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Deadline for Questions: July 5, 2024, 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time)
Closing Date: August 30, 2024
Closing Time: 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time)

Subject: Round 03 - BHA Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Studies Activity under Base APS 720BHA23APS00002

Program Title: BHA Multi-Year APS: Round 03-Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Studies

Federal Assistance Listing Number: 98.001

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications for up to two cooperative agreements from qualified entities to implement the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Studies Activity. Eligibility for this award is not restricted.

USAID intends to make an award to the applicant(s) who best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this NOFO subject to a risk assessment. Eligible parties interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this NOFO and the base Multi-Year Annual Program Statement thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and selection process.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this NOFO. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity and to ensure that the NOFO has been received from the internet in its entirety. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section D.6.g. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section G. The deadline for questions is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to www.grants.gov.

Issuance of this notice of funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of comments/suggestions or an application. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

/S/

Renee Newton
Agreement Officer

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SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This funding opportunity is authorized under the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. The resulting award(s) will be subject to 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and USAID’s supplement, 2 CFR 700, as well as the additional requirements found in Section F.

1. Overview of Office/Division Sponsoring the Round

The Office of Technical and Program Quality (TPQ) leads the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance's (BHA) efforts to ensure high quality programmatic and technical leadership, oversight, and guidance. TPQ strengthens capacity in technical best practices and contextually appropriate programmatic approaches focused on all dimensions of USAID/BHA programming from humanitarian response and transition into longer-term resilience programming, as well as risk analysis and early warning. TPQ designs, supports, and coordinates research to advance the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of USAID/BHA programming. Within TPQ, the Public Health and Nutrition Division (PHN) leads USAID/BHA efforts to protect the public health of supported populations and encompasses expertise in the following technical sectors: health; pharmaceuticals and medical commodities; nutrition; food technology; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

2. Problem Statement and Background

WASH sector interventions are critical for addressing essential needs, disease prevention, and dignity in humanitarian response. In the immediate aftermath of natural disasters and conflict, securing access to sufficient quantities of safe water for drinking and other household needs reduces mortality and alleviates suffering. Providing emergency and durable sanitation solutions interrupts fecal-oral contamination pathways, reducing populations’ risk of infectious disease, particularly among the most vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. Hygiene kit distribution and associated promotion provides critical dignity items such as menstrual hygiene materials, soap, and other essential items for individuals and households to practice personal hygiene behaviors and maintain hygienic environments necessary to protect their health and well-being. Furthermore, the Grand Bargain, an agreement launched in 2016 between the biggest donors and aid organizations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action, included a commitment to increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming.

WASH interventions remain critical humanitarian priorities globally. Humanitarian WASH needs are expanding due to the elevated frequency and severity of disasters coupled with the increase in disease outbreaks such as cholera. Cholera outbreaks are associated with poor WASH conditions, and cholera is reported to be active in at least 29 countries.¹

¹ OCHA. (2023). Global Humanitarian Overview 2024.

Global WASH funding in 2022 fell short by around \$2 billion of the funding requested to meet the scale of humanitarian needs.² The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs predicts there will be nearly 300 million people in need of emergency assistance in 2024, but expects funding will be far below what will be needed to meet the full scope of humanitarian need across the world.³ With growing needs and shrinking resources, the humanitarian WASH sector needs to improve its efficiency and effectiveness in order to save lives and alleviate human suffering in response to natural disasters and conflict.

USAID/BHA has a long history of supporting global research and capacity strengthening activities to advance the humanitarian WASH sector, and USAID/BHA remains the largest humanitarian WASH donor globally, addressing emergency WASH needs in over 40 countries in recent years. USAID/BHA is committed to supporting evidence-based, effective emergency WASH programming. This Round under the MY APS targets three priority knowledge gaps around timeliness of the WASH response in acute emergencies, methods and costs associated with the targeting of household WASH interventions across a range of humanitarian contexts, and infrastructure and operations and maintenance (O&M) models to support continued drinking water services over time.

2.1 Timeliness

Acute crises such as natural disasters and armed conflict cause urgent, life-threatening needs in affected populations, so it is vital that WASH responses be timely - delivering appropriate interventions at critical times. Although general emergency guidelines are to “respond within 48 hours,” it is not clear if the response includes any actions (such as conducting sector assessments), or to directly provide WASH needs. A thorough baseline of WASH response timeliness for critical life-saving activities has not been established for the sector⁴, but, in some crises, WASH actors and donors have the perception that WASH services were not delivered fast enough.⁵ The barriers to timely WASH responses are not well understood, nor the impact of delayed response for life-saving WASH interventions. The opportunities for improving the speed and efficiency of WASH interventions in acute crises remain under-researched.

2.2 Targeting

In addition to timeliness, the benefits, and limitations of standard methods of targeting at-risk and affected households have not been well characterized. Blanket distribution and targeted approaches have distinct advantages and disadvantages (e.g., time, cost, community perceptions) as well as differing requirements for appropriate application (e.g., data availability and accuracy, organizational

² Global WASH Cluster. (2023). Humanitarian Response Dashboard 2022.

³ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2024-enarfres>

⁴ Yates, T., Vujcic, J. A., Joseph, M. L., Gallandat, K., & Lantagne, D. (2018). Efficacy and effectiveness of water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions in emergencies in low- and middle-income countries: a systematic review. *Waterlines*, 37(1), 31–65.

⁵ Cosgrave, J. (2008). Global Survey of gaps in WASH capacities for emergencies: Results of on-line survey conducted from July to September 2008. Global WASH Cluster.

capacity, human resources). In addition, the scale of the disaster or level of need in the geographic area may support the use of a particular targeting method over others. The response context (e.g., acute, urgent humanitarian, and early recovery response settings) also can dictate what targeting approach is enacted. The evidence base for various targeting approaches needs to be interrogated and strengthened to validate whether current practices are the most appropriate and effective across a range of response settings, and if/when targeting approaches should be modified to meet context-specific needs.^{6,7}

2.3 Infrastructure and Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Models

Most emergency WASH interventions involve repair, rehabilitation, upgrading, or construction of WASH infrastructure; and the WASH sector historically has struggled with infrastructure functionality and sustainability.^{8,9,10} While long-term sustainability may not be appropriate in all humanitarian response contexts, water supply infrastructure and the water services that the infrastructure enables, are priorities to prevent recurring needs and protect public health impacts in crisis-affected populations. The current baseline durability (defined here as functionality for at least two years) of humanitarian water supply infrastructure is not well characterized, but it is generally agreed upon that it needs to be improved in many response contexts.¹¹ Many humanitarian water supply interventions do not evaluate medium- to long-term functionality of rehabilitated or newly constructed water systems, and it is unclear what a reasonable expectation of durability should be for various response scenarios (e.g., acute disasters, chronic crises, conflict settings). Many factors influence functionality; however, one critical gap causing repeated failure of water supply infrastructure is the lack of appropriate and effective O&M models.

