

Subject: Annual Program Statement (APS) Number: APS-WATIH-1247
Title of Opportunity: Promoting Agricultural Innovations and Modern Technologies in Nigeria (Round 2)
Issue Date: June 2, 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 *Promoting Agricultural Innovations and Modern Technologies in Nigeria (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. Furthermore, applicants may contact info@westafricatih.com to request a meeting with the Trade Hub’s R&D team to identify opportunities for collaboration and determine if this APS, or another Trade Hub funding opportunity, is an appropriate way for the applicant and the Trade Hub to explore shared interests. Trade Hub staff may not, however, assist applicants to prepare and submit their EOI. After EOI submission, the Trade Hub will only contact applicants proposing interventions 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. 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, the Trade Hub is soliciting Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from private sector companies, non-governmental organizations, and public organizations partnering with private companies who have proven and marketable technologies and innovations to improve smallholder farmers' productivity and livelihoods in Nigeria. Concepts/activities proposed by applicants as part of their EOI submission must:

- Target one or more of the Trade Hub's five targeted value chains in Nigeria: maize, rice, soy, cowpea, and/or aquaculture.
- Target one or more of the Trade Hub's seven targeted States: Kebbi, Kaduna, Niger, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, and/or Benue.
- Be market-driven and utilize innovative technology or practices to increase agricultural/farmed fish yields and revenue within targeted market systems for smallholder farmers and/or agribusinesses/value chain actors.

The primary objective is to increase agricultural productivity and profitability through targeted interventions that scale production, dissemination, distribution, and marketing of new agricultural technologies and improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. To this end, the Trade Hub's research and development (R&D) fund seeks applicants that have innovative and marketable solutions in the target value chains, with particular focus on cross-cutting areas such as input supply, digital solutions, and improved post-harvest handling, storage, and logistics.

Examples of potential R&D interventions include:

Improved Inputs & Production Techniques

- Multiplication and commercial dissemination of improved varieties of rice, soy, maize, and cowpeas, including those that enhance nutrient value.
- Fish breeding and fingerlings production, nutrition, logistics, and processing.
- Soil fertility management, crop and site-specific fertilizer development, generic fertilizer development, marketing, and adoption.
- Improved irrigation.
- Sustainable power solutions relating to agriculture and target value chains.
- Mechanization service provision.

Digital Solutions

- Farm and weather monitoring and extension delivery services.
- Input and output markets.
- Finance and payment platforms, crowdfunding, and related solutions.

Post-Harvest Handling & Storage

- Improved cleaning, drying, treatment, storage, and handling of targeted commodities.

Further, the R&D team welcomes opportunities that can meaningfully improve nutrition and food security and help farmers adapt to climate change by achieving higher yields with less water.

3. Objectives

The Trade Hub aims to co-invest in proven technologies and innovations on a grant matching principle with local/international public and private sector actors and research institutions that promote smallholder farmer productivity and incomes. Eligible organizations proposing R&D initiatives that engage in smallholder-productivity improvements or processing, and which align with the Trade Hub's targeted value chains and regions, are invited to submit EOIs to support the piloting and scaling of their proven technologies and innovations.

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 (co-investments with a 5:1 leverage ratio or higher are preferred). Activities with the potential to engage women and youth are also priorities.

Individual applications are allowed. Additionally, joint applications between private sector and research institutions/universities are encouraged.

4. Illustrative Activities

Below are illustrative examples of activities that may be eligible:

- A company working on a new seed variety that has secured early-stage certification seeking a co-investment grant to scale up multiplication efforts and commercialize within agro-input suppliers.
- A company engaged in a new technology to improve drying of a targeted commodity (maize, soybean, cowpea) seeking to scale its prototype in the Trade Hub's target states.
- A financial institution seeking to introduce a new digital product to enhance access to agricultural credit.
- An international research organization seeking to introduce a new breed of fish in Nigeria in collaboration with a private sector company and in compliance with the Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service (NAQS) guidelines.
- A private equity firm seeking to identify various SMEs that align with the Trade Hub's R&D objectives, and to support these SMEs to become investor ready/capable of accessing Trade Hub funds, debt, or external equity investments.
- A company proposing a new technology that will utilize renewable energy for agricultural production or agricultural waste products (e.g., maize cobs, rice husks, cowpea/maize/soy stover) to generate power and reduce waste.

