

**Subject:** Annual Program Statement (APS) Number: APS-WATIH-1021  
**Title of Opportunity:** Promotion of Catalytic Business Concepts (Round 2)  
**Issue Date:** February 11, 2021  
**Deadline for Questions:** December 31, 2021 5:00pm Local Time in Nigeria  
**Deadline for Submitting EOIs:** January 31, 2022 5:00pm Local Time in Nigeria

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 *Promotion of Catalytic Business Concepts (Round 2)*. 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 that successfully advance through each of three pre-award stages: EOI, concept, and full application. Applicants submitting EOIs that best meet the program objectives and evaluation criteria contained in Sections A and E of Attachment 1 respectively will be invited to co-create a concept and—if the concept is accepted by USAID—a full application with the Trade Hub.

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, concept, 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/tradehub>. 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 as a co-investment. 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 submitting EOIs 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, an EOI, concept, and/or full application. All preparation/submission costs are at the applicant's expense. Each EOI, concept, 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 8:** Environmental Review Guide

**Attachment 9:** Conflict Risk Checklist

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

### **A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

#### **1. Purpose**

The overall purpose of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded West Africa Trade & Investment Hub (the Trade Hub) is to promote and expand employment, trade, and investment opportunities both within the West African sub-region and international markets.

#### **2. Background**

The Trade Hub is a five-year trade and investment facilitation program that seeks to improve private sector competitiveness in West Africa. By co-investing with the private sector and other organizations, such as financial institutions, the Trade Hub encourages private-sector investment growth in strategic sectors including but not limited to agriculture, services, water/sanitation, and light manufacturing. The program also seeks to increase trade between the U.S. market and West Africa, including through increased utilization of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

Under this notice of funding opportunity, USAID is seeking partners investing in catalytic businesses with large-scale development impacts. Priorities for the region are described below.

**West Africa Region:** The Trade Hub seeks to fund activities in all ECOWAS countries that contribute to large-scale jobs, exports, and investment, particularly with strong demonstrated or potential links to U.S. companies, investors, or suppliers. This includes activities with the potential to engage large numbers of smallholders and/or outgrowers in regional supply chains or in the apparel or other non-agriculture sectors. Such activities should present business models capable of providing smallholders with productivity-enhancing agricultural services and technologies or employment in other sectors.

**Ghana:** In Ghana, the Trade Hub encourages private-sector growth in strategic export-oriented sectors including but not limited to agriculture and agricultural processing; services to enable greater exports; garment and apparel production; light manufacturing; and enabling factors like affordable energy services (including renewable energy) and logistics to stimulate exports. The Trade Hub also promotes activities that increase trade between Ghana and international markets, notably the U.S. under AGOA in accordance with the Prosper Africa initiative.

To these ends, the Trade Hub is seeking partners poised to make catalytic investments driving large-scale development impacts in Ghana, including export and trade expansion, new job creation and private investment, and enhanced productive capacity. All viable export-oriented activities with catalytic potential will be well considered. Potential co-investments in Ghana may focus on activities that:

- Support high value export commodities including but not limited to horticulture and tradable vegetables, shea, mango, and cashew. Processed or value-added commodities for export, including but not limited to maize and soya products, are also encouraged.
- Encourage domestic and international investment in growth- and export-oriented Ghanaian firms.
- Increase access to finance and management consulting services benefiting business operations, management, and the capacity to hire, develop, and retain staff with specific and unique skills.
- Proposals driving exports, trade, and investment that also impact USAID/Ghana's seventeen (17) [Global Food Security Strategy Zones of Influence \(ZOIs\)](#) in the target Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions (see ZOI map on page 10).
- Enable entrepreneurs and smallholder farmers to improve their business or agronomic practices.
- Include women and youth-owned businesses and support job creation, capacity building, and income generation for women and youth.
- Strengthen resilience and market systems in the agricultural sector.
- Align with the U.S. Government's [Prosper Africa](#), Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP), Power Africa, and/or Global Food Security Strategy initiatives.