Most humanitarian water supply interventions (and many water supplies in development contexts) rely on community-based management models where water user committees are responsible for drinking water service delivery, including collection of tariffs and operating, maintaining, and repairing the infrastructure. This model has major weaknesses in terms of inadequate technical and financial capacity and support.¹² Development WASH actors have demonstrated that alternative models for technical and

⁶ World Food Programme (WFP) Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division. (2021). Targeting and Prioritization: Operational Guidance Note. World Food Programme.

⁷ Trocaire, 2021. Targeting in Humanitarian Programmes. <https://www.trocaire.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Targeting-in-Humanitarian-Programmes-FINAL.pdf?type=policy>

⁸ Foster, T., Furey, S., Banks, B., & Willetts, J. (2020). Functionality of handpump water supplies: a review of data from sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia-Pacific region. *International Journal of Water Resources Development*. 36:5, 855-869. DOI: 10.1080/07900627.2018.1543117

⁹ Thomas, E., Jordan, E., Linden, K., Mogesse, B., Hailu, T., Jirma, H., Thomson, P., Koehler, J., & Collins, G. (2020). Reducing drought emergencies in the Horn of Africa. In *Science of The Total Environment* (Vol. 727, p. 138772). Elsevier BV. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.138772>

¹⁰ REAL-Water. 2023. Desk Study: Professionalizing Rural Water. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Rural Evidence and Learning for Water Project.

¹¹ United Nations Children's Fund. (2019). *Water Under Fire Volume 1: Emergencies, development and peace in fragile and conflict-affected contexts*. UNICEF. New York.

¹² World Bank. 2017. "Sustainability Assessment of Rural Water Service Delivery Models: Findings of a Multi-Country Review." World Bank, Washington, DC.

financial management can support more sustainable WASH services.^{13, 14} Some variations on the three main management models are shown below in Table A.1. The enabling environment varies between development and humanitarian contexts, and there is a wide range of enabling environments even within humanitarian contexts that can impact the appropriateness of various O&M models. There is a knowledge gap to understand how both proven and promising O&M models can be adapted and applied in humanitarian contexts to improve functionality of water supply infrastructure in emergency responses and fragile contexts.

Table A.1. Variations on Management Models for Rural Water Service Delivery¹⁵

Supported Community-Based Management			Private Service Providers			Public Service Provision	
Water Committee manages infrastructure and tariffs with external support as needed from the service authority (usually local government) and local mechanics	Water Committee manages water service delivery with the formal delegation of some technical and/or financial functions to private operators	Grouping of Water Committees into associations or federations to support economies of scale for technical and financial management	Privately owned and operated water systems (invest, build, operate, maintain and repair), with oversight by service authority	Local government delegates some technical and financial management functions to private operators	A specialized asset holding company delegates some technical and financial management functions to private operators	A local government department or unit directly manages water supply infrastructure and tariffs for sustained water service delivery	A national or subnational utility directly manages water supply infrastructure and tariffs for sustained water service delivery

3. Program Goal, Purposes and Outcomes

3.1 Theory of Change and Methods

The main goal of this Round is to generate evidence to support improved speed and targeting of humanitarian WASH interventions and durability of humanitarian water supply infrastructure leading to more efficient and effective WASH programs. Achievement of this goal will contribute to improving the quality of the WASH humanitarian response for communities and households affected by crises. The purposes detailed below were identified as priority knowledge gaps by USAID through a rigorous consultative process across the humanitarian WASH sector, a systematic literature review, and iterative

¹³ University of Colorado Boulder. (2020). Maintenance Approaches to Improve the Sustainability of Rural Water Supplies. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership.

¹⁴ REAL-Water. (2023). Emerging findings in rural water service management. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Rural Evidence and Learning for Water Project.

¹⁵ Adapted from REAL-Water. (2023). Emerging findings in rural water service management. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Rural Evidence and Learning for Water Project. Available online: [EMERGING TRENDS IN RURAL WATER MANAGEMENT](#)

ranking exercises.¹⁶ The Theory of Change posits that if USAID addresses these priority knowledge and practice gaps then the efficiency and impact of humanitarian WASH programs will improve.

Addressing the critical gaps in the humanitarian WASH sector highlighted in this Round will require a range of technical approaches, as well as researchers working in tandem with humanitarian practitioners. Activities funded under this Round should address the key knowledge and practice gaps described above through an appropriate combination of methodologies for targeted research, implementation, and/or dissemination and capacity strengthening activities, resulting in more efficient and effective humanitarian WASH interventions and improved public health in crisis-affected populations. This activity should lead to operationally relevant findings and outputs that improve WASH outcomes in humanitarian settings.

3.2 Purpose I

Increase sector understanding of baselines, barriers, and opportunities around humanitarian WASH response timeliness and participant targeting to improve response speed and effectiveness.

USAID intends to award one cooperative agreement of up to \$750,000 in USAID funding over a maximum two-year period focused on filling knowledge gaps in the timeliness and targeting of WASH interventions, as summarized in Table A.2, and described in more detail below.

Table A.2. Summary of Purpose I topics, WASH interventions, and humanitarian response context

Sub-purpose topic	Range of WASH interventions to include in analysis	Humanitarian response context
I.A: Timeliness of WASH response	Full range of humanitarian interventions in drinking water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (including menstrual hygiene)	Acute onset phase only
I.B: Targeting of WASH response	Household-level WASH interventions	Acute, urgent humanitarian, and early recovery response settings ¹⁷

Sub-Purpose I.A. Timeliness of WASH response: Increase humanitarian sector understanding of WASH response timeliness and barriers/enablers to response speed across a range of WASH interventions in acute onset emergencies.

Deploying timely WASH interventions in response to acute onset emergencies is critical to reducing excess mortality and morbidity. The humanitarian WASH sector often mobilizes quickly to provide non-food items (NFIs) and sufficient water access to crisis-affected populations, but a true baseline response speed for these interventions has not been established. There is inherent tension between responding sooner without full information or taking time for a needs assessment before deploying a response. Many in the sector feel that it takes too long to respond in acute emergencies with provision of life-

¹⁶ Wise T., & Bentley, M. (2022). [Emergency WASH Research and Capacity Building Priorities from a Donor Perspective](#). University of North Carolina Water & Health Conference 2022.

¹⁷ As defined in BHA’s Emergency Application Guidelines Common Requirements (page 13)

saving WASH support, but the barriers and enablers to improving WASH response speed are not well understood.

USAID/BHA is interested in supporting work that would establish baseline response timeframes for the full range of humanitarian interventions in the WASH subsectors of drinking water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (including menstrual hygiene) in acute onset emergency settings. USAID/BHA is also interested in establishing appropriate expectations for the time to begin and complete provision of WASH interventions after an acute shock. The modalities of the WASH interventions should include responses that provided direct service delivery for water and sanitation, distribution of WASH-related NFIs, and single-sector¹⁸ cash/vouchers for WASH needs.

