

Feed the Future Ghana Mobilizing Finance in Agriculture (MFA) Activity
REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

REF: *Ghana Mobilizing Finance in Agriculture*
Prime Contract Number: 72064120C00003.

Subject: Palladium's Request for Applications (RFA) Number 2024-Fertilizer-001 – Facilitating Agents VSLA's Farmers' Input Supply Hub (VSLA-FISH)

Dear Prospective Applicants,

Palladium, implementers of the USAID-supported Feed the Future Ghana Mobilizing Finance in Agriculture Activity, is seeking applications from qualified organizations interested in partnering as facilitating agents to support establishment of community-based input shops under the “Expanding Access to Inputs for Smallholder Farmers” project.

We invite interested organizations to submit concept notes outlining their capabilities and vision for providing hands-on support to Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) in launching sustainable input shops integrated into fertilizer and agro-input supply chains. Facilitating agent grants will fund initial shop establishment costs and technical assistance over a 6 month period. Palladium is implementing this project under Prime Contract Number: 72064120C00003.

The RFA comprises the following main sections:

- I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
- II. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
- III. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS
- IV. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Successful Applicants will be responsible for ensuring achievement of the project objectives. Please refer to Section I of this RFA entitled Funding Opportunity Description for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

Subject to availability of funds, Palladium intends to provide up to \$115,000 in total funding for activities implemented by August 2024, with individual grant amounts up to \$23,000 per grantee. Palladium reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

To be eligible for award, Applicants must provide all required information in their application, including the requirements found in any attachments to this RFA. Applications submitted late, incomplete, or non-responsive will not be considered. Awards will be made to the responsible Applicant(s) whose application(s) best meet the requirements of this RFA and the evaluation criteria contained herein.

Palladium intends to use a one-stage application process to evaluate and select Grantee(s) under this RFA. Applicants should submit a full application package to be evaluated per **Section III, Step I of this RFA**.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on behalf of Palladium, nor does it commit Palladium to pay any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, Palladium reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. Applications are submitted at the risk of the Applicant and all preparation and submission costs are at the Applicant's expense.

Issuance Date:	February 21, 2024
Deadline for submission of questions:	February 26, 2024 @ 5:00pm GMT
Pre-application Conference Date:	March 07, 2024, from 2:00pm to 4:00pm (virtual)
Closing Date for Receipt of full applications:	March 28, 2024 @ 11:59pm GMT
Total funding available (all grants):	up to \$115,000
Anticipated Number of Grants:	Approximately 5 – 6 grants

Sincerely,

Victor Antwi
Chief of Party

0593838581

Attachments:

- A. Full Technical Application Template
- B. Full Cost Application Template
- C. Required Representations and Certifications of Offeror
- D. Fixed Amount Award (FAA) Template

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

Project Description.

I. Scope

USAID/Ghana has made progress expanding financing to agricultural micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the agriculture sector. However, barriers remain to ensuring sufficient affordable financing is available to meet demand without ongoing donor technical assistance or subsidies. Interest rates for small loans remain high, tenors are short, collateral requirements are prohibitive, and transaction costs limit commercial financial institutions (FIs) from profitably providing small loans at scale.

The COVID-19 pandemic and deterioration of Ghana's economic climate have exacerbated these challenges. Inflation, currency depreciation, rising interest rates, and global fertilizer shortages have significantly increased input costs and operational expenses for agribusinesses. As a result, FIs have become more risk averse, further constraining agribusinesses' access to finance.

This RFA aims to identify facilitating partners to support establishment of VSLA-owned input shops expanding smallholder farmer access to fertilizer and other agro-inputs in the following target districts in Ghana:

- Northern Region: Gushiegu, Karaga, Mion, Sagnerigu, Nanton, and Yendi
- North East Region: East Mamprusi, Mamprugu Moagduri
- Upper East Region: Bawku Municipal, Bawku West, Garu, Tempene
- Upper West Region: Daffiama Bussie Issa, Nadowli-Kaleo, Sissala East, Sissala West, Wa East

The input shops will be set up across these districts located within the Feed the Future Zone of Influence to improve availability of quality, affordable inputs tailored to smallholder farmers' needs for focus value chains like maize, soybean, groundnut, cowpea, cashew, mango, shea and pineapple.

The facilitating partners will support development of community-based distribution models through VSLA input shops to improve smallholder farmers' access to fertilizer and train farmers on proper input use. Solutions to improve product affordability and availability will be implemented. Lessons learned will inform scaling efforts.

The goal is to sustain smallholder farmer productivity and incomes following setbacks suffered from the economic crisis by ensuring continued community access points for critical agricultural inputs like fertilizer. The facilitating agents are expected to play a key role in integrating VSLA input shops into fertilizer and agro-input supply chains extending access across target regions.

Ghana MFA will link VSLA input shops, through the Facilitating Agents, to hub dealers to provide lower cost access to fertilizer and other farm inputs. Any fertilizer inputs supplied by hub dealers under partnerships with Ghana MFA will be required to meet USAID guidelines for safe and effective fertilizer. These guidelines may be accessed here: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/312mad.pdf>

2. Objectives

The proposed intervention seeks to establish 50 VLSA shops to achieve the following short-term objectives:

- i. Increase rural household incomes through increased yields resulting from improved community access to fertilizer and agro-inputs and training on their proper use.
- ii. Support creation of community-based distribution networks via VSLA-owned input shops that provide sustainable access points for fertilizer and agro-inputs to smallholder farmers.