Country-specific priorities outside Ghana include the following:

- In **Liberia**, the trade Hub encourages applications from businesses and investors in a range of sectors, including but not limited to conservation, biodiversity, agriculture (exports and staple), and finance.
- In **Nigeria**, the Trade Hub is specifically looking to enhance existing business networks, institutions, and firms involved in increasing the production of maize, rice, soy, cowpeas, or farmed fish (aquaculture) in priority regions including Benue, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Kaduna, Kebbi, and Niger.
- In **Senegal**, the Trade Hub encourages applications from businesses and investors in a range of sectors including but not limited to agriculture (staple and export crops), water/sanitation/hygiene, energy, and fisheries.
- In the Sahel, the Trade Hub encourages activities in **Burkina Faso** and **Niger** that are supportive of USAID's objectives to advance resilience in the region with a focus on opportunities in agriculture and other sectors with a strong contribution to job creation. 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 aims to co-invest in activities that contribute to:

- Increased value of exports and/or sales
- Value of new private-sector capital investment
- Creation of new private sector jobs
- Increased access to financing for firms and farmers
- Improved technologies and management practices

Proposed activities will be evaluated on several factors, the most important being their ability to achieve significant commercial-scale results through market-based approaches that include co-investment from private funding sources to advance the project. Another general eligibility requirement is that proposed projects and activities must be funded through private financing, which can include equity capital (internal or external) and/or debt capital from banking and other financial institutions. The Trade Hub will prioritize projects and activities exceeding the 1:1 matching fund requirement governing the grant partnership. To expand trade and investment relationships between Africa and the U.S., the Trade Hub is particularly interested in activities with the potential to engage American companies and investors, West African companies that are suppliers for U.S. companies, or use U.S. equipment and technologies. Activities with the potential to engage women and youth are also priorities.

### 4. Illustrative Activities

Below are illustrative examples of activities that could be eligible:

- An established company interested in establishing a new processing or export investment seeking a partnership with the Trade Hub to train and hire new employees and establish local sourcing operations.
- A U.S. apparel buyer seeking assistance to expand an existing local apparel company to increase production for export to the U.S. that will create an additional 500 jobs for women.
- A maize aggregator selling large quantities to major value-added processors looking to partner on investments to reduce the level of aflatoxin in maize purchased by smallholder farmers by introducing improved planting and post-harvest techniques to reduce aflatoxin levels.
- An investor interested in making debt and equity investments seeking a partnership with the Trade Hub to identify and provide technical assistance to potential firms to unlock their financing.
- A company interested in partnering with the Trade Hub as part of a plan to scale-up existing production and/or sourcing through activities such as increasing certified production or expanding its sourcing operations to new countries or geographies.

- A hardware company in Senegal seeking to introduce its products as transformational technology aimed at lowering costs and improving the quality of latrine construction in regions where USAID has already made headway in increasing access to sanitation and creating new jobs. *Note:* Co-investments in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) will only be considered in Senegal.
- An investment fund seeking to co-invest private capital in export-oriented SMEs.
- A bank seeking a partnership with the Trade Hub as part of a larger first loss capital to extend debt products to a portfolio of women owned SMEs.
- A financial institution in Nigeria specializing in loans to the agriculture sector seeking grant support to expand its portfolio of agribusiness clients.

## **5. Authorizing Legislation**

Awards are authorized in accordance with Creative Associates International, Inc.'s contract with USAID.

## **6. Additional Information**

- 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)
- Gender:** Activities under the Trade Hub seek to reduce gender disparities in access to and benefits from investments. To this 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).

- 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 for youth will be prioritized. (See Attachment 4: Guide on Gender and Youth Integration for Applicants).
- 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](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>

Please refer to the Trade Hub's Environmental Review Guide included as Attachment 8.

- 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 the procurement of commodities and/or services can be from the U.S., 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/310.pdf>).

- f. **Purchase of IT Equipment:** See ADS 303.3.35.2 for certain restrictions on the procurement of telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment:  
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303.pdf>
- g. **Construction Activities:** Note that no construction activities will be funded by the Trade Hub for any approved grant activity.
- h. **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.
- i. **Risk of Conflict:** Each Trade Hub co-investment grant is susceptible to disruption caused by violent extremism (VE), criminality, corruption, and long-standing conflicts over land rights, among other factors. These factors, individually or collectively, can contribute to a breakdown in the effective functioning of agricultural value chains and related services. Conversely, well-structured Trade Hub activities that take place in the same or proximate locations as conflict can work against “spoiler” interests who capitalize on the lack of opportunity for jobs and income. Applicants that advance beyond the EOI stage will be required to complete and update the Conflict Risk Assessment included as Attachment 9 as a reference.

## **B. AWARD INFORMATION**

### **1. Application Process**

An applicant interested in this opportunity must first submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) electronically to the Trade Hub using the form available at <https://smart.fluxx.io/apply/tradehub>. 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 and/or cost share.

EOI submissions will be received on a rolling basis from the date the solicitation is issued up until the closing date stated on the cover page of this APS. The Trade Hub will only contact applicants submitting 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.