Related to the knowledge gap around baseline response times, there are gaps in understanding the barriers and enablers for improving response speed for WASH interventions in future emergencies, for example the time to conduct an assessment. Delays in repair and construction of critical WASH infrastructure, in particular, can negatively affect public health outcomes in the immediate acute response phase. Identifying and investigating the factors that influence the speed of provision of WASH interventions should support streamlined programming in future responses, resulting in reduced mortality and improved public health in acute onset emergencies.

Activities supporting this sub-purpose could include a selection of the following illustrative methodologies (non-exhaustive): secondary data review, desk review, key informant interviews (KIIs), program evaluations, and/or data analysis. Diverse sources of data should be collected from a variety of humanitarian WASH actors (e.g., Global/National WASH clusters, international NGOs, national/regional/local governments, local organizations, participant populations) to address this knowledge gap. Activities supporting this sub-purpose must:

- Investigate baseline WASH response speed;
- Identify key factors influencing WASH response timeliness in acute onset emergencies; and,
- Develop guidance for the humanitarian WASH sector for future responses.

USAID/BHA expects activities under this sub-purpose will result in four outputs:

1. A report - The report must contain concrete and actionable recommendations for humanitarian WASH sector stakeholders to improve response time and prioritization for the provision of WASH interventions in acute onset settings and include:
 - A summary of the information collected (average and range of response times) for the range of humanitarian responses for water, sanitation, and hygiene in acute onset settings;
 - A discussion of the impact of these response times for different interventions;
 - An analysis of barriers and enablers to response time, and how these barriers and enablers to timeliness were addressed or leveraged in previous responses; and

¹⁸ This Round does not refer to USAID/BHA Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA), only to cash provided as part of a WASH-sector response.

- A set of actionable recommendations for WASH sector stakeholders related to timeliness of responses.
2. Sector validation workshop following the report.
 3. Guidance for the humanitarian WASH sector for future responses, incorporating findings from validation workshop (2-5 pages)
 4. A dissemination plan - Post-award, the recipient will develop a dissemination plan to reach a range of different stakeholders.

Sub-Purpose I.B. Targeting of WASH response: Increase humanitarian WASH sector understanding of the costs, benefits, trade-offs, and best practices for identifying beneficiaries for household-level WASH interventions across acute, urgent humanitarian, and early recovery response settings.

The methods used to identify households to receive humanitarian WASH assistance differ depending on the size, scale, and urgency of the response. Blanket distribution of NFIs, cash, vouchers, and other in-kind assistance are common in acute onset emergencies, while targeting based on rigorous needs assessments using defined criteria for vulnerability is often used after the acute response phase to address the most critical public health needs in the most vulnerable populations.

Blanket distribution and various targeting methodologies have particular advantages and disadvantages that may make them more or less appropriate depending on the response context. More work is needed to better understand when and how best to apply various targeting approaches for WASH assistance across the range of acute, urgent humanitarian, and early recovery response settings. In particular, the costs (in time and in money) of different targeting approaches is a key area of interest in the broader humanitarian community and in need of further investigation.

USAID/BHA is interested in supporting work that will elucidate the costs, benefits, trade-offs, and best practices for a range of household targeting approaches for WASH-related cash, voucher, and NFI interventions (e.g., hygiene kits, water treatment products). Targeting approaches include:

1. Blanket distribution to all affected households;
2. A single- or multi-criteria yes/no or threshold targeting strategy (E.g., does the household have a toilet/latrine?, Does the household have at least one child under five?, Does the household have any of the following characteristics: child currently enrolled in malnutrition programming, pregnant or lactating women, disabled family member(s)); and,
3. An index-type targeting strategy requiring household surveys to identify and rank the most vulnerable households.

Comparing the qualitative and quantitative advantages and disadvantages of these approaches across a variety of historic and active responses is needed to validate the current recommendations on applying targeting to WASH responses. In particular, USAID/BHA is interested in understanding the full costs and results of the different targeting methods. Data on the cost of interventions when blanket distribution is used is relatively straightforward to calculate, but the cost of targeting is not well understood in terms of the hidden costs of additional staffing and logistics required to implement single-criteria or indexed targeting strategies.

Activities supporting this sub-purpose could include a selection of the following illustrative methodologies (non-exhaustive): secondary data review, including reports in USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse¹⁹, key informant interviews (KIIs), data analysis, program evaluation, modeling, and/or supply chain studies. Activities supporting this sub-purpose must:

- Evaluate and document the financial costs of WASH interventions of using blanket and targeted approaches for household WASH responses in drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene across acute, urgent humanitarian, and early recovery response settings.
- Document actual (or estimated) financial costs including additional staff and transportation needs, if any.
- Document results for access to WASH products and services as they relate to provision of cash, vouchers, NFI distributions, or other in-kind assistance for WASH services, to refine WASH sector best practices across a range of response contexts.

USAID/BHA expects activities under this sub-purpose will result in four outputs:

1. A report - The report must contain concrete and actionable recommendations for WASH sector stakeholders to improve targeting of household-level WASH interventions (including cash, vouchers, and in-kind) in terms of actual costs for meeting WASH needs in a range of acute, urgent humanitarian, and early recovery response settings, and include:
 - A summary of targeting methods used in different response contexts (blanket distribution, single-criteria, or index-type targeting);
 - A discussion of the impact of the targeting methods on the timeliness of the WASH interventions in different response contexts; and
 - Results of the cost comparison of different approaches to targeting of WASH interventions in different response settings.
2. Sector validation workshop following the report.
3. Guidance for the humanitarian WASH sector for future responses, incorporating findings from validation workshop (2-5 pages)
4. A dissemination plan - Post-award, the recipient will develop a dissemination plan to reach a range of different stakeholders.

3.3 Purpose II

Identify and validate effective operation and maintenance models to improve the durability of rural water supply infrastructure implemented in acute, urgent humanitarian, and early recovery humanitarian response settings.

USAID intends to award one cooperative agreement of up to \$2,250,000 over a three-year period under Purpose II to address water supply infrastructure durability and operation and maintenance models to provide drinking water for affected rural populations in different humanitarian response contexts. Post-

¹⁹ [Development Experience Clearinghouse](#)

award, USAID/BHA will require the award recipient to form a technical advisory group, including USAID as a member, to guide their work under this purpose.

Sub-Purpose II.A. Identify O&M models for rural water supply: Identify promising O&M models for rural water supply infrastructure that have been implemented in or could be adapted to acute, urgent humanitarian, and early recovery humanitarian response settings.

As noted above in Section 2, many humanitarian (and development sector) water supply programs in rural settings rely on community-based management models. These water systems are prone to frequent breakdowns and delays in repairs, while populations affected by crises are often at higher risk of water-related diseases. There are O&M models in use in development contexts that may have potential to provide sustained water supply in humanitarian contexts. Humanitarian actors have utilized diverse O&M models for water supply, however there is not widespread understanding of the success rates, available options, benefits, and trade-offs of previously implemented and new O&M models for different types of water supply infrastructure.