- iii. Strengthen operational sustainability of VSLA input shops through integration into the fertilizer supply chain.

The medium-term objective is to support the development of community-based distribution models that can meet the agricultural input needs of smallholder farmers on an ongoing basis.

The task to be executed by the facilitating agent under this objective is as follows:

1. Assist VSLAs to identify appropriate location of an input shop and support in acquiring of the shop for the purpose of selling agricultural inputs, including fertilizer.
2. Provide technical oversight in the setting up of the shop, including general works, shop branding, and other miscellaneous activities required to have a functional shop.
3. Facilitate linkage with input dealers to provide training on proper handling of fertilizer and other production inputs.
4. Hand hold VSLAs to successfully operate one cycle of the input shop and provide the needed training required to manage the shop.

3. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

To achieve the objectives of the proposed intervention, the following key performance indicators are provided to guide applicants:

The average number of VSLA shops, the facilitating agent, will be expected to establish and support is a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 10. Applicants should provide the number of input shops they expect to establish and support as part of their Key Performance Indicators.

Short-term objectives:

- i. Support creation of community-based distribution networks via VSLA input shops
 - Number of VSLA input shops established
 - Number of smallholder farmers purchasing inputs from VSLA input shops
 - Volume of fertilizer and other agro-inputs sold through VSLA input shops
- ii. Increase rural household incomes through improved community access to inputs and training
 - Number of smallholder farmers reached through VSLA input shops
 - Percent increase in yield by beneficiaries of the input shops
 - Increase in annual household income from crop sales by beneficiaries of the input shops
- iii. Strengthen operational sustainability of VSLA input shops
 - Number of VSLA shops integrated into fertilizer supply chains through partnerships
 - Percent of VSLA shops recording profits within first year of operations

In the Medium to Long-term, these partnerships should seek to achieve the following objectives:

- i. Percent of VSLA shops which remain operational for the 2025 production season.
- ii. Number of VSLA shops offering organic alternatives to synthetic inputs which give farmers choice to use more climate friendly options.

Note the following:

- The list of KPIs provided under this Section of the RFA are only indicative and not exhaustive, Applicants are therefore encouraged to propose additional and relevant KPIs that address the objectives of the call.

- Applicants are advised to indicate clearly the KPIs to measure their proposed objectives against.
- All applications and proposed interventions must focus on one or more of MFA's priority value chains: maize, soybeans, groundnuts, cowpeas, cashew, mango, shea and pineapple. Only proposals centered on developing these target commodities will be considered. Applications targeting other value chains will not be eligible.

4. **Example Models Envisaged under the RFA (All concepts must propose activities that fall within the following domains:)**

Grants to Facilitating Agents should support innovative solutions that leverage existing VSLAs to improve smallholder farmer access to affordable inputs through sustainable rural agro-input shops. This should involve facilitating the VSLA groups to establish an input shop, structuring partnerships between VSLAs and input suppliers, providing hands-on support for input shop launch, and building capacity of VSLAs on operations management of the shop.

Grants to Facilitating Agents should lead to a combination of the following:

- Establishment of VSLA-owned input shops with quality storage facilities and layouts well-suited to farmer needs and shopping experiences.
- Integration of VSLA input shops into input supply chains through supplier agreements ensuring reliable access to affordable, quality products.
- Tailored capacity building and tools that equip VSLA management committees to sustainably operate input shops as income-generating community assets.
- Local farmer education campaigns on good agricultural practices related to input application, soil fertility management, and sustainable farming approaches, led by the hub agro-dealer.

5. **Requirements**

Full applications must conform to the structure in **Attachment B**, Technical Application Format, which includes the provided and described in more detail in **SECTION III - STEP II** of this RFA.

6. **Schedule**

Project anticipates awarding one or more **Fixed Amount Award (FAA)** grants as a result of this solicitation process by April 2024. The expected performance period is April 2024 – September 2024. Feed the Future Ghana MFA may revise the period of performance prior to award.

7. **Project Guidance and Post-Award Support**

Once grants are awarded, partners will receive ongoing support and guidance from the project team, including:

- Overall grant guidance from the grants and procurement team and technical manager
- Technical assistance from subject matter specialists
- Monitoring and reporting support from the M&E team
- Additional post-award capacity building will include:
 - A kick-off meeting covering grant objectives, administration, reporting requirements, and compliance
 - Targeted trainings to build partner capacity on project implementation
 - In-kind technical assistance to support achievement of project goals, such as developing products to facilitate smallholder farmers' access to fertilizer. Specific support will be detailed in grant agreements.

The aim is to provide partners with the direction, knowledge, tools, and resources to successfully execute their fertilizer access initiatives. Partnerships will be collaborative to ensure maximum impact is sustainably achieved.

8. Monitoring

To enable effective grant oversight, partners will be required to participate in regular monitoring activities including:

- Monthly check-in calls with the project team to review progress and address any issues.
- Quarterly performance reviews covering:
 - Accomplishments from the previous quarter
 - Planned activities for the upcoming quarter
 - Identification of potential problems
 - Action items and deliverable modifications if needed

The monitoring process aims to facilitate adaptive management based on regular open communication and data reviews. Partners should expect to dedicate time to monitoring activities that support results-driven execution and continuous learning. Monitoring enables the project to provide better support for overcoming obstacles as they arise.

