both English and French submitted EOIs.

### **2. Submission of Full Application**

For applicants that make it past the EOI stage, their full application must be submitted in two separate parts: a) Technical Application and b) Cost Application. To prepare both parts, an applicant must use the templates provided by the Trade Hub, which provide instructions on the required content and format. An applicant not adhering to these instructions risks being considered nonresponsive to the requirements of the APS and eliminated from further consideration.

The Trade Hub will also accept and give equal attention to both English and French submitted full applications.

### **3. Submission Guidance and Assistance**

After an applicant’s EOI is accepted, the Trade Hub may provide guidance to the applicant while it prepares a full application. When such guidance is offered, the Trade Hub’s role is limited to facilitating the application process, ensuring that proposed activities contribute to the program objectives stated in Section A, and co-designing activities with the applicant. Actual preparation and submission of the technical and cost applications is the strict responsibility of the applicant.

### **4. Method for Submission**

The Trade Hub will only receive EOIs electronically via its online grants management system, SMART. If the applicant’s EOI is accepted, its authorized representative and project point of contact will receive a username and password for SMART if they have not already been registered in the system. At that stage, they will be able to use the system to share organization details (e.g., proof of registration and other due diligence documents), access technical and cost application templates, and formally submit their applications electronically.

An applicant should retain for its records one (1) copy of its EOI/full application and all enclosures that accompany it. Should an applicant experience any difficulties submitting an EOI or a full application, it should contact the Grants Department via email at ([grants@westafricatih.com](mailto:grants@westafricatih.com)).

## **5. Registration Requirements for U.S. Government Funding**

To be eligible for award under this solicitation, a non-U.S. NGO applicant may be required to obtain a valid Duns & Bradstreet number (DUNS). Information regarding DUNS registration can be found at <http://www.dnb.com/get-a-duns-number.html>. The program will notify non-U.S. NGO applicants of DUNS requirements where applicable. A U.S. NGO applicant must provide a valid DUNS number, be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting its application, and continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has: a) an active award with the U.S. Government or b) an application or plan under consideration by the U.S. Government or a U.S. Government implementing partner. Information regarding SAM registration can be found at: <http://www.sam.gov>.

If DUNS is required, the Trade Hub will not issue an award to an applicant until it has complied with this requirement. As the registration process may take several weeks to complete, applicants are encouraged to register early. Please note that completion of an early registration does not constitute any commitment on the part of the Trade Hub to make an award.

## **6. Submission Deadline**

Applicants must submit their EOI prior to the closing date listed on the cover page. EOIs that are submitted late are at risk of not being considered for review. Late submissions are marked as “late”.

## **7. Funding Restrictions**

An applicant that receives an award under this APS is responsible for ensuring that it only incurs post-award costs that were approved and determined to be allowable, allocable, and reasonable by the Trade Hub during pre-award negotiations. Furthermore, the Trade Hub will not reimburse a successful applicant for any costs it incurs prior to the date it signs a grant agreement with the Trade Hub.

## **8. Questions & Answers**

Any questions concerning this APS must be submitted in writing to [grants@westafricatih.com](mailto:grants@westafricatih.com). All questions must be received no later than the Deadline for Questions/Clarifications stated in the cover letter. Responses to questions received prior to this deadline may be furnished to all potential applicants through periodic amendments to the APS.

Any information related to this APS that is provided to a prospective applicant may be furnished to all other prospective applicants as an amendment to the APS on condition that: a) it is required to submit an EOI and/or b) its exclusion would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicant.

## **E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **1. Criteria**

Each EOI received by the closing date will initially be reviewed against the objectives stated in Section A.3, the eligibility criteria outlined in “Section C. Eligibility Information”, and the evaluation criteria below. EOIs that fail to adequately respond to at least one of these objectives and the eligibility and evaluation criteria risk being removed from further consideration. EOIs that are incomplete will be determined nonresponsive and also not considered for co-creation.