There is also a knowledge gap on what level of functionality can be expected across various humanitarian response contexts due to constraints in humanitarian settings (given that sustainability is a challenge even in more stable settings) and what kind of inputs are required for durability (defined for these purposes as functionality for at least two years). USAID/BHA is interested in supporting work that will increase the humanitarian WASH sector's knowledge about O&M models that contribute to durability of water supply infrastructure, thereby improving provision of safe drinking water in a range of humanitarian contexts.

Activities supporting this sub-purpose could include a selection of the following illustrative methodologies (non-exhaustive): secondary data review, key informant interviews (KIIs), program evaluation, and systems analysis.²⁰ Activities supporting this sub-purpose will advance humanitarian WASH actors' understanding of durability and available and potential new O&M models for rural water supply by:

- Evaluating baseline durability/functionality and critical factors to support durable humanitarian water supplies;
- Identifying promising O&M models for different types of water supply infrastructure in different humanitarian response contexts; and
- Identifying or documenting potential strengths and weaknesses in different response contexts, along with transition options.

USAID/BHA expects activities under this sub-purpose will result in four outputs:

1. A report detailing O&M models for a range of humanitarian response contexts, and include:
 - Documented effectiveness, strengths, and weaknesses of currently used O&M models along with a description of the humanitarian response context and any existing transition strategies;

²⁰ Tillet, W. Trevor, J, Schillinger, J & DeArme, D (2020): Applying WASH systems approaches in fragile contexts: A discussion paper.

- Other promising O&M models that could be used or modified for humanitarian response, along with an analysis of potential strengths and weaknesses for different humanitarian response contexts, and proposed transition strategies for these O&M models; and
 - A discussion of any limitations or knowledge gaps that remain around choice of water supply technology and O&M models for water supply in a range of humanitarian contexts.
2. Sector validation workshop following the report.
 3. Guidance for the humanitarian WASH sector for future responses, incorporating findings from validation workshop (2-5 pages)
 4. A dissemination plan - Post-award, the recipient will develop a dissemination plan to reach a range of different stakeholders.

Sub-Purpose II.B. Validate selected O&M models: Validate promising operation and maintenance model alternative(s) (from Sub-Purpose II.A or other sources) in multiple humanitarian response contexts.

The humanitarian WASH sector lacks tested models of O&M for drinking water service delivery in different humanitarian response contexts. The knowledge gap includes both the technical and financial aspects of operating, maintaining, and repairing water systems.

USAID/BHA is interested in supporting work that will provide field-level performance data on a selected subset of O&M models for drinking water service delivery in a range of humanitarian contexts. Performance indicators should include the following SPHERE standards²¹ for quantity, accessibility, and management, and draw on other recent literature on functionality.^{22, 23}

- Average volume of water used for drinking and domestic hygiene per household (Minimum of 15 liters per person per day)
- Percentage of household income used to buy water for drinking and domestic hygiene (Target 5 percent or less)
- Percentage of targeted households who know where and when they will next get their water.
- Percentage of water systems/facilities that have functional and accountable management systems in place.
- Number of service disruptions and time to repair.

Activities supporting this sub-purpose could include a selection of the following illustrative methodologies (non-exhaustive): piloting, testing, and documenting performance of new or modified O&M models during humanitarian response contexts. Activities supporting this sub-purpose will contribute to the humanitarian WASH sector’s understanding of effective approaches for drinking water service delivery in a range of humanitarian response contexts by:

- Testing promising new or modified O&M models for different types of water supply infrastructure in different humanitarian response contexts; and,

²¹ The Sphere Handbook. 2018. Available online at: [The Handbook editions and languages | Sphere Standards](#)

²² [The Drought Resilience Impact Platform \(DRIP\): Improving Water Security Through Actionable Water Management Insights](#)

²³ [Sustainable WASH Systems Learning Partnership End of Project Report](#)

- Identifying and documenting potential strengths and weaknesses in different response contexts using SPHERE indicators, along with proposed transition strategy options.

USAID/BHA expects activities under this sub-purpose will result in four outputs:

1. A report detailing the performance of one or more O&M models and describing the humanitarian response context where it/they were deployed. The report should include a discussion of any limitations or knowledge gaps that remain around the piloted O&M model(s) and proposed next steps for the humanitarian WASH sector to continue to improve effectiveness of responses.
2. Sector validation workshop following the report.
3. Guidance for the humanitarian WASH sector for future responses, incorporating findings from validation workshop (2-5 pages)
4. A dissemination plan - Post-award, the recipient will develop a dissemination plan for incorporating findings from the validation workshop, to reach a range of different stakeholders.

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SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID intends to award up to two cooperative agreements—one for each purpose—pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide:

- For Purpose I USAID intends to award one (1) Cooperative Agreement of up to \$750,000 in IDA / funding over a maximum of two-year period.
- For Purpose II USAID intends to award one (1) Cooperative Agreement of up to \$2,250,000 in IDA funding over a maximum three-year period.

2. Expected Outputs/Outcomes and Performance Indicators

This Round falls under BHA’s Humanitarian Policy, Studies, Analysis, or Applications sector; Applied Research and Studies subsector. All award(s) for this Round will have the expected outputs, indicators, and targets described in Table B.1 below.

Table B.1. Expected Outputs, Indicators, and Targets for Purpose I and Purpose II

Expected Output or Indicator	When Due	Description	End-of-Activity Target
Annual Work Plan	Draft submitted with full technical application Finalized post-award with substantial involvement of USAID/BHA Final draft submitted no later than 30 days post-award	The work plan must include a brief description of the discrete efforts being undertaken with a timeline for those efforts. Starting with year 2, annual work plans should also include a review of accomplishments; challenges encountered; progress towards achieving specified results; and a dissemination plan, including proposed channels.	1 per purpose
Required permissions and approvals (e.g. Protection of Human Subjects)	Prior to beginning any household data collection	Inform USAID/BHA in writing that requirements have been met (recipient must keep documentation on file). See USAID and USG policy. ²⁴	As needed
Final Research Report for each sub-purpose	Draft submitted at least 60 days before end of agreement	Report for each sub-purpose meeting the criteria described in Section A.3	2 per purpose
Technical Advisory Group (terms of reference including composition of members)	By end of first quarter post-award	USAID will be a member of the Technical Advisory Group	1 (Purpose II only)
Indicator: Number of research reports produced	In all required progress reports (semi-annual, annual, and final activity report)	Indicator required for the Humanitarian Policy, Studies, Analysis and Applications; subsector for Applied Research and Studies	2 per purpose
Indicator: Number of research reports shared with the humanitarian community	In all required progress reports (semi-annual, annual, and final activity report)	Indicator required for the Humanitarian Policy, Studies, Analysis and Applications; subsector for Applied Research and Studies	2 per purpose
Optional Custom Indicators	In all required progress reports (semi-annual, annual, and final activity report)	Include additional output or outcome indicators as needed.	As needed

²⁴ [Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations - A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 303, https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-22/chapter-II/part-225](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-22/chapter-II/part-225)

3. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The anticipated start date for the awards is on or about January 2025. The anticipated period of performance is up to 2 years for Purpose I and up to 3 years for Purpose II.