SECTION II: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be considered eligible for a grant award, prospective grantees must:

- Be legally registered in accordance with the laws of Ghana (registration documents required)
- Not be part of a government or any government structures.
- Not appear on any list of debarred or suspended entities (as found on www.sam.gov), or on any terrorist watch list or other published list of ineligible recipients.
- Certify that they are not affiliated with any political party nor engaged in any partisan activities.
- In addition, all prospective Grantees under consideration for an award exceeding \$25,000 (or local equivalent) must have or be able to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number. UEI number or proof of registration for UEI number must be submitted for application to be considered. *

*Note: GSA has developed a useful interactive PDF tool that guides through the most common scenarios about UEI (https://www.fsd.gov/gsafsd_sp)

SECTION III: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Activity Name: Facilitating Agents VSLA's Farmers' Input Supply Hub (VSLA-FISH)

Palladium will award one or more award grants resulting from this solicitation to the responsible Applicant(s) that demonstrate the capability to carry out activities conforming to the project objectives and within the funding and other parameters set by this RFA.

This solicitation does not commit Palladium to make an award. Palladium may at its sole discretion accept or reject any or all applications, at any step in part or in full without assigning a reason.

STEP I: Full Application

Interested applicants should directly submit a full application including both technical and cost proposals. Based on evaluation of the full applications, MFA may invite shortlisted applicants for a call to clarify any questions on the proposed approach.

MFA will determine the most appropriate award mechanism for selected grants - **fixed amount awards in case of the Facilitating Agent support.**

The full application documents provide the final technical scope of work and costs that will form the basis of any grant agreement. So comprehensive details should be included in the proposal itself rather than requiring a separate co-creation process.

Instructions for Full Application Preparation & Submission¹

Full applications must be submitted no later than 15 workdays after the bidders conference. A clear deadline for submission of the full application will be communicated during the bidders conference. Full application should be submitted via Palladium's Grant Management System (GMS), Enquire, at the URL Link <https://palladium-cp.enquire.cloud/round/RND-000069/586> and via email (as backup) to ghanamfa.procurement@thepalladiumgroup.com.

Full applications should be prepared according to the structural format set forth below:

1. **Cover Page** (no more than one page). The cover page must include:
 - a. Concise title of proposed activity
 - b. Name of Organization
 - c. Address of organization
 - d. Contact point (lead contact name, relevant telephone, e-mail information)
 - e. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), if applicable.
 - f. Signature of an authorized representative of the applicant.

2. **Technical Approach** (no more than four pages)
 - 1) Statement of Purpose and Background
 - a) Describe the problem or challenge the concept aims to resolve.
 - 2) Goals and Objectives
 - a) A description of the proposed activities and how they will help address the stated challenges and advance MFA's objectives within the stated project area.
 - b) A description of the facilitating agents' geographic coverage within the ZOI.

¹ Note: All grantees will need to have a completed EMMP to be approved by USAID for implementation. Details on the EMMP and its development will be provided at the co-creation stage.

- c) The key results the activity will produce, including a description of how the activity will involve or benefit women, youth, and businesses in the ZOI.
- 3) A proposed milestone table with deliverable description, proposed dates, and corresponding payments.
- 4) Annex: Agricultural Inputs Details
- In no more than 2 pages, provide the following details regarding agricultural inputs that will be sold through the VSLA shops:
- a) Plans for working with hub agro-dealers in training VSLAs and farmers on safe use, storage, and disposal per environmental guidelines. Any fertilizer supplied by hub agro-dealers in partnership with Ghana MFA will be required to meet eligibility guidance established in USAID fertilizer financing guidelines: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/312mad.pdf>
- b) Description of processes that will be undertaken to ensure shops ONLY work with by input suppliers that have established phytosanitary safety of organic fertilizers above threshold application distances per USAID guidance. Amu organic-based soil fertilizers supplied by organic fertilizer dealers in partnership with Ghana MFA will be required to meet the following USAID requirements/
- (1) Clearly identify whether the organic-based soil fertilizer amendments are intended for use more than 40 km from their point of origin.
 - (2) If the product(s) are not intended for use more than 40 km from the point of origin, include a certification that the product(s) are not intended for use more than 40 km from the point of origin
 - (3) If the product(s) are not intended for use more than 40 km from the point of origin, include:
 - (a) Confirmation that a reasonable level of phytosanitary safety exists (i.e., the product is composed of traditional local materials such as animal manure and plant residues and does not pose a great threat of transporting weed seeds or plant pathogens beyond the point of origin).
 - (b) A detailed description of the awardees processes to establish phytosanitary safety.

Please see USAID fertilizer financing guidelines for more information - <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/312mad.pdf>

Instructions for Preparation of the Cost Application

The applicant should be guided by the details below and should include the following in their budget:

- I. Transmittal Letter

The application must be signed by an individual authorized to commit the organization.
- II. Organizational Information and Certifications
 - a. “ADS 303mav: Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient”. Attachment E of this RFA.
 - b. Copy of the organization's chart and bylaws and power of attorney of the authorized signer.
 - c. Copy of the organization’s legal registration under the laws of Ghana.
 - d. Copies of the last annual financial report(s) completed by an authorized/certified accountant.
- III. Budget Narrative and Detail

This section should include a summary of the information provided in the application budget forms and includes the total grant funding request. The applicant must provide a budget, a budget narrative, and adequate cost and historical or unit pricing data to establish a reasonable cost and the assurance that the recipient will not realize any profit above the actual cost.

