



**Issuance Date:** July 27, 2022

**Closing Date:** August 26, 2022

**Closing Time:** 12.00 pm Uganda

**Subject:** Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) No. NOFO-IAM-22-004  
Transition Award to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for Market Systems Development (MEL4MSD)

**Reference:** Issued Under Feed the Future/Uganda Inclusive Agricultural Markets Activity USAID Contract No. 7261719C00007

Through this Notice of Funding Opportunity, the USAID funded Feed the Future Uganda Inclusive Agricultural Markets Activity (FtF IAM or the “Activity”) aims to identify potential partners that can offer Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for Market Systems Development (MEL4MSD). FtF IAM is a five-year Activity implemented by DAI Global Inc. The Activity seeks to increase incomes and improve the livelihood of households through agriculture-led inclusive economic growth in 38 districts across three regions in Uganda (Northern, Eastern and Western). Layered on the principles of inclusive market systems, inclusivity refers to the active participation and engagement of all actors looking to participate in the market system including the poor, women, youth, ethnic minorities, or other marginalized groups who are often excluded, or even exploited by the traditional market systems.

USAID through FtF IAM seeks to transition implementation of parts of the FtF IAM scope of work to local implementing partners using grants called Transition Awards to help Uganda move along its pathway to self-reliance. Through this NOFO, Awards will enable firms that offer Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning services to develop their capacity to offer services for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for Market Systems Development (MEL4MSD) interventions. Concurrently, the firms targeted under this opportunity should be thinking about how to market and commercialize so as to offer these services sustainably.

The NOFO offers interested parties the opportunity to submit Concept Papers that provides ideas for consideration and selection for further exploration and implementation. Successful respondents will receive a request for applications and will submit full proposals and will be offered capacity building support from FtF IAM on how to work with USAID as an implementing partner, on market systems development and USAID rules and regulations. FtF IAM will select one or two organizations to receive transition awards. The selection process contains three phases:

**Phase 1: Short Concept Notes.** FtF IAM will identify organizations based on specific criteria, including their commitment to investing in upgrading their own capacity and systems, their ability to serve as facilitators; their interest in market systems development approaches; their commitment to supporting marginalized groups; and their current and potential managerial and operational capacity. FtF IAM will review the concept papers and select 2-4 firms and organizations that have the potential to take on a larger role on FtF IAM to move onto Phase 2.

**Phase 2: Capacity Building.** Selected firms and organizations will all work with FtF IAM to complete the Non-US Organization Pre-Award Survey (NUPAS) tool to establish a baseline across its six criteria (legal structure, financial management/internal controls, procurement, human resources, performance management, and operational sustainability). The initial score will help determine areas where these local organizations need additional support. In addition, the Activity will assess the needs of the

potential awardees in the technical areas of Market Systems Development (MSD) analysis and results measurement.

FtF IAM will then work with each organization on a range of issues in line with its NUPAS assessment. FtF IAM will cover participant costs but will require that employees' time be covered by their organization. This will include supporting grantees to:

- Attend USAID contracts and grants training and enroll in online courses such as “How to work with USAID”.
- Participate in MSD training and Results Measurement training programs.
- Participate in a training on proposal writing and development for USAID.

Phase 2 partners that demonstrate commitment and pass the NUPAS assessment will qualify to move onto Phase 4 and apply for a Transition Award according to the process and criteria outlined in the Phase 4 Request for Applications. This decision is expected to be 2 to 3 months after completion of the NUPAS baseline. Capacity building will continue concurrently with Phase 3 to avoid unnecessary delays.

**Phase 3: Co-Creation of Transition Award Program Descriptions.** In the third phase of the NOFO, successful organizations will co-design the Program Description (scope) for the Transition Awards. This will involve a one-week intensive workshop with FtF IAM staff and USAID representatives where possible.

**Phase 4: Request for Applications.** FtF IAM will share the request for applications with successful participants that incorporate the co-designed program descriptions. The applicants will submit cost information, key personnel, and a sustainability plan as part of the application. FtF IAM will evaluate the applications and submit requests to issue grants to an estimated 1 or 2 successful applicants.

USAID will then review and approve Transition Awards.

Pursuant to 2 CFR 700.13, it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments such as grant awards. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the grant program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (2 CFR 200 Subpart E for all US-based and for non-US based non-profit organizations, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for for-profit organizations), may be paid under the grant.