4. Substantial Involvement

Per Section B.4 of the Base APS and in accordance with the [ADS 303.3.11](#), the cooperative agreements awarded through this Round will require the following elements of substantial involvement by the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR):

- Approval of the recipient's annual work plans
- Approval of key personnel
- Approval of the recipient's final research methodology²⁵
- Review and approval of the draft research reports for each sub-purpose
- Monitoring to permit specific kinds of direction or redirection of the work because of the interrelationships with other projects or activities
- For Purpose II.B., approval of country/countries of pilot implementation

See base APS section B.4 for additional guidance on Substantial Involvement.

5. Authorized Geographic Code

See Base APS Section B.5

6. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient

See Base APS Section B.6

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²⁵ See USAID reference at: [Research Plan \(Protocol\) Guidelines | USAID Learning Lab](#)

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility for this NOFO is not restricted. See Base APS Section C.1. for additional information.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost share is not required for this Round and, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.306, it will not be used as a separate factor during the merit review of applications. However, if the applicant decides to include cost share, the application must provide detailed information, including the amount of matching funds and in-kind contributions, in U.S. dollars (USD) and not percentages (2 CFR 200.306, 2 CFR 700.10, ADS Chapter 303). The proposed cost share will be incorporated into the award budget.

3. Additional Requirements for New Applicants

See Base APS Section C.3.

4. Other

See Base APS Section C.4.

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SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

All communications concerning this Round, including its appendices and technical references, must be submitted in writing by July 5, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) to the following:

Email: BHA.720BHA23APS00002-03.WASH@usaid.gov

2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this Round should be submitted by email no later than the date and time indicated in Section D.1, as amended. The government reserves the right to receive questions from those selected to submit a full application.

3. General Content and Form of Application

Concept papers will be required for Round 3. General guidance is provided below.

To be considered as a potential prime on a full application, an organization may submit a total of two concept papers under this Round, one concept paper per purpose. If an organization submits more than one concept paper for either purpose, only the first one received (demonstrated by the timestamp on the email when received by USAID) will be evaluated.

See Base APS Section D.3 for guidance that applies to the concept paper, full technical and cost applications.

Phase 1 Concept Paper submission

For Round 3, interested applicants must submit a concept paper via email to: BHA.720BHA23APS00002-03.WASH@usaid.gov. Under 5 CFR 1320, the Paperwork Reduction Act, only electronic copies of concept papers will be accepted. The concept papers must be received by the deadline on the cover page of this document for Round 3 (demonstrated by the timestamp on the email when received by USAID). Each applicant when emailing a concept paper must include the APS number and Round number in both the email and file names and add in the email Subject Line the APS Number and the Round number with the words "Concept Paper". USAID's email server cannot handle more than 10 MBs of attachments per email. If the applicant must divide the submission into more than one email, please number the emails in the subject line and indicate in the email's subject line the desired sequence of emails (i.e., XXXX - APS Number, Round 3, Email 1 of 3). It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary documentation is complete and received on time.

Concept papers received for this round will be reviewed based on full and open competition and under the procedures and review criteria identified in Section E. This evaluation will be by a USAID/BHA Selection Committee (SC) for responsiveness to all the criteria outlined in each this Round. Competition under this Round will consist of a two-step process where applicants first submit a concept paper for an initial competitive review.

After a concept paper is received, USAID/BHA reserves the right to pose clarifying questions and conduct discussions with any applicant but may opt not to do so if it believes it has sufficient information in the concept paper itself. Posing clarifying questions and conducting discussions with one applicant does not obligate USAID to do so with all applicants.

After the concept papers are evaluated, all successful applicants may be invited to submit a full application.

The applicant's submission, and USAID/BHA's acceptance, of a concept paper does not guarantee that USAID/BHA will request a full application. USAID/BHA understands that the information in a concept paper will be preliminary and may change in the full application (if requested). Concept papers are not evaluated against other concept papers, but rather against the concept paper review criteria for this Round. The evaluation/review of the content in the concept papers for this Round will allow USAID/BHA to determine if an organization could propose a potentially successful and responsive technical approach in a full application. Due to the number of concept papers received, USAID/BHA is not able to provide details on why concept papers were not selected/passed. USAID/BHA may limit the number of initial submissions selected to move forward based on efficiencies.

Phase 2: Full Application

The Technical Applications for Purpose I and Purpose II must be specific, complete, and presented concisely. It must demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the objectives of this program. The application must take into account the requirements of the program and merit review criteria found in Section E of this Round.

See Base APS Section D.4. for additional submission instructions applicable to technical applications, and cost applications.

4. Application Submission Procedures

Competition under this Round will consist of a two-step process. To be considered as a potential prime on a full application, an organization may submit a total of two concept papers under this Round, one concept paper per purpose. If an organization submits more than one concept paper for either purpose, only the first one received (demonstrated by the timestamp on the email when received by USAID) will be evaluated.

Concept papers for either or both purposes in response to this Round must be submitted no later than the closing date and time indicated on the introduction letter. Late applications will not be reviewed nor considered. Applicants must retain proof of timely delivery in the form of confirmation from the receiving office. After reviewing the concept papers, USAID/BHA will provide a deadline and any additional submission instructions to the applicant(s) invited to submit full technical and cost applications.

See Base APS Section D.4. for additional submission instructions applicable to technical applications, and cost applications.

5. Technical Application Format for Purpose I and Purpose II

The Technical Applications for Purpose I and Purpose II must be specific, complete, and presented concisely. It must demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the objectives of this program. The application must take into account the requirements of the program and merit review criteria found in Section E of this Round.

a. Phase 1: Concept Paper

Concept papers for each purpose must include the following information. Concept pages should be a maximum 10 pages for sections i through v below, as per the page section limits.