Full applications submitted by eligible, responsive applicants that advance beyond the EOI stage will be reviewed in accordance with the criteria set forth below:

No.	Description	Scoring
1	<p><b>Relevant Investment Experience</b>  Points assigned will be based on the applicant’s demonstrable capacity to operate a business sustainably. The following will be taken into consideration: 1) financial health of the business prior to Covid-19, 2) years of experience and industry experience, 3) customer base (current and prior to Covid-19), and 4) number of investments made in the last 10 years.</p>	0-10%
2	<p><b>Readiness to Implement</b>  Points assigned will be based on the extent to which the co-investment project is practical and can be implemented rapidly to curb the impact of Covid-19, particularly as it relates to maintaining business operations, preserving jobs, and investing in activities that can generate new economic activities.</p>	0-20%
3	<p><b>Private Capital Mobilization</b>  Points assigned will be based on the amount of leverage proposed. All applicants must show substantial funding leverage of at least a 1:1 ratio. Activities with higher leverage ratios are strongly preferred. Cash leverage is preferred over in-kind leverage. Therefore, the higher the cash contributions, the higher the application will score on this criterion.</p>	0-20%
4	<p><b>Job Retention and/or Creation</b>  Points assigned will be based on the impact the proposed co-investment project will have on jobs. The following key factors will be taken into consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of jobs retained</li> <li>• Percent of lost jobs recouped and time to reach pre-Covid-19 job levels</li> <li>• Number of jobs created</li> <li>• Applicant’s ability to describe the project’s anticipated impact on livelihoods</li> </ul>	0-20%
5	<p><b>Gender and Youth Approach</b>  Points assigned will be based on the extent to which women and youth, as direct and indirect beneficiaries, will be engaged/participate in the proposed co-investment project. Also, a target of at least 50% job creation for women and 50% for youth must be met.</p>	0-10%
6	<p><b>SME Business Resilience</b>  Points assigned will be based on the applicant’s ability to address as many of the following key factors as possible in its proposed co-investment project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement in SME business operations resulting in sustainable free cash flows</li> <li>• Improvement in revenues to pre-Covid-19 levels</li> <li>• Promotion of climate resilience</li> <li>• Promotion of food and nutrition security</li> <li>• Provision of medical products and services in the context of Covid-19</li> </ul>	0-20%
<b>Total Score</b>		<b>100%</b>

## 2. Evaluation Process

An applicant’s EOI/full application will be reviewed by the Trade Hub’s program staff to ensure that the activities proposed contribute to the program objectives in Section A.3 and the evaluation criteria above. During these reviews and co-creation, the applicant may be requested to respond to clarifying questions and/or submit a revised full application. However, the Trade Hub reserves the right to accept an EOI/full application without requesting clarifications or additional detail.

The Chief of Party or authorized delegate makes the final decision on all awards made under this APS.

## 3. Conflict of Interest

Throughout the evaluation process, the Trade Hub will take every step to ensure that Trade Hub staff do not have any conflicts of interest or the appearance of such with any organization/individual submitting an EOI/application in response to this APS. An individual shall be considered to have the appearance of a conflict of interest if that individual or that individual’s spouse, partner, child, close friend, or relative works for, is negotiating to work for, and/or has a financial interest (including being an unpaid member of a Board of Directors) in any organization

that has submitted an EOI/application for review by the Trade Hub. Trade Hub staff shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from any applicant.

## **F. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **1. Award Notices**

For an applicant progressing beyond the EOI stage, a Notice of Intent to co-create will be provided to the point of contact listed in the full application submitted by the apparently successful applicant. **Please note that such notification does not constitute or guarantee an award.** An apparently successful applicant must first demonstrate that it possesses or has the ability to obtain the necessary management competence to practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided. To this end, the applicant may be required to submit additional information about its organization (e.g., Articles of Incorporation or other documentation substantiating the legal character of the applicant or key individuals within its organization) for vetting purposes. Final issuance of an award will be contingent upon the timely receipt of the information requested and the successful completion of the Program's vetting process and pre-award capacity and risk assessment.