For non-US organizations, the Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Recipients will apply. For US organizations, 2 CFR 200 and the Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients will apply. See Annex I for Standard Provisions.

Subject to the availability of funds, DAI intends to provide 1-2 grants to eligible organizations, as defined in Section D of this RFA, up to a maximum amount of US \$100,000 per grant. The expected duration of DAI support or the period of performance is twelve (12) months. DAI, as primary implementer of the Feed the Future/Uganda Inclusive Agricultural Markets Activity, reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

For the purposes of this program, this NOFO is being issued and consists of this cover letter and the following:

- Section A – Program Description
- Section B – Selection Process
- Section C – Grant Application Instructions

## **Annexes**

No physical applications or correspondence will be accepted. All applications must be received via email to [IAMBids@dai.com](mailto:IAMBids@dai.com).

Award will be made to the responsible applicant(s) whose application(s) offers the best value for money.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of DAI, nor does it commit DAI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, DAI reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Any questions concerning this RFA should be submitted in writing not later than August 10, 2022, at 12 noon to the Grants Manager at [IAMGrants@dai.com](mailto:IAMGrants@dai.com). Applicants should retain for their records copies of all documents, enclosures and correspondence in relation to their application.

Thank you for your interest in Feed the Future/Uganda Inclusive Agricultural Markets Activity activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julia Grossman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'G'.

Julia Grossman

**Acting Chief of Party**

# Transition Awards to Support Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for Market Systems Development

## Table of Contents

A. Program Description.....	5
B. Selection Process .....	5
Eligibility .....	6
Phase 1: Concept Note Selection .....	6
Phase 2: Capacity Building.....	6
Phase 3: Co-Creation.....	7
Phase 4: Partnership Application .....	7
C. Grant Application Instructions.....	7
Phase 1 Application Procedure: Concept Note.....	7
Phase 2: Capacity Building.....	7
Phase 3: Co-Creation.....	8
Phase 4: Full Application.....	8
I. Preparation Instructions – Technical.....	8
II. Preparation Instructions – Financial and Administrative Documentation .....	8
Annex I Concept Note Template.....	9
Section 1: Overview .....	9
Section 2: Concept Note (limit 5 pages) .....	9
Section 3: Client Reference .....	10

## **A. Program Description**

FtF IAM adopts an inclusive market systems development approach that aims to generate opportunities within the agricultural sector for all market actors including women, youth, and other marginalized groups to effectively participate in the marketplace. FtF IAM will focus on constraints and opportunities to upgrading and creating efficiencies in the market system that will have a sustainable impact on the agricultural sector and the country. The approach empowers local actors, especially private sector, government, and market actor organizations, to align incentives for improved market performance. FtF IAM will play a facilitative role to empower the market actors to act on inefficiencies that limit growth of the markets within which they operate.

Using the MSD approach, FtF IAM seeks to build more competitive, inclusive, and resilient agricultural market systems in the Zones of Influence (Zoi). Competitive agricultural market systems promote constant upgrading as the basis of competition; the market system becomes more competitive as it adds value to products, increases efficiency and productivity, and where the market demands quality standards that must be met by all. Agricultural market systems are more inclusive when they create opportunities and sustainable benefits for women and youth and other marginalized groups, leveraging innovative and cost-effective business models, and marketing strategies that target traditionally excluded to participate and harvest better value from their engagement. Resilient agricultural market systems have stronger market governance mechanisms; diversity of market actors; strong connectivity and relationships between actors; commercial norms that drive better, more productive behavior; and business strategies informed by data, learning and innovation.

The MSD approach has gained recognition as an important development approach that delivers results in a sustainable manner among major donors in agriculture, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and health among others. FtF IAM has identified a gap in the ability of local service providers to provide MEL4MSD interventions such as market research and evaluations among others.

Larger private firms sometimes hire market research and marketing firms to help collect some of this research but early on, small and medium enterprises may not pay for these services. In addition, there are MEL4MSD activities that cut across multiple partners and help inform donor programming, rather than benefit a specific actor. These may be seen as more of a social good than a commercially viable service. FtF IAM seeks to increase the number of local partners that can support MEL4MSD on FtF IAM as it scales its activities to more partners and regions, particularly the resilience zones around Karamoja and refugee communities. FtF IAM will identify and coach local partners who may be eligible to lead the implementation of some of its interventions related to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in Years 4 and 5 of the Activity (2022-2024).