- i. Cover page conveying the information detailed in Base APS Section D.3 (maximum 1 page).
- ii. Technical approach (maximum 5 pages) including:
 - Summary of activity design: A succinct summary of the proposed activity, structured by sub-purposes and interventions. This section must:
 - Include a detailed description of proposed interventions, as well as methodologies (with relevant rationales), processes, or steps that will be undertaken to implement each proposed intervention within the timeframes outlined in this Round.
 - Demonstrate how the proposed interventions will achieve the primary purposes indicating how the activity will advance the goal of WASH improvements and adaptation.
 - Justify the selected geographic location(s), describe how selected country(ies) or responses are strategic choices to inform the purposes of this Round, and include a description of the vulnerabilities and capacities for each location.
 - Institutional Capacity and Management Structure: Brief description of the applicant's accomplishments and experience in humanitarian WASH responses and in implementing the activities outlined in the summary of the activity design, and the applicant's proposed management structure for achieving the purposes.
- iii. List or map of the proposed humanitarian responses to include in data collection (and implementation for Purpose II.B) (maximum 1 page)
- iv. Draft work plan (maximum 2 pages)
- v. Budget Overview (maximum 1 page). The illustrative budget overview must state the total estimated amount for the purpose and each object class cost category, for each sector. The sector for this Round is Humanitarian Policy, Studies, Analysis and Applications. Object class categories are logical groupings of costs, such as staff salaries, fringe benefits, travel, equipment.
- vi. (as defined in 2 CFR 200.1), supplies, and indirect costs. A sample budget template for IDA-funded activities²⁶ is available on the BHA Emergency Application Guidelines Page.

²⁶ Found at [USAID-BHA Budget Template IDA | Document](#)

- vii. Up to two examples of reports from prior research in the humanitarian WASH sector to demonstrate institutional capacity. (no page limit, not included in the 10 page limit)

b. Phase 2: Full Technical Application

The requirements for the full Technical Application are listed below. This format applies to both Purpose I and Purpose II applications. None of the other documents listed in the Base APS Section D are required for full applications under this Round. To facilitate the competitive review of the applications, USAID will consider only applications conforming to these content guidelines.

Technical Application Format

- i. Cover Page
- ii. Executive Summary
- iii. Activity Design
 - Technical Approach/Program Description
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- iv. Management Approach, Structure, and Staffing
 - Management Approach
 - Management Structure
 - Key Personnel and Activity Specific Staffing Plan
- v. Institutional Capacity
- vi. Other Supporting Documents Required for this Round
 - Gender Analysis Summary - See Base APS Section D.6.b
 - Accountability to Affected Populations - See Base APS Section D.6.d
 - List or Map of Proposed Targeted Intervention Geographic Areas for Purpose II.B - See Base APS Section D.6.e
 - Organizational Chart - See Base APS Section D.6.f
 - Curriculum Vitae of Key Personnel - See Base APS Section D.6.g
 - Letters of Commitment for Key Personnel - See Base APS Section D.6.h
 - Nonexclusive letters of commitment from any proposed sub-awardees or consortium members, if applicable
 - Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (see requirements below)
 - Proposed terms of reference, including composition of members, for a Technical Advisory Group (Purpose II only)
 - **Draft Annual Work Plan (5 pages maximum)**

Instructions for Full Technical Application

These instructions supersede those of the Base APS.

- i. Cover Page (maximum 1 page) conveying the information detailed in Base APS Section D.3.
- ii. Executive summary (maximum 2 pages): The executive summary must provide a high-level overview of key elements of the technical application, including the problem statement and justification for the activity, and the technical approach and program description.
- iii. Activity Design (20 pages maximum)

(Theory of Change and Purpose Overview, as described in the Base APS, are not required for applications under this Round.)

Technical Approach/Program Description

The technical application will be the critical item of consideration in the selection of an applicant(s) for an award(s). The information provided in the technical application must be specific, complete, and presented concisely. The technical application must demonstrate how the proposed activities will achieve the selected purpose and sub-purposes, including specific results anticipated. The scoring in the merit review criteria set forth in Section E below of this Round indicates the relative importance of the required sections.

The successful application(s) (as may be revised) will become the Program Description for the award(s) resulting from this Round. Thus, applications submitted in response to this Round must be written clearly and in results-oriented terms. The technical application must provide the information using the following headings:

- Technical approach and program description: Include a detailed description of the proposed interventions covering the following topics from the USAID research plan²⁷:
 - A short background/literature review section for the approach describing evidence base (3 pages maximum)
 - Describe objectives of the approach (2 pages maximum)
 - Research Methodology
 - Describe the study design. Explain its appropriateness to the project and the objectives/questions previously outlined. Describe how the study design helps address possible sources of bias. Explain how the study will involve relevant stakeholders and address community-identified priorities, as applicable. (5 pages maximum)
 - Sampling plan - Provide details about how the data will be identified and selected (2 page maximum)
 - Data collection - Describe any study instruments or methods that will be used to collect data or construct variables (3 page maximum)
 - Describe plan for data analysis (2 page maximum)
 - Ethics (1 page maximum)
 - Timelines, charts, or other graphics may be included for illustrative purposes, within the overall 20 page maximum for the Activity Design section
 - Diversity, equity, and inclusion: As relevant to the proposed design, this section must describe strategies for targeting and integrating diverse minority groups (gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, ability, etc.). (1 page maximum)
- iv. Management Approach, Structure, and Staffing (5 pages maximum)

²⁷ [Research Plan \(Protocol\) Guidelines | USAID Learning Lab](#)

The technical application must provide the information using the following headings:

- Management Approach:

Applicants must explain how their management approach will ensure holistic, integrated, and adaptive management. This must include a description of:

- Any planned management approaches and processes that will foster integrated activity planning, implementation, and coordination within the proposed award. The applicant must also describe approaches to collaboration with other USAID funded activities, as applicable, and with other external stakeholders, including government partners, other donor funded activities, private sector actors, local partners, and other change agents;
- Adaptive management approaches at all levels of staffing, including any field agents, that will enable feedback cycles that foster experiential learning and utilization of data from assessments, surveys, research, and routine monitoring. This should include planned approaches to identify and address unintended consequences as well as scenario planning around activity responses to anticipated shocks and/or changes in the political, social, environmental and/or market context. Also describe the management processes that will enable the application of analysis and learning in adaptations to ongoing implementation and management strategies, and updates to learning strategies and plans. These processes are expected to continue throughout the life of the award.
- Performance management strategies that will measure the effectiveness of proposed interventions, and an explanation of how these interventions will achieve the intended outcomes in a sustainable fashion. Performance management strategies must include a description of how the applicant will monitor, identify, and link with adaptive management strategies, and address implementation quality issues throughout the life of the award;
- Plan for potential shifts in approaches that adapt to unforeseen events like shocks, management or staffing changes, etc.; and
- Efforts to coordinate, link, and leverage complementary activities implemented by other actors. This must include a description of how the proposed activity will: leverage existing public, private, and donor investments to achieve the goal; complement the activities of the local government and donor-facilitated interventions; and support proposed strategies to leverage other USAID investments in the region.

- Management Structure

The applicant must describe a management structure that ensures the efficient use of resources, effective and adaptive management, strong technical implementation, and administrative support. The management structure must demonstrate the necessary technical competencies to implement the proposed interventions. The applicant must explain their own management structure, and, if applicable, that of all members of a consortium and sub-awardees; personnel management of

expatriate and national staff; lines of authority; and communication channels between organizations and staff.