The applicant shall include a budget narrative that breaks down proposed costs in sufficient detail corresponding to the attached budget template to permit cost analysis. The budget shall be denominated in US Dollar.

Cost estimates must be submitted in Excel format using the provided budget template. The file must be unprotected and there should be no hidden columns, rows, or cells. Each cost element must include a basis for estimate or rationale.

The budget template contains the following budget categories:

a. Personnel (activity staff)

The Applicant shall provide the individual's name, position title, the unit (days), the number of units (i.e. the level of effort), the unit salary or consultant fee and the total salary or consultant fee. Unit salaries shall be stated in days. Benefits, fees, and fringe benefits including social security, health insurance, and other mandatory withholdings for relevant Grantee staff.

b. In-Country Travel and Transportation

Travel and Transportation includes per diem and shall be broken down by traveler, transportation vehicle, number of trips and the corresponding number of days of per diem. Include a basis of estimate for each trip.

c. Other Direct Costs (ODCs)

As part of the detailed budget breakdown, the Applicant shall submit details of all other direct costs (ODCs) required for undertaking the award grant. ODCs include costs of direct project implementation, as well as costs for communication, meetings, expendable supplies and materials, report preparation/reproduction and publications. Include a basis of estimate for each item.

As illustrative examples only, project implementation costs could include the following (or many others):

- Marketing costs: The Applicant should provide details of marketing costs that would promote its services. Illustratively, marketing costs could include events, signage, and promotional print materials.
- Assurance costs: The Applicant should provide details of costs for quality improvement/assurance that could include supervisory visits, monitoring mechanisms.

d. Indirect Cost

Applicants may charge up to a 10% de minimis rate of modified total direct costs (MTDC) to cover general overhead and administration expenses that cannot be directly accounted for within other cost categories. These indirect costs may include elements such as utilities, administrative salaries, accounting, grants management, human resources services, payroll, maintenance, janitorial, security, and rent expenses.

To budget for indirect costs, the applicant should first calculate 10% of the total direct costs within the budget. Then, provide a high-level breakdown of what key expense areas are covered under this. For example:

- Administrative Staff: 5%
- Office Rent and Utilities: 3%
- Accounting and Compliance: 2%

Ensure the types of expenses listed as covered by the indirect costs are general operational overhead expenses not budgeted for directly under any other cost category. No additional backup documentation is required during the application process to substantiate the indirect cost amounts budgeted.

However, if selected for a grant, the applicant may need to provide details of current overhead and administrative costs to demonstrate the reasonability of amounts budgeted for indirect and that no duplication exists across direct and indirect pools. Applicants should maintain organized accounting to easily track direct vs indirect expenses in the event auditing is undertaken during or after a grant.

e. Applicant Co-Financing (Leverage)

Not applicable.

NOTE: USAID Policy Prohibits the Payment of Fee/Profit to recipients under assistance instruments.

Submission of the Full Application

Full applications must be submitted electronically via Palladium’s Grant Management System (GMS), Enquire at the URL Link <https://palladium-cp.enquire.cloud/round/RND-000069/586> and by email (as backup) to ghanamfa.procurement@thepalladiumgroup.com by the deadline specified for each invited Applicant. The subject line of the email shall refer to this RFA (**Facilitating Agents VSLA’s Farmers’ Input Supply Hub (VSLA-FISH)**).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Technical and financial applications should be submitted in two separate electronic files.

Evaluation Criteria for Full Application

Upon completion of the co-creation process, MFA will complete an internal review to determine whether or not to proceed with a final award, based on the following criteria:

MFA intends to issue a grant to the organization(s) considered to provide the best strategic fit, technical approach, past performance/organizational capacity and gender and youth considerations for the overall project. The criteria below serve as the basis for evaluating the application. Selection will also be based on the capabilities of the organizations as detailed in the application.

Evaluation Criteria

The technical applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria, which are listed in order of importance, with the most important listed first. Additional details are included below. Each Application will be evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis against these criteria.

Relative importance	Criteria
1.	Strategic Fit
2.	Technical Approach
3.	Past Performance/ Organizational Capacity
4.	Targets set for the KPIs including Gender, Youth and other considerations
5.	Financial Application including proposed leverage

1. Strategic Fit considerations include:

- Is the purpose of the activity consistent with the objectives and overall goals VSLAs' Farmers' Inputs Supply Hub?
- Contribution toward the overall project objectives of expanding smallholder farmer access to affordable, quality fertilizers as demonstrated by the indicator targets proposed by the Applicant.
- Anticipated benefits to the smallholder farmer beneficiaries targeted by the Applicant.

2. Technical Approach considerations include:

- Does the application demonstrate a firm understanding of the requirements and goals set forth in the RFA?
- Does the application provide technical solutions to demonstrate that requirements and goals will be met on schedule?
- Does the application include a complete and realistic plan to accomplish each requirement, including reaching shortlisted VSLA candidates if applicable?
- Does the application demonstrate supply sources of input to the VSLA shops to ensure the shops are well stocked to meet farmer's needs?
- Does the application clearly demonstrate the approach to making the shop viable?
- Does the application demonstrate how the proposed interventions will continue to deliver benefits and impact beyond the implementation period?