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).

- c. **Youth:** In addition to promoting gender equality, the Trade Hub also strongly promotes integrating a growing the 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).
- 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):

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

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

- 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 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>
Note that successful applicants will be required to sign an 889 certification.
- 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. The summarized project description serves as an initial concept embedded within the EOI form.

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. Prior to EOI submission, the applicant and Trade Hub staff (including Trade Hub implementing partner staff) may contact each other to identify opportunities for collaboration; consider how the applicant’s respective expertise, resources, and capabilities may be leveraged to meet the Trade Hub’s objectives; and determine if this APS, or another Trade Hub funding opportunity, is an appropriate way for the applicant and the Trade Hub to explore shared interests. Trade Hub staff may not, however, assist applicants to prepare and submit their EOI. After EOI submission, the Trade Hub will only contact applicants proposing interventions it considers practical for further development/negotiation. EOIs must be received no later than the APS expiry date. 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. Furthermore, as R&D funds are limited, applicants are encouraged to apply early in the process.

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 accepted, the Trade Hub will invite the applicant to co-create a concept in collaboration with technical staff from the Trade Hub. 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.

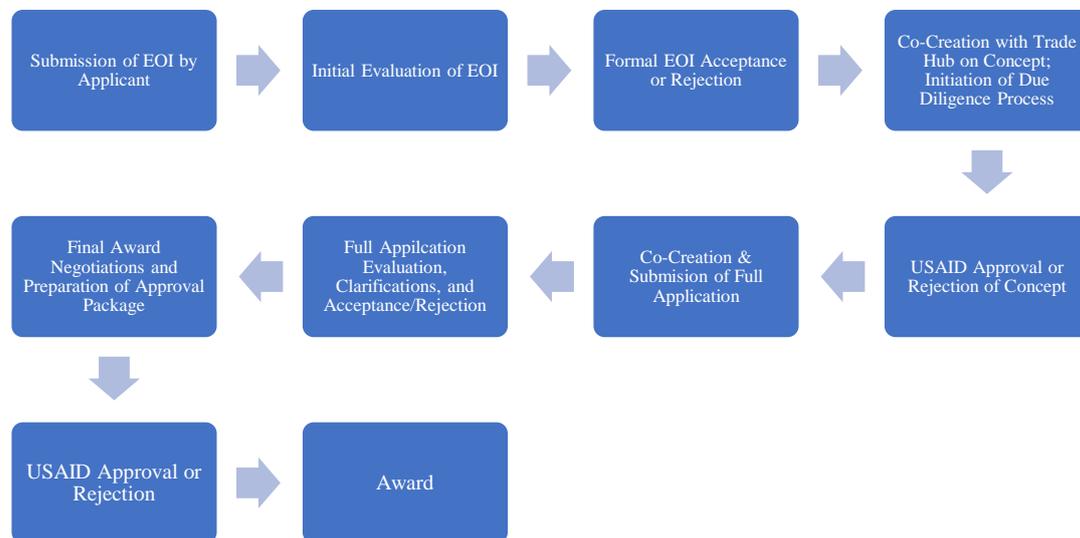
If an applicant’s concept is approved by USAID, it will be invited to co-create a full application with the Trade Hub. In parallel, the grants department will conduct a pre-award assessment to assess applicant risk and determine the appropriate grant mechanism. It will also initiate its pre-award due 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. Taken together, these steps allow the Trade Hub to determine the applicant’s viability as a grantee and co-investment partner. Certain due diligence steps may be initiated at the concept stage.

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 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 from NGN 100,000,000 (\$250,000) to NGN 200,000,000 (\$500,000). 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 April 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
- e. National and International Research Institutions, including universities partnering with private sector companies.