If proposing sub-awardees or a consortium management model, applicants must describe how the partnerships will be structured, organized, and managed. Applicants must specify the responsibilities of all organizations and the rationale for their selection (i.e., organizational strengths and weaknesses, technical expertise, etc.); proposed staff and reporting relationships within and between each of these organizations; and how the consortium will be structured to ensure cohesive and coordinated knowledge sharing, planning, decision-making, and implementation across roles and organizational boundaries. Nonexclusive letters of commitment from any proposed sub-awardees or consortium members must be submitted with the application.

The application must demonstrate the degree to which the applicant and all proposed consortium members or sub-awardees possess the depth and breadth of institutional capacity, technical expertise, and management systems to plan, implement, and support the pathways and interventions described in the technical approach.

- Key Personnel and Activity-Specific Staffing Plan

Key Personnel

Key Personnel are those individuals whose performance is critical to the success of the purpose. For this Round, the applicant must submit a CV and Letter of Commitment for each of the two key personnel positions listed below:

Project Director: The applicant must designate a Project Director who will serve as the main point of contact, provide overall technical strategy and direction for all project activities and staff, be responsible for global and institutional technical leadership, and ensure administrative, fiscal, and regulatory oversight of the project. The role will serve as the principal institutional liaison to USAID, and as needed, with USAID's implementing partners, and other donors and stakeholders. At least 50% level of effort (LOE) is required for the Project Director position.

The proposed Project Director must have:

- Master's degree or higher in a relevant field;
- Significant leadership experience in each of the following areas, totaling at least 10 years: research, technical expertise in humanitarian response (experience in WASH required), and project management of overall alignment, strategy, and execution across all partners and sub-partners;
- Minimum of five (5) years of demonstrated leadership and senior managerial experience overseeing a team (or teams) of cross-cutting expertise in support staff and/or consultants; and
- Fluency in English oral and written communication.

Deputy Project Director for Research Operations: The applicant must designate a Deputy Project Director for Research Operations who will serve as the secondary point of contact, providing back-up

support to the Project Director as well as project-wide technical, operational, and administrative oversight. At least 50% LOE is recommended for the Deputy Project Director for Research Operations.

The proposed Deputy Project Director for Research Operations must have:

- Master’s degree or higher in a relevant field;
- At least seven (7) years of demonstrated technical experience in a combination of multiple cross-cutting areas, such as social science, humanitarian WASH response, and data analytics;
- Minimum of three (3) years of demonstrated leadership and managerial experience overseeing a team (or teams) of support staff and/or consultants; and
- Fluency in English oral and written communication.

Activity-Specific Staffing Plan

Applicants must provide a comprehensive staffing plan that demonstrates their ability to recruit highly qualified staff, including any technical, managerial, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and program learning staff that will be sufficient to implement the proposed interventions and achieve the objectives outlined in the Technical Approach and Management Approach and Staffing sections of the Round. The staffing plan must demonstrate:

- Staff with substantive experience in the area being proposed (both key and non-key personnel). Necessary staff skills should include humanitarian response, water and sanitation service delivery, adaptive management, data management, gender and social inclusion, stakeholder engagement, and supply chain management.
- How staff, and consultants as required, will be encouraged to work collaboratively across teams
- How staffing will be adjusted based on learning during implementation

v. Institutional Capacity - 2 pages maximum

The applicant/consortium must address the following in this section:

- Applicable experience, including relevant technical experience, outlining the knowledge, capabilities, and competencies relevant to the scope of work and intended roles;
- Experience securing IRB approvals for research in developing countries; and
- Experience creating public goods and engaging a broad set of stakeholders.

6. Other Supporting Documents

These documents do not count against the above page limits, but note that some do include their own page limits. This list of supporting documents supersedes the instructions in the Base APS.

- a. Gender Analysis Summary - *See Base APS Section D.6.b*
- b. Accountability to Affected Populations - *See Base APS Section D.6.d*
- c. List or Map of Proposed Targeted Intervention Geographic Areas for Purpose II.B - *See Base APS Section D.6.e*
- d. Organizational Chart - *See Base APS Section D.6.f*
- e. Curriculum Vitae of Key Personnel - *See Base APS Section D.6.g*
 - Each Curriculum Vitae of Key Personnel should not exceed five (5) pages in length.

- f. Letters of Commitment for Key Personnel - *See Base APS Section D.6.h*
- g. Nonexclusive letters of commitment from any proposed sub-awardees or consortium members, if applicable
- h. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- i. **Draft Annual Work Plan (5 pages maximum)**

The requirements for the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan described here replace the requirements described in the Base APS.

The M&E plan has two components (Indicator Tracking Table and Monitoring Approach) and must describe the technical resources and expertise that the applicant will utilize in implementing the proposed approach and how these resources will be organized to deliver the desired outcomes. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to adequately monitor and evaluate the activities throughout the duration of the award. Applications must include the two required and any custom output and outcome indicators for proposed activities, where feasible, and describe the methods used for data collection and analysis.

- *Indicator Performance Tracking Table* (No page limitation)
- *Monitoring Approach* (4 pages maximum) documenting the activity's M&E processes, methods, and elements. Describe how data will be collected, transferred, stored, managed, safeguarded, and used safely and ethically while avoiding harm. Describe data responsibility at different levels, including interactions with beneficiaries or vulnerable populations, other organizations, or clusters/sectors and inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

7. Cost Application Format

- **Cover page**
For more information, see Section D.3 of the Base APS for instructions.
- **SF 424 forms**
For more information, see Base APS Section D.7.b
- **Required Certifications and Assurances**
For more information, see Base APS Section D.7.c
- **Budget and Budget Narrative**
Specific budget and budget narrative requirements for this Round are found below. Applicants should also refer to Base APS Section D.7.d for related instructions.
 - i. Applicants should use the [USAID-BHA Budget Template for IDA funded activities](#) and the corresponding [Budget Narrative Example](#). Awards made under this Round will be funded with IDA funds.
 - ii. The following elements (described in the Base APS) are not required for applications under this Round:
 1. The Executive Summary Table and Annual Estimate of Requirements;
 2. Program Income; and
 3. Climate and Environmental Safeguards.

iii. Applicants should use the following sectors in developing budgets and budget narratives, as applicable: Humanitarian Policy, Studies, Analysis or Applications (HPSAA); and WASH.

- **Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407**

For more information, see Base APS Section D.7.e.

- **Approval of Subawards**

For more information, see Base APS Section D.7.f.

- **Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM Registration**

For more information, see Base APS Section D.7.g.

- **History of Performance**

Not required with applications; only apparently successful applicants will be required to provide history of performance and only upon request of the Agreement Officer. For more information see Base APS Section D.7.h.

- **Branding Strategy & Marking Plan**

Not required with applications; only apparently successful applicants will be asked to provide a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan to be evaluated and approved by the Agreement Officer and incorporated into any resulting award. For more information see Base APS Section D.7.i.