3. Past Performance and Organizational Capacity considerations include:

- Has the Applicant implemented projects of similar nature in the past or is currently implementing the same, preferably in the ZOI?
- Are the skills set and experience of the staff proposed by the Applicant relevant and appropriate for the implementation of the grant?
- Does the Applicant have the necessary financial management systems and capability to manage the proposed activities?
- Does the Applicant have experience or capacity to adhere to the applicable USAID financial management guidelines?
- Does the Applicant have the capacity to meet all USAID and USG statutory and regulatory requirements including—but not limited to— environmental, reporting, use of appropriate technologies, avoidance of child labor, and etc.

4. Key Performance Indicators and related targets, including Gender, Youth and other considerations include:

- Have appropriate indicator targets been set across relevant standard KPIs (see KPIs section)
- Are custom indicator targets relevant and aligned to meeting proposal-specific objectives?
- Do the proposed targets against each KPI seem achievable given funding and timelines?
- Will the targets, if met, represent meaningful progress towards fertilizer access, availability and adoption goals?
- Do targets demonstrate a commitment to inclusion and equitable impact across gender, youth, vulnerable groups which disproportionately benefits these groups?
- Has the application demonstrated how it will impact persons living with disabilities and women's empowerment through outlined opportunities for women's participation and involvement?

5. Financial application considerations include:

Budgets, cost proposals and proposed milestone payments (as applicable) within final applications resulting from the co-creation process will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Does the total funding requested seem reasonable compared with the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries or potential impact?
- Are the proposed costs allowable, allocable, and reasonable?
- Are the milestones appropriate to a Fixed Amount Award grant?
- Cost is consistent with various elements of the technical requirements;

SECTION IV: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Award Notices

Successful applicants can expect to receive the following upon approval by USAID:

- A notice of USAID approval
- Draft grant agreement

2. Award Administration Standards

Grants resulting from this solicitation will be administered by the approved Project Grants Manual, and the following regulations (as applicable):

- FAR Part 31 – Cost Principles for For-Profit organizations used to negotiate award amounts https://www.acquisition.gov/far/part-31#FAR_31_000 and terminations per 2 C.F.R. 200.201 (b)(1)) - <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/section-200.201>
- Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter 303 Grants & Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations: 303.3.25 Fixed Amount Awards to Non-Governmental Organizations - <http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303saj>
- A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 303: 303_mak Fixed Amount Award Entity Eligibility Checklist – <http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mak> as adapted by Palladium.
- A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 303: 303_mat Fixed Amount Awards to Non-Governmental Organizations - <http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303saj> as adapted by Palladium.
- ADS 302.3.4.13 Grants Under Contracts (GUCs) - <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/302>
- 2 C.F.R. 200.1 Definition Fixed Amount Awards - <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/section-200.201>
- 2 C.F.R. 200.201 Use of grant agreements (including fixed amount awards), cooperative agreements, and contracts (as referenced in ADS 303.3.25.a.) - <http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mak>
- 2 C.F.R. 200 Subpart E – Cost Principles for non-profit and educational organizations – used to negotiate award amounts and terminations per 2 C.F.R. 200.201 (b)(1)) - <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/section-200.201>
- All Awards must comply with the standards of ADS 312.3.3 and Fertilizer Financing Guidance ADS1mad - <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-12/312mad.pdf>

3. Branding & Marking Requirements

Should successful applicants have the plan to publicize any document relating to this grant, they will be required to submit a Branding Strategy and a Marking Plan that complies with the approved Branding and Marking Plan for the project and must follow the mandatory standard provision entitled “MARKING AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS UNDER USAID-FUNDED ASSISTANCE (DECEMBER 2014)” (for standard cost type grants) or “MARKING AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS UNDER USAID-FUNDED ASSISTANCE (JULY 2015)” (for FAAs) in preparing the Branding and Marking Plan for approval.

4. Environmental Compliance

The grants project anticipates funding only activities that fall under the categorical exclusions of “USAID Environmental Guidelines”. Therefore, if all activities under a specific grant are identified as categorical exclusions, the project will not conduct any additional environmental assessment or will not require prior review by USAID’s environmental officer. However, in instances where the proposed activity may directly affect the environment outside the exclusions, the project will seek guidance from the COR, to ensure compliance with 22 CFR 216 and the “USAID Environmental Guidelines.”

MFA will ensure all stipulated environmental measures and conditions in the award are implemented throughout the life of the award, and that timely amendments are undertaken, as needed, by obtaining the relevant USAID Environmental Officer’s prior approval in writing to ensure compliance with 22 CFR 216 and the applicable USAID Environmental Guidelines.

ATTACHMENT A

FULL TECHNICAL APPLICATION TEMPLATE (On Facilitating Agents letter head)

Guide: The Technical Proposal should comprehensively outline the proposed activities, alignment to program goals, implementation plan, monitoring methodology, and key risks. It provides an opportunity to demonstrate the experience, technical knowledge and capabilities to execute the initiative. Clear, evidence-based demonstration of understanding of barriers faced and realistic, effective activities to address those is expected. Robust implementation plans, emphasis on impact measurement and proactive risk mitigation all build confidence in capacity to deliver results.

SECTION 0.0: TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Guide: The transmittal letter should formally submit the technical proposal and any included attachments. It should be printed on official letterhead and signed by an authorized representative of the applicant organization. Include a brief overview of the grant opportunity pursued, the project duration, location of intended activities, amounts requested, and key objectives. Specify the primary point of contact for any clarification or additional information requests related to enclosed materials along with their coordinates. Keep the transmittal letter succinct while officially conveying essential details about the enclosed proposal.