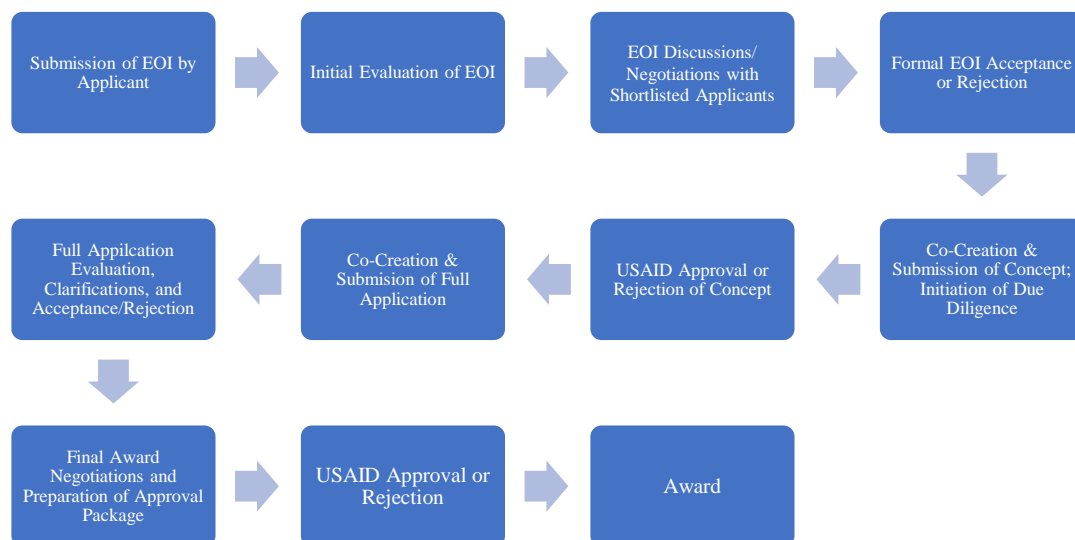
EOI submissions will be evaluated by the Trade Hub against the objectives in Section A.3 and the evaluation criteria in Section E.1. If an applicant’s EOI is selected for further consideration, the Trade Hub will contact the applicant to initiate negotiations and seek clarification on the proposed project. 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 concept in collaboration with technical staff from the Trade Hub. Concurrently, the Trade Hub will initiate its pre-award due diligence process by requesting: 1) organizational details from the applicant (e.g., registration documents, audited financial statements) and 2) evidence/proof of leverage (e.g., a

fully executed loan agreement and/or an investment commitment) from the partner financial institution(s) or outside investor(s), including their contact details, to begin validating proposed co-investments.

Fully developed, technically sound concepts with competitive private sector match ratios will be submitted to USAID for review and concurrence at the Trade Hub’s discretion based on current need and available funding. If an applicant’s concept is approved by USAID, it will be invited to co-create a full application with the Trade Hub. In parallel, the grants department will conduct a pre-award assessment to assess applicant risk and determine the appropriate grant mechanism. Taken together, these steps allow the Trade Hub to determine the applicant’s viability as a grantee and co-investment partner. As the final step, grant approval packages will be developed for viable applicants that clear the due diligence process and present and successfully negotiate full applications accepted by the Trade Hub’s technical team and Investment Committee.

The commencement of co-creation and work on a concept and/or full application does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Trade Hub. Any concept or full application requested from the applicant will again be evaluated against the objectives in Section A.3 and the evaluation criteria in Section E.1. After evaluations, clarifications, 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

Final grant amounts are subject to negotiation; however, they are expected to range between \$250,000 and \$2 million USD. Grant sizes of smaller or larger amounts may be considered should the proposed activity meet the objectives of the APS. Grantees must supply a minimum leverage ratio of 1:1 (higher leverage ratios are preferred) as further outlined in Section C.2 below.

**The Trade Hub reserves the right to fund any or none of the full applications submitted against approved expressions of interest and concepts.**

## 3. Period of Performance

The duration of grant awards made under the APS are subject to the program requirements and negotiations but are expected to be for multiple years with an end date that does not exceed June 30, 2024.



#### **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 leverage ratios up to 5:1 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.

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/GDA-APS\\_-\\_Partnering\\_for\\_Impact\\_APS-OAA-21-00001\\_-\\_10.14.2020.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/GDA-APS_-_Partnering_for_Impact_APS-OAA-21-00001_-_10.14.2020.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 to the Trade Hub at a time. Furthermore, the Trade Hub may request an applicant to submit a new EOI after evaluating its most recent submission. 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 a subsequent concept and/or 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/tradehub>. A link to a Microsoft Word EOI template titled “EOI Template (CBC)” 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 in the system.