- **Funding Restrictions**

For more information, see base APS Section D.7.j.

- **Conflict of Interest Pre-Award Term**

For more information, see base APS Section D.7.k.

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SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

As referenced in the base APS (Section D.4) BHA may request applications be submitted according to a ‘phased approach’. This Round will utilize a phased competition system under which applicants will first submit brief concept papers for Purpose I and/or Purpose II. USAID/BHA will review and evaluate these concept papers in accordance with the evaluation criteria below to determine whether USAID/BHA would consider funding the applicant’s conceived program, without imposing the burden of preparing full applications initially. To be competitive under this solicitation, applications must be fully responsive to all directions in this Round 3 document, and the directions in the Base APS.

Applicants who submit the most responsive concept paper(s) will then be requested to submit full applications for the conceived program. Such a request is not a commitment by USAID/BHA to support the conceived program (or portion thereof) and does not guarantee that USAID/BHA will fund a full application after it is submitted.

USAID/BHA will evaluate full applications in accordance with the criteria set forth below.

Phase 1: Concept Paper

1. Criteria

A USAID/BHA Selection Committee (SC) will review all concept papers for their technical merit against the concept paper evaluation criteria and weights below. The criteria are organized in descending order of importance where technical merit is the most important factor. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review both the Base APS and the Round document to which they are applying.

Criterion	Description of evaluation criteria
<p>Criterion 1: Technical approach and geographic targeting</p>	<p>The concept paper should be specific, complete, and concise. While the technical approach will be evaluated in terms of overall quality, the evaluation will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The extent to which the concept is well conceived, technically sound, and addresses the considerations identified in the Round. ● The extent to which the proposed interventions are appropriate, realistic, and likely to achieve the intended results within the proposed time frame.
<p>Criterion 2: Institutional capacity and management structure</p>	<p>This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project, demonstrated administrative and financial ability to implement the technical approach, and the degree to which the project is likely to achieve its stated purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The extent to which the breadth and depth of an applicant’s accomplishments and experiences in humanitarian WASH

	<p>responses demonstrate capacity to implement the purpose efficiently and effectively</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the proposed management structure will enable the applicant to accomplish the purpose of the award effectively and efficiently (including a subaward management system for any proposed subawards)
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2. Review and selection process

USAID/BHA evaluates concept papers against the concept paper review criteria in each specific Round, not against other concept papers. USAID/BHA evaluates concept papers to determine if an organization could propose a potentially successful and responsive technical approach in a full application. Due to the number of concept papers received, USAID/BHA is not able to provide details on why concept papers were not selected/passed.

After evaluating all concept papers, the SC may invite one or more applicants to submit a full application. The applicant’s submission, and USAID/BHA’s acceptance, of a concept paper does not guarantee that USAID/BHA will request a full application. USAID/BHA also understands that the information in a concept paper will be preliminary and may change in the full application, if a full application is requested. USAID/BHA will provide a deadline and any additional submission instructions to the applicant(s) invited to submit a full application.

Phase 2: Full Application

In the event of a successful concept paper for either or both purposes, each applicant must review all relevant documents of the Base APS, this Round, and any subsequent information from the SC on the preparation and submission of a full application.

1. Criteria

The SC will review all full applications for Purpose I and Purpose II for their technical merit against the full application evaluation criteria and weights below. The criteria are organized in descending order of importance where technical merit is the most important factor. Any award(s) that may be made will go to the organization(s) whose application(s) offer the best technical approach according to the merit review criteria and the best value to USAID subject to availability of funds and at the discretion of the Agreement Officer.

2. Review and selection process

- a) Merit Review

USAID will conduct a merit review of all requested applications received that comply with the instructions in this Round. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the following criteria, shown in order of importance. The bullets under each criterion below are intended to further explain the relevance of the evaluation factor and will not be scored individually.

Criterion	Description of evaluation criteria
Criterion 1: Technical approach	<p>The application should be specific, complete, and concise. While the technical approach will be evaluated in terms of overall quality, the evaluation will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The extent to which the activity is well conceived, technically sound, and addresses the considerations identified in the Round. ● The extent to which the proposed interventions are appropriate, realistic, and likely to achieve the intended results within the proposed time frame. ● Level of innovation, creativity, locally appropriate solutions, and local partnerships in the activity design and implementation. ● Strength and realism of M&E plan to measure results and achievements of the activity using the appropriate targets and indicators. ● Gender and social inclusion are clearly addressed throughout the technical design/program description.
Criterion 2: Management approach, structure, and staffing	<p>This section will be assessed based on the extent to which the proposed management approach and structure supports the technical approach and demonstrates an ability to achieve program objectives (including a subaward management system for any proposed subawards). The management section will be evaluated in terms of overall quality and efficiency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The management structure and staffing should reflect efficient use of resources, as well as effective and adaptive management, strong technical implementation, and administrative support. ● Effectiveness of the proposed staffing plan, which should also include the technical, administrative, and financial support personnel required to implement the program (describing the roles and responsibilities for key and non-key personnel). ● Strength of the technical background and qualifications of each proposed key personnel, as described in Section D.
Criterion 3: Institutional capacity	<p>This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project, demonstrated administrative and financial ability to implement the technical approach, and the degree to which the</p>

	<p>project is likely to achieve its stated purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Demonstrated technical and contextual expertise related to conducting research in humanitarian contexts● Demonstrated understanding of the humanitarian architecture (e.g., coordination mechanisms, endorsed guidelines/standards, etc.) and ability to coordinate work with other relevant actors● Demonstrated ability to implement work that informs and influences the global humanitarian community
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b) Cost Review - See Base APS Section E.2.b

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SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

- 1. Federal Award Notices** - See Base APS, Section F.1
- 2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements** - See Base APS, Section F.2
- 3. Reporting Requirements** - See Base APS, Section F.3
- 4. Program Income**

Program income is not anticipated in any awards resulting from this Round.

5. Greening of Humanitarian Assistance: Climate and Environmental Guidance and Requirements

International Disaster Assistance (IDA)-funded awards receive an Exemption pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(b)(1) and no further environmental compliance documentation will need to be developed. As per the Base APS, the awardee will be required to comply with Host Country Climate and Environmental Procedures, if applicable.

6. Other Requirements

6.a) Code of Conduct and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Implementation Details - See Base APS

6.b) Safety and Security Plan

Not required for Purpose I, required for Purpose II - see Base APS

6.c) Risk Assessment and Management Plan - see Base APS

6.d) Partner Vetting Requirements - see Base APS

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SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT

1. APS Points of Contact

Any questions concerning this Round, its appendices, or Technical References must be submitted in writing by July 5, 2024, 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) to BHA.720BHA23APS00002-03.WASH@usaid.gov and "*BHA Multi-Year APS: Round 03-Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Studies*" in the subject line.

2. Acquisition and Assistance Ombudsman - See base APS, Section G.2.

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SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

For more information, see base APS, Section H.

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