SECTION A: PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND MILESTONE (EXPANDED CONCEPT NOTE)

Guide: This section should provide a comprehensive overview of your capacity to support VSLAs to establish input shops. Applicants should describe how these shops would be made operational and the linkages that would be established to ensure a robust supply chain to the inputs needed to operate the shop. Outline the key components and interventions planned to address the challenges related to VSLAs successfully operating an input shop. Describe how the proposal will lead to meaningful expansions in availability, accessibility, affordability or awareness of fertilizer products for smallholder farmers through the VSLA shops. Explain any partnerships, innovations, or models that will underpin execution. Ensure there are logical linkages between identified issues and proposed solutions.

- **PROBLEM STATEMENT**
- **PROPOSED APPROACH TO SETTING UP VSLA INPUT SHOPS**
- **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND EXPECTED RESULTS**
- **PROJECT MILESTONE**

SECTION B: EXPERIENCE AND CAPACITY OF GRANTEE

Guide: Provide background on your organization, including when it was established, by whom, and why. Give a brief history of major activities and program to date. Outline your core focus areas and domains of expertise. Help reviewers understand your operating structure, leadership, and track record of implementing related projects or interventions. Clearly articulate connections between your mission and focus areas with the fertilizer access gaps this partnership aims to address. Describe your direct experience with comparable projects or partnerships in the past. Provide details on relationships with government, donor, or private sector partners to facilitate fertilizer availability and affordability through VLSA. Outline any specific experience around supply chains, distribution models, or smallholder farmer outreach related to fertilizers.

- **BRIEF HISTORY AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES**
- **EXPERIENCE WITH SIMILAR PROJECTS**
- **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

SECTION C: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Guide: Outline the key tasks, activities, timeframes and responsibilities involved in executing the project. Clearly list out the major components and interventions. Identify owners and provide start and end dates at the appropriate level of granularity to capture all milestone moments. Ensure the level of effort across resources aligns to the activities duration. Provide justification if specific elements require elongated timelines. Ensure dependencies and sequences are logical. If external partners are involved, indicate the scope and timing of their contribution.

- **IMPLEMENTATION WORKPLAN**
- **KEY IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS AND THEIR ROLE**

SECTION D: PROJECT MONITORING & EVALUATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Guide: Outline the strategic approach for monitoring activity progress and evaluating outcomes and impact. Identify key quantitative indicators (refer to suggested objectives and related indicators in the RFA) aligned to objectives and describe systematic processes for data tracking, sourcing and management. Discuss the mix of methods planned to provide performance insight across beneficiaries, activities, external factors, etc. Explain how learning and adaptations will be facilitated internally. Ensure sufficient emphasis on inclusion, gender equity and segment-specific effectiveness. Discuss protocols for reporting and transparency.

- MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN
- PROJECT RISK AND MITIGATION

ATTACHMENT B

FULL COST APPLICATION TEMPLATE (On Facilitating Agents letter head)

Guide: The Cost Proposal should clearly detail the budgetary resources requested from this grant, as well as projected commitments the applicant is prepared to make towards elements of the proposed fertilizer access initiative. Reviewers will assess whether budget requests seem broadly appropriate given the partnership activities, number of beneficiaries reached, and overall scale of impact. Emphasis will also be placed on evaluating what percentages of total budgets will be financed directly by the applicant versus requested from MFA to ensure appropriate buy-in. Clearly justified expenses that align to technical proposal components and demonstrate cost-consciousness are important. Co-investment commitments that maximize impact by supplementing grant resources also strengthen cost proposals.

SECTION 0.0: TRANSMITTAL LETTER

SECTION A: BUDGET NARRATIVE

Guide: Outline summary budget figures including precise grant funding requests segmented by cost category. Discuss how this aligns to proposed activities. Highlight key areas of expenditure and discuss what amounts the applicant organization is prepared to directly finance as it shows buy-in. Provide overview of financial accounting competencies, systems and policies that ensure accountability, efficiency, and transparency.

- **PROJECT BUDGET**
- **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

SECTION B: DETAILED BUDGET

Guide: Granularly break down funding requested from MFA covering all technical proposal activities into precise elements like staff rates, tasks, purchasing quantities and frequencies, travel distances and durations etc. Quantify all mathematical assumptions enabling exact verification of aggregate budget requests to instill confidence in command over financial details. Segment out budget expected to be directly contributed by the applicant either financially or in-kind showing how it supplements grant asks. Discuss how budgets link logically to technical activities.

- **DETAILED PROJECT BUDGET**
 - **DETAILED GRANT BUDGET**
 - **Personnel (activity staff)**
 - **In-Country Travel and Transportation**
 - **Other Direct Costs (ODCs)**
 - **Indirect Cost**

ATTACHMENT C: REQUIRED REPRESENTATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS OF OFFEROR

CERTIFICATIONS, ASSURANCES, REPRESENTATIONS, AND OTHER STATEMENTS OF THE SUBRECIPIENT

NOTE: When these Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Subrecipient are used for Cooperative Agreements, the term "Grant" means "Cooperative Agreement."

Part I – Certifications and Assurances

1. Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Non- Discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs

Note: This certification applies to U.S. organizations at all times and to Non-U.S. organizations if any part of the program will be undertaken in the United States.