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

### **2. Submission of Concept**

Applicants that advance to the concept stage will be registered in SMART then prepare and submit their concept to the Trade Hub in the system based on guidance from Trade Hub staff. The concept form in SMART will include a submission template with detailed instructions. Applicants not adhering to these instructions risk being considered nonresponsive to the requirements of the APS and eliminated from further consideration.

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

### **3. Submission of Full Application**

Applicants advancing beyond the concept stage will submit their full applications, including their cost applications, in SMART using templates with instructions on the required content and format provided by the Trade Hub. Applicants not adhering to these instructions also risk being considered nonresponsive to the requirements of the APS and eliminated from further consideration.

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

### **4. Submission Guidance and Assistance**

After an applicant’s EOI is accepted, the Trade Hub may provide guidance to the applicant while it prepares its concept and/or full application through a process referred to as “co-creation”. 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.

### **5. Method for Submission**

The Trade Hub will only receive EOIs, concepts, and full applications electronically via SMART, its online grants management system. If the applicant’s EOI is accepted, its authorized representative and project point of contact (POC) will receive a username and password if they have not already been registered in the system under a prior solicitation. A username and password are only required after the EOI has been submitted and the applicant has been registered. At that stage, the authorized representative/POC 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 applications electronically.

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

## **6. 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.

## **7. 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”. Furthermore, for applicants that advance beyond the EOI stage, the Trade Hub will assign submission dates for concepts and full applications. Concepts and full applications submitted beyond these dates will also be marked “late” and at risk of not being considered for review.

## **8. 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.

## **9. 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 deemed nonresponsive and not considered for co-creation. Concepts and full applications submitted by eligible, responsive applicants that advance beyond the EOI stage will also be reviewed in accordance with the criteria set forth below:

No.	Description	Scoring
1	<b>Use of Market-Based Approaches</b> Points assigned will be based on the extent to which the applicant’s proposed use of market-based approaches will achieve socioeconomic development impact such as increased exports/sales, increased investment and access to finance, substantial job creation, and improved incomes and access to technologies and markets for smallholder farmers.	0-15%
2	<b>Sustainability of Business Model</b> Points assigned will be based on the extent to which the proposed business model and approach are sustainable in terms of the company having incentives to continually generate revenues and sustain/expand activities after USAID funding ends.	0-15%
3	<b>Leverage Ratio</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.	0-15%
4	<b>Opportunities to Partner with/Source from U.S. Companies</b> Points assigned will be based on the extent to which proposed activities create opportunities to partner with U.S. companies or companies that source from U.S. companies.	0-8%
5	<b>Additionality</b> Points assigned will be based on the extent to which the co-investments and proposed activities generate clear additionality for USAID funds. This criterion assesses if the private investment and associated development impacts would be unlikely to happen (in the same way, time, or extent) without Trade Hub’s support.	0-9%
6	<b>Scalability</b> Points assigned will be based on the extent to which the proposed co-investment activities can be scaled or replicated.	0-8%
7	<b>Phased Results-Based Execution</b> Points assigned will be based on the extent to which the applicant’s proposed activities are results-based and phased in their execution.	0-5%
8	<b>Geographic Diversity &amp; Impact</b> Points assigned will be based on the degree to which the applicant’s proposed activities focus on the Trade Hub’s targeted geographic areas. Projects with investment activities that target multiple states and ZOIs will be scored higher on this criterion. Applicants are encouraged to refer to the Trade Hub’s prioritized geographic areas stated in Section A.2 of this APS.	0-10%
9	<b>Gender and Youth Inclusion</b> Points assigned will be based on the extent to which women and youth, as direct and indirect beneficiaries, will be engaged in expanded economic opportunities. <i>Note:</i> A target of at least 50% job creation for women and 50% for youth must be met.	0-10%
10	<b>Ability to Attract External Sources of Funding</b> Points assigned will be based on the extent to which the applicant’s proposed project will attract additional external sources of funding (debt/equity).	0-5%
<b>Total Score</b>		<b>100%</b>

## 2. Evaluation Process

An applicant’s EOI, concept, and/or full application will be reviewed by Trade Hub technical staff with the relevant expertise 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 concept or full application. However, the Trade Hub reserves the right to accept an EOI, concept, or full application without requesting clarifications or additional detail.

The Chief of Party or authorized delegatee 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, concept, or full 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, concept, or full 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 Trade Hub will use the results 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>.

**Attachment 8: Environmental Review Guide**

Click [here](#) for *Trade Hub Environmental Review Guide*.

**Attachment 9: Conflict Risk Checklist**

Click [here](#) for *Trade Hub Conflict Risk Checklist*.