The Trade Hub will complete the pre-award capacity and risk assessment while the applicant's full application is being reviewed. The results will be used by the Trade Hub to make a responsibility determination and, if a decision is made to proceed with award, select the appropriate award mechanism.

### **2. Award Administration**

Any award resulting from this APS will be administered in accordance with the provisions in Attachment 7.

### **3. Reporting**

Reporting requirements (including a reporting schedule) will be provided in the award document for any award resulting from this APS. The specific reports required will depend on the award type and project duration; however, examples may include the following:

- Quarterly Report(s) with updates on progress made during the reporting period, photos of program activities, challenges encountered during implementation, activities planned for the next reporting period, etc.
- Final Program Report including lessons learned, success stories, any impacts achieved vis-à-vis the funded project's goal and objectives, etc.
- Financial Reports including planned obligations, actual expenditures, funds remaining, etc. as well as a detailed Final Financial Report.
- Reporting on program income (if required).

Please note that issuance of final payment will be contingent upon the Trade Hub's receipt and acceptance of the Final Financial Report and/or Final Program Report. For Fixed Amount Awards (FAAs), final payment is also contingent on the completion of the final milestone and acceptance of its deliverables/means of verification.

The Trade Hub reserves the right to co-create with and fund one, some, or none of the applications received. The Trade Hub does not use third-party persons, companies, or organizations to facilitate grant submissions. The Trade Hub does not charge a fee for any grant submission.

**Please report any suspected fraudulent activity to [grants@westafricatih.com](mailto:grants@westafricatih.com) or [hotline@creativedc.com](mailto:hotline@creativedc.com).**

**Attachment 2: EOI Submission Template**

Click [here](#) for *EOI Submission Template*.

**Attachment 3: Trade Hub Performance Indicators Table**

Click [here](#) for *Trade Hub Performance Indicators Table*.

**Attachment 4: Guide on Gender and Youth Integration for Applicants**

Click [here](#) for *Guide on Gender and Youth Integration for Applicants*.



**Attachment 5: Trade Hub Leverage & In-Kind Contribution Policy**

Click [here](#) for *Trade Hub Leverage & In-Kind Contribution Policy*.

**Attachment 6: Provisions**

Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations  
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303maa.pdf>

Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations  
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303mab.pdf>

Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards to Nongovernmental Organizations  
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303mat.pdf>

## **Attachment 7: Certifications**

### **A. CONFLICT OF INTEREST AVOIDANCE CERTIFICATION**

When signing a grant agreement with the Trade Hub, a successful applicant's authorized representative will also be required to sign a certification affirming that the entity she/he represents (the Grantee) does not have any conflicts of interest pertinent to the award. Such conflicts would include, for instance:

- Personal or professional relationships with entities that could directly benefit from the award;
- Personal or professional relationships with other staff persons involved in administering the award;
- Personal or professional relationships with government officials that may have influence or oversight of matters directly pertaining to the award;
- Holding formal or informal positions in organizations that would be relevant to the award;
- Holding any financial interest in any entity that would be impacted by the award.

By virtue of the Grantee's actions in carrying out the award, the authorized representative's certification will affirm that she/he would endeavor to ensure that conflicts of interest or their appearance do not arise, understanding that such conflicts of interest would arise when there are situations in which the Grantee is involved in multiple interests (financial, personal, or otherwise) that could be conceived of as corrupting the motivation of herself/himself or the Grantee in the discharge of duties pertinent to the award.

Should such real or perceived conflicts arise, the authorized representative's certification will affirm that the Grantee will immediately inform the Chief of Party of the Activity to discuss the matter.

### **B. OTHER CERTIFICATIONS**

When signing a grant agreement with the Trade Hub, a successful applicant will be required to sign the *Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient* referenced here: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mav.pdf>.