- (1) The subrecipient hereby assures that no person in the United States will, on the bases set forth below, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity receiving financial assistance from USAID, and that with respect to the assistance award for which application is being made, it will comply with the requirements of:
 - (1) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub. L. 88-352, 42 U.S.C. 2000-d), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance;
 - (2) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance;
 - (3) The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (Pub. L. 95-478), which prohibits discrimination based on age in the delivery of services and benefits supported with Federal funds;
 - (4) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance (whether or not the programs or activities are offered or sponsored by an educational institution); and
 - (5) USAID regulations implementing the above nondiscrimination laws, set forth in Chapter II of Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations.
- (2) If the subrecipient is an institution of higher education, the Assurances given herein extend to admission practices and to all other practices relating to the treatment of students or clients of the institution, or relating to the opportunity to participate in the provision of services or other benefits to such individuals, and must be applicable to the entire institution unless the subrecipient establishes to the satisfaction of the USAID Administrator that the institution's practices in designated parts or programs of the institution will in no way affect its practices in the program of the institution for which financial assistance is sought, or the beneficiaries of, or participants in, such programs.

2. Certification Regarding Lobbying (22 CFR 227)

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

- (1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal Cooperative Agreement, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
- (2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned must complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.
- (3) The undersigned must require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including contracts, subawards, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients must certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, United States Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification will be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

"The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that: If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned must complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement will be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure."

3. Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals (ADS 206)

Palladium reserves the right to terminate this Agreement, to demand a refund or take other appropriate measures if the Grantee is found to have been convicted of a narcotics offense or to have been engaged in drug trafficking as defined in 22 CFR Part 140. The undersigned must review USAID ADS 206 to determine if any certifications are required for Key Individuals (see Part II below) or Covered Participants (see Part III below).

If there are COVERED PARTICIPANTS: Palladium reserves the right to terminate assistance to or take other appropriate measures with respect to, any participant approved by Palladium and USAID who is found to have been convicted of a narcotics offense or to have been engaged in drug trafficking as defined in 22 CFR Part 140.

4. Certification Regarding Support to Terrorists

(1) The undersigned represents, to the best of its knowledge, that:

Except as otherwise disclosed to the Prime Recipient and USAID in writing and included with this application, the applicant did not, within the previous three years, knowingly engage in transactions with, or provide material support or resources to, any individual or entity who was, at the time, subject to sanctions administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) within the U.S. Department of Treasury pursuant to the Global Terrorism Sanctions Regulations (31 CFR Part 594), and the Foreign Terrorist Organizations Sanctions Regulations (31 CFR Part 597), or sanctions established by the United Nations Security Council, collectively, "U.S. or U.N. sanctions." Note: Prime Recipient intends to retain the information disclosed pursuant to this paragraph in any award file and use it in determining whether to provide the applicant with an assistance award. Prime Recipient and USAID will not make such information available publicly unless required by law.

(2) The representation in paragraph (1) does not apply to:

(a) Transactions entered into or material support and resources provided pursuant to an OFAC license;

(b) The furnishing of USAID funds, or USAID-financed commodities or other assistance, to the ultimate beneficiaries of USAID-funded humanitarian or development assistance, such as the recipients of food, non-food items, medical care, micro-enterprise loans or shelter, unless the applicant knew or had reason to believe that one or more of these beneficiaries was subject to U.S. or U.N. terrorism-related sanctions; or

(c) The procurement of goods and/or services by the subrecipient acquired in the ordinary course of business through contract or purchase, such as utilities, rents, office supplies, or gasoline, unless the applicant knew, or had reason to believe, that a vendor or supplier of such goods and services was subject to U.S. or U.N. sanctions. This certification includes express terms and conditions of the award, and any violation of it will be grounds for unilateral termination of the agreement by the Prime Recipient or USAID. This certification does not preclude any other remedy available to the Prime Recipient or USAID.

For purpose of this certification:

(a) "Material support and resources" means currency or monetary instruments or financial securities, financial services, lodging, training, expert advice or assistance, safehouses, false documentation or identification, communications equipment, facilities, weapons, lethal substances, explosives, personnel, transportation, and other physical assets, except medicine or religious materials.

(1) "Training" means instruction or teaching designed to impart a specific skill, as opposed to general knowledge.

(2) "Expert advice or assistance" means advice or assistance derived from scientific, technical, or other specialized knowledge.

(b) "Entity" means a partnership, association, corporation, or other organization, group, or subgroup.

5. Certification Regarding Trafficking in Persons, Implementing Title XVII of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013

Note: This certification must be completed prior to receiving an award if the estimated value of services required to be performed under the award outside the United States exceeds \$500,000. This certification must also be submitted annually to Palladium during the term of the award.

By signing below, the applicant or subrecipient, as applicable, through its duly designated representative, after having conducted due diligence, hereby certifies the following:

1. The applicant/subrecipient has implemented a compliance plan to prevent the prohibited activities identified in section (a) of the Mandatory Provision "Trafficking in Persons" and is in compliance with that plan;
2. The application/subrecipient has implemented procedures to prevent any activities described in section (a) of the Mandatory Provision "Trafficking in Persons" and to monitor, detect, and terminate any contractor, subawardee, employee, or other agent of the applicant/subrecipient engaging in any activities described in such section; and
3. To the best of the representative's knowledge, neither the applicant/subrecipient, nor any employee, contractor, or subawardee of the applicant/subrecipient, nor any agent of the applicant/subrecipient or of such a contractor or subawardee, is engaged in any of the activities described in section (a) the Mandatory Provision "Trafficking in Persons."