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 and/or leverage are required under this funding opportunity.

All grants must include cost share and/or 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 U.S. Government 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 higher) 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>
The determination of what constitutes cost-share is set forth 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/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 (R&D)” 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 only accept EOIs submitted in English.

2. Co-Creation of Concept

Applicants with approved EOIs will co-create on any necessary revisions to their proposed concept with Trade Hub staff as required. Concept revisions will be prepared in an MS Word template shared by the Trade Hub that, as a starting point, utilizes the same information the applicant entered for the project summary fields of the EOI form. Track changes and comments may be used to finalize revisions. Applicants not adhering to the Trade Hub's co-creation instructions risk being considered nonresponsive to the requirements of the APS and eliminated from further consideration. After co-creating on revisions, the Trade Hub will determine whether to request concept concurrence from USAID or reject the concept.

3. Submission of Full Application

Applicants advancing beyond the EOI/concept stage will be registered in SMART and 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 only accept full applications submitted in English.

4. Submission Guidance and Assistance

After an applicant's EOI is accepted, the Trade Hub may provide guidance to the applicant while it prepares concept revisions and/or a 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 and full applications electronically via SMART, its online grants management system. If the applicant's concept is approved by USAID, 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 initial EOI has been submitted, the concept has been approved, 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 full 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).

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”. As R&D funds are limited, applicants are encouraged to apply early in the process. Furthermore, for applicants that advance beyond the EOI stage, the Trade Hub will assign submission dates for concept revisions and full applications. Concept revisions and full applications submitted beyond these dates will also be marked “late” and are 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. 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. Full applications submitted by eligible, responsive applicants that advance beyond the EOI/concept stage will also be reviewed in accordance with the criteria set forth below:

No.	Description	Scoring
1	<p>Use of Market-Based Approaches</p> <p>Applicants should propose market-based approaches that achieve socioeconomic development impact such as increased sales, increased investment and access to finance, substantial job creation, and improved incomes and access to technologies and markets for smallholder farmers. Therefore, applicants proposing activities that speak directly to the Trade Hub’s R&D objectives defined in this APS and that a) are based on market principles, b) increase sales, and c) increase investment will receive the highest score for this criterion.</p>	0-13%
2	<p>Sustainability of Business Model</p> <p>Applicants should propose business models and approaches that are sustainable in terms of the company having incentives to continually generate revenues and sustain/expand activities after USAID funding ends.</p>	0-13%

3	Improved Food Security Applicants should propose solutions that can have a tangible impact on improving food security for smallholder farmer households through improved agricultural market systems.	0-13%
4	Leverage Ratio 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, applicants with higher cash contributions will receive higher scores for this criterion.	0-10%
5	Innovative R&D Concept Applicants should propose concepts that have been initially proven but require final piloting and initial scaling of new and unique technologies, which can lead to increased farmer productivity and/or performance of targeted value chains.	0-10%
6	Gender and Youth Inclusion 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: A target of at least 50% job creation for women and 50% for youth must be met.</i>	0-10%
7	Additionality 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 the Trade Hub's support.	0-8%
8	Scalability Points assigned will be based on the extent to which the proposed co-investment activities can be scaled or replicated.	0-8%
9	Phased Results-Based Execution Points assigned will be based on the extent to which the applicant's proposed activities are results-based and phased in their execution.	0-10%
10	Geographic Diversity & Impact Points assigned will be based on the degree to which the applicant's proposed activities focus on the Trade Hub's targeted States identified by Feed the Future (Benue, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Kaduna, Kebbi, and Niger). Projects with investment activities that target multiple states will be scored higher for this criterion.	0-5%
Total Score		100%

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 delegee 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 EOI submitted by the applicant. **Please note that such notification does not constitute or guarantee an award.** An 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, in addition to a full application, 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 acceptance of the full application, USAID approval, 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 and certifications in Attachments 6 and 7 respectively.

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 or hotline@createdc.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*.