The final Program Description for the NOFO will be developed in Phase 3 using a co-creation approach with successful applicants. In this way, the applicants will contribute to the design of the interventions, and then submit applications in Phase 4 to complete the work.

## **B. Selection Process**

Within ten (10) working days of the closing date for this NOFO, a technical review panel will convene to evaluate Phase I Concept Notes. DAI shall take steps to ensure that members of the review panel do not have any conflicts of interest or the appearance of such with regard to the organizations whose applications are under review. An individual shall be considered to have the appearance of a conflict of interest if that person, or that person's spouse, partner, child, close friend or relative works for or is negotiating to work for, or has a financial interest (including being an unpaid member of a Board of Directors) in any organization that submitted an application currently under the panel's review. Members of the panel shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from parties to the awards.

The status of the Concept Notes received, whether accepted or rejected, shall be communicated to all applicants within thirty (30) days. All Concept Notes that meet the NOFO requirements will be reviewed by the review panel.

## **Eligibility**

Eligible respondents must be Ugandan licensed and legal organizations working in Uganda as private businesses. Individual consultants will not be considered for this NOFO.

## **Phase I: Concept Note Selection**

The evaluation of the Concept Notes will be used to determine if respondents shall be requested to submit detailed technical and costs proposals. The following criteria will be applied to all Concept Notes. All evaluation factors other than cost are of equal importance, and, when combined, are significantly more important than cost. Submissions are not evaluated against other submissions, but solely against the evaluation criteria outlined below:

- Evidence that the respondent is registered and licensed in Uganda to perform the work outlined
- Evidence that the respondent is offering Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning services commercially.
- Willingness to commercialize the services at the end of the partnership
- Prior experience in providing MEL4MSD
- Besides, the respondent should confirm.
  - The respondent must indicate that they can invest in the activity they propose and can prove at a later date that they have the necessary financial resources to perform the work, through bank statements, or a letter from their bank for example.
  - They submit the Concept Note response template under Annex A (see below)

DAI reserves the right not to review any Concept Note that do not meet the guidelines.

## **Phase 2: Capacity Building.**

Selected firms and organizations will all work with FtF IAM to complete the Non-US Organization Pre-Award Survey (NUPAS) tool<sup>1</sup> to establish a baseline across its six criteria (legal structure, financial management/internal controls, procurement, human resources, performance management, and operational sustainability). The initial score will help determine areas where these firms need additional support. In addition, the Activity will assess the needs of the potential awardees in the technical areas of MSD, analysis, and results measurement.

FtF IAM will then work with each organization on a range of issues in line with its NUPAS assessment. FtF IAM will cover participant costs but will require that employees' time be covered by their organization. This will include supporting grantees to:

- Attend USAID contracts and grants training and enroll in online courses such as “How to work with USAID.”
- Participate in MSD training and Results Measurement training programs.
- Participate in a training on proposal writing and development for USAID.

Phase 2 partners that demonstrate commitment and have a passed the NUPAS assessment will qualify for applying for a Transition Award according to the process and criterial outlined in the NOFO. This

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303sam.pdf>

decision is expected to be 2 to 3 months after completion of the NUPAS baseline. Capacity building may continue concurrently with Phase 3 to avoid unnecessary delays.

### **Phase 3: Co-Creation**

In the third phase of the NOFO, successful organizations will co-design the Program Description (scope) for the Transition Awards. This will involve a one-week intensive workshop with FtF IAM staff and USAID representatives where possible. For more information on how USAID uses co-creation, visit: <https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/how-to-work-with-usaid/co-creation-usaid>

It is anticipated that this workshop will happen at the end of October 2022 and the final dates will be shared with successful organizations, providing a minimum of 2-weeks' notice.

Successful Concept Paper respondents who are unable to participate in the co-creation conference must notify FtF IAM grants by email ([IAMGrants@dai.com](mailto:IAMGrants@dai.com)) ahead of time and provide a justification. Not participating in Phase 3 may exclude the applicant from eligibility to participate in Phase 4.

### **Phase 4: Partnership Application**

FtF IAM will share a Request for Application (RFA) with successful Phase 2 applicants who are interested in applying for grant funding based on the final Program Description developed out of the Phase 3 co-creation conference. In response to the RFA the applicant will submit a detailed application with a technical and cost proposal that describes how the applicant will complete the program description, the personnel and management plan, and the detailed budget.