6. Certification of Subrecipient

By signing below the subrecipient provides certifications and assurances for (1) the Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Non-Discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs, (2) the Certification Regarding Lobbying, (3) the Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals (ADS 206), (4) the Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing Implementing Executive Order 13224, and (5) the Certification Regarding Trafficking in Persons above.

These certifications and assurances are given in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all Federal grants, loans, contracts, property, discounts, or other Federal financial assistance extended after the date hereof to the subrecipient by the Agency, including installment payments after such date on account of applications for Federal financial assistance which was approved before such date. The subrecipient recognizes and agrees that such Federal financial assistance will be extended in reliance on the representations and agreements made in these assurances, and that the United States will have the right to seek judicial enforcement of these assurances. These assurances are binding on the subrecipient, its successors, transferees, and assignees, and the person or persons whose signatures appear below are authorized to sign these assurances on behalf of the subrecipient.

Request for Application No. _ _____

Application No. - _____

Date of Application

Name of Subrecipient _

Typed Name and Title -

Signature -

Date -

Part II – Key Individual (Principal of Organization) Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking

I hereby certify that within the last ten years:

1. I have not been convicted of a violation of, or a conspiracy to violate, any law or regulation of the United States or any other country concerning narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances.
2. I am not and have not been an illicit trafficker in any such drug or controlled substance.
3. I am not and have not been a knowing assistor, abettor, conspirator, or colluder with others in the illicit trafficking in any such drug or substance.

Signature: -

Date: -

Name: -

Title/Position: -

Organization: -

Address: -

Date of Birth: -

NOTICE:

1. You are required to sign this Certification under the provisions of 22 CFR Part 140, Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers. These regulations were issued by the Department of State and require that certain key individuals of organizations must sign this Certification.
2. If you make a false Certification you are subject to U.S. criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1001.

Part III – Participant Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking

NOTE: The certification must be completed by all participants of training funded through the subaward.

1. I hereby certify that within the last ten years:
 - a. I have not been convicted of a violation of, or a conspiracy to violate, any law or regulation of the United States or any other country concerning narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances.
 - b. I am not and have not been an illicit trafficker in any such drug or controlled substance.
 - c. I am not or have not been a knowing assistor, abettor, conspirator, or colluder with others in the illicit trafficking in any such drug or substance.
2. I understand that USAID may terminate my training if it is determined that I engaged in the above conduct during the last ten years or during my USAID training.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

NOTICE:

1. You are required to sign this Certification under the provisions of 22 CFR Part 140, Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers. These regulations were issued by the Department of State and require that certain participants must sign this Certification.
2. If you make a false Certification you are subject to U.S. criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1001.

Part IV – Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction

- (1) As required by sections 744 and 745 of Division E of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113-235), and similar provisions, if contained in subsequent appropriations acts, none of the funds made available by that Act may be used to enter into an assistance award with any organization that –

- (1) “Was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency has direct knowledge of the conviction, unless the agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government”; or
- (2) “Has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency has direct knowledge of the unpaid tax liability, unless the Federal agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government”.

It is USAID’s policy that no award may be made to any organization covered by (1) or (2) above, unless the M/MPBP Compliance Division has made a determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

(2) **Applicant Representation:**

1. The Applicant represents that it is [] is not [] an organization that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under a U.S. Federal law within the preceding 24 months.
2. The Applicant represents that it is [] is not [] an organization that has any unpaid U.S. Federal tax liability that has been assessed for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability.

[Part V – Prohibition on Providing Federal Assistance to Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements – Representation \(May 2017\)](#)

(1) Definitions.

“Contract” has the meaning given in 2 CFR Part 200.

“Contractor” means an entity that receives a contract as defined in 2 CFR Part 200.

“Internal confidentiality agreement or statement” means a confidentiality agreement or any other written statement that the subrecipient requires any of its employees or subrecipients to sign regarding nondisclosure of subrecipient information, except that it does not include confidentiality agreements arising out of civil litigation or confidentiality agreements that subrecipient employees or subrecipients sign at the behest of a Federal agency.

“Subaward” has the meaning given in 2 CFR Part 200. “Subrecipient” has the meaning given in 2 CFR Part 200.

- (2) In accordance with section 743 of Division E, Title VII, of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113-235) and its successor provisions in subsequent appropriations acts (and as extended in continuing resolutions), Government agencies are not permitted to use funds

appropriated (or otherwise made available) for federal assistance to a non- Federal entity that requires its employees, subrecipients, or contractors seeking to report waste, fraud, or abuse to sign internal confidentiality agreements or statements that prohibit or otherwise restrict its employees, subrecipients, or contractors from lawfully reporting such waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information.

- (3) The prohibition in paragraph (b) of this provision does not contravene requirements applicable to Standard Form 312, (Classified Information Nondisclosure Agreement), Form 4414 (Sensitive Compartmented Information Nondisclosure Agreement), or any other form issued by a Federal department or agency governing the nondisclosure of classified information.
- (4) **Representation.** By submission of its application, the prospective subrecipient represents that it will not require its employees, subrecipients, or contractors to sign or comply with internal confidentiality agreements or statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting its employees, subrecipients, or contractors from lawfully reporting waste, fraud, or abuse related to the performance of a Federal award to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information (for example, the Agency Office of the Inspector General).

Part VI – Other Statements of Subrecipient

1. Authorized Individuals

The subrecipient represents that the following persons are authorized to negotiate on its behalf with the Government and to bind the subrecipient in connection with this application or grant:

Name	Title	Telephone No.	Facsimile No.
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