Applications will be due on or about 30 days after the RFA is received and will be reviewed by FtF IAM for final selection. More information on Phase 4 will be provided to the firms with selected Concept Paper responses.

## **C. Grant Application Instructions**

### **Phase I Application Procedure: Concept Note**

Interested applicants should submit the concept note template included as Annex A.

#### **Deadlines**

Concept Notes must be received by email no later than the Closing Date indicated at the top of the NOFO (ie 12.00pm on August 26, 2022). Applications and modifications thereof shall be submitted in electronic format to the Grants Manager at [IAMBids@dai.com](mailto:IAMBids@dai.com)

#### **Late Applications**

All Concept Notes received by the deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness and programmatic merit according to the specifications outlined in these guidelines and the application format. Concept Notes submitted late or are incomplete run the risk of not being considered in the review process.

### **Phase 2: Capacity Building**

The capacity building phase will enable FtF IAM to assess the baseline and final capacity of the potential implementing partners (transition awardees) to implement USAID awards. It will also enable the partners to learn more about applying for and managing agreements with USAID under market systems development activities. The capacity building phase is not used as a competitive selection process; however, partners participation is required to demonstrate interest and willingness in working with USAID under FtF IAM as a Transition Awardee.

### **Phase 3: Co-Creation**

Phase III is not part of the competitive selection process but failure to participate in Phase 3 may prevent the prospective grantee from being eligible to submit an application in Phase 4.

### **Phase 4: Full Application**

Instructions on the full application will be provided in the RFA to be shared with successful Phase III co-creation. It will include both a technical application as described above and a detailed budget with financial documentation.

#### **I. Preparation Instructions – Technical**

Applicants should complete the Concept Note template attached as Annex I. Instructions are included in the Concept Note template. Concept Notes should be specific, complete, and presented concisely and shall not exceed four (4) pages (exclusive of annexes).

Instructions on Phase 4 will be provided to successful applicants at each phase respectively.

#### **II. Preparation Instructions – Financial and Administrative Documentation**

Successful applicants in Phase 2 will be requested to submit a detailed budget and financial and administrative documentation in Phase 4 when they receive a request for application (RFA). Questions or concerns related to these requirements may be submitted to [IAMGrants@dai.com](mailto:IAMGrants@dai.com) and may be discussed during Phase 3 co-design with successful applicants.



# Annex I: Concept Note Template

## Section I: Overview

1. Call Number:	NOFO-IAM-22-004		
2. Name of Organization:			
3. Contact Person:	Name:	Telephone:	
	Email:		
4. Head office Address in Uganda:			
5. Registration Type:		Number:	
6. Description of company/organization	(Describe type of business, target sectors, types of products and services)		
7. Distribution network locations	<input type="checkbox"/> Northern <input type="checkbox"/> Karamoja <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern <input type="checkbox"/> Southwestern <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain) _____		
8. Branch locations			
9. Main business partners			
10. Business information (est. 2020/2021)	Annual Business Revenue (est. 2020/2021)		
	Number of employees (full time)		
	Number of part time employees or agents		

## Section 2: Concept Note (limit 5 pages)

*(Instructions have been provided in italics. They do not count toward page limits and you may choose to delete them; each question should take between ¼- ½ of a page)*

11. **Business Support Services Model** *(Provide a brief introduction and background of your business support services, plans for growth, and challenges)*
12. **Aligned Objectives** *(What are your main objectives in relation to this NOFO; how does the call for transition awards align with your objectives? est ½ page)*
13. **Commercial viability and Scale** *(Describe how you think business support services targeted at MBOs can achieve sustainability in the medium and long term; what information and analysis are critical to understanding if the system is on track to achieve sustainability?)*
14. **Interest in Market Systems Development (MSD)** *(Why are you interested in working with USAID as a Transition Awardee on a USAID-funded MSD activity?)*

### Section 3: Client Reference

Include 3 references. Each reference must include the following:

- Client Name, address, Point of Contact Name, Telephone number, email
- Similar work performed and period of performance

I, the undersigned (Mr./Mrs./Ms. Chairman/President/Representative) of \_\_\_\_\_  
that is requesting financial assistance from the USAID FTF IAM Activity for the implementation  
of the proposed activity certify that all the information provided on this application is exact and  
correct.

Signature:

Date: