



USAID



Annual Program Statement (APS) July 2021-July 2022.

RTI International -USAID/Uganda Biodiversity for Resilience Activity (B4R)

The B4R Strategic Investment Fund (SIF)

Annual Program Statement (APS) Number: APS-SIF-2021-002

Issuance date: July 14, 2021

Round one,

Concept Paper Submission Date for Round 1: August 31, 2021,

Closing date for questions: : August 15, 2021,

Responses to be published by: : August 31, 2021,

Grant Amount: : Not Exceeding US\$ 50,000,

Matching Fund (Cost Share) : 1 - 1 Match

Grant Term: : 12 Months,

Closing date for Annual Program Statement : July 14, 2022.

Target Audience: Small and Medium Enterprises/ Organizations (SMEs).

Dear Stakeholder,

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

The USAID/Uganda Biodiversity for Resilience (B4R) Activity (June 2020-May 2025) is implemented by RTI International together with consortium members African Wildlife Foundation, (AWF), Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH), and Viamo. The main goal is to support communities, the Government of Uganda (GoU), and the private sector to conserve and manage biodiversity in target ecosystems for lasting environmental, economic sustainability, increased community, and household resilience.

The B4R Activity works collaboratively with key government agencies that include Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and National Forest Authority (NFA) and other related ministries and departments, as well as district and local authorities in support of community wildlife ranches, collaborative forest management areas and protected area management while promoting market-based solutions to improve stewardship of the natural resources necessary to sustain Uganda's economic development.

Vision

Landscapes where wildlife populations, natural habitats, and empowered communities are resilient and prosperous.

B4R Goal

To assist communities, the GOU, and the private sector to conserve and manage biodiversity in target ecosystems for lasting environmental and economic sustainability and increased community and household resilience.

a. Program Background -Strategic Investment Fund (SIF)

B4R provides direct financial support in the form of sub-awards from its Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) to private sector and other community-based enterprises. This support is tied to achieving the biodiversity conservation objectives in Kidepo Valley, Murchison Falls, Lake Mburo, and Budongo Forest landscapes.

SIF Goals and Objectives

- To create successful enterprises that support strong and resilient local economies.
- To ascribe value to biodiversity resources through sustainable use.
- To focus on creating long-term positive impact on biodiversity.
- To provide direct revenue for conservancy management.

Target Landscapes:

- Kidepo Valley National Park (NP) area: Karenga Community Wildlife Area (KCWA) and Central Forest Reserves (CFRs) of Timu, Morungole, Nyagea Napore, Lwala, and Rom. Districts: Karenga, Kaabong, Abim, Kotido, Kitgum and Agago
- Murchison Falls NP area: Murchison Community Conservancy (MCC) and Budongo CFR. Districts: Masindi, Buliisa, Nwoya, and Pakwach
- Lake Mburo NP area: Rurambira Conservancy. Districts: Isingiro, Kiruhura, and Mbarara and Rakai

These areas represent a major part of the Uganda's highly biodiverse areas and USAID priority areas. The focus will be on districts around these protected areas. The precise determination of the communities involved in the B4R/SIF private sector activities will be determined by several factors:

a) Community Relationship and Potential Threat to the Target Landscapes

Communities and economic activities impact the B4R target landscapes in multiple ways. Some effects are more direct and others less direct, such as:

- Encroachment on the proposed conservancies or central forest reserves (CFRs)
- Poaching by the communities both in the vicinity and by migrants
- Charcoal making, sometimes involving both locals and outsiders.
- Distant communities relying on some natural resources in those landscapes.
- Migration to the neighboring areas with negative effects due to inability to access the proposed conservancy resources.

- Conversion of adjacent land to commercial agriculture, often with no buffer zones or corridors remaining.

Specific priority threat reduction strategies and associated key species and ecosystems of interest by landscape are listed in the Annex C.

The proposed business ventures will need to address these threats and include all relevant communities. This will ensure that the illegal activities will not simply shift to the neighboring areas creating negative “leakage”. Long-term landscape management is critical.

b) Existing Community Skills and Activities

B4R activities may not always start from “ground zero” but rather build upon the existing economic activities in place and the community skills. For example, certain communities may already be involved in growing of desired crops or forestry enterprises. B4R/SIF private sector engagement should take advantage of these existing value chains as they can de-risk the project for scale up and allow for valuable transfer of skills. Involving such communities hence could be an important success factor.

c) Settlement Dispersion and Pattern

Lastly, community settlement follows certain patterns and trends. B4R/SIF needs to take these into consideration and analyze the interactions of various settlements and agricultural expansion on the landscapes. It is also important to anticipate future trends and incorporate planning to guide the development of interventions.

Target Sectors:

- Climate-smart, Organic and/or Restorative Agriculture – across the entire value chain with focus on value-added crops.
 - Eco-Tourism – nature-based tourism (both accommodation and activities).
 - Forestry – sustainable indigenous tree planting, non-timber forest products (e.g., honey, shea nut), and sustainable timber harvesting.
 - Wildlife-based Enterprises – game ranching and other ancillary products from wildlife (e.g., crafts).
 - Renewable Energy – products/services both in biomass and solar sectors.
 - Aquaculture – environmentally-compliant fish farming.
- Other sectors could be eligible if they contribute to the B4R objectives.

What are the key tenets and objectives for private sector engagement?

Conservation enterprise development supported by the B4R SIF will follow these tenants:

- *Diversification & Resiliency* – each landscape should aim to develop several enterprises in multiple target sectors, which would in turn make the local economies more vibrant and resilient to both economic and environmental risks.
- *Innovation* – applying best practices, developing new products/services, and using innovative partnerships.
- *Direct Linkage with Conservation Management* – the enterprise models should be closely linked with the conservation management of the target areas to address the threats around the buffer zones and other surrounding habitats (e.g., stop deforestation, reduce human wildlife conflict, land use planning guiding agricultural practices).

- *Equitable Benefit Sharing and Community Skills* – the businesses should include provisions to support improved community skills and benefit-sharing (e.g., local supply chains, investment in local skills and capacities).

The applicant needs to be located within or near the landscape and is in position to work with the population located within the target landscapes, contributing towards significant impacts on local livelihoods.

Soft copies of this document are available from the RTI International website: www.rti.org/rfp.

To ensure uniform disclosure to all potential applicants, we request that you submit any clarification questions to us by email. All questions must be submitted by email to SIF@ugandabiodiversity.rti.org. In addition, RTI will organize in-person information sessions, open to all interested parties in the area. RTI will not respond to telephone inquiries. Answers will be updated and sent to your emails through the designated email of SIF@ugandabiodiversity.rti.org on a monthly basis.

In the initial stage, only a concept paper is required to be submitted. If the applicant successfully meets or exceeds the merit review criteria, they will be invited to submit a full application. Details on what will be required at the application stage are explained in section IV below.

Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Uganda Biodiversity for Resilience Activity (B4R), nor does it commit the B4R Activity to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a concept paper. Further, B4R Activity reserves the right to reject any or all concept papers received. Similarly, an invitation to submit a full application is not a commitment to fund that application.

The RTI International grant review and approval process eliminates the possibility of any unilateral decision on any given application. RTI employees will not ask for, and applicants are prohibited from offering, any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, thing of value, or compensation to obtain or reward improper favorable treatment regarding this solicitation. Any improper request from a project employee should be reported to ethics@rti.org

b. Authority /Governing Regulations

RTI International grant awards are made under the authority of the U.S. Foreign Affairs Act and USAID's Advanced Directive System (ADS) 303. Awards made to non-U.S. organizations will adhere to guidance provided under ADS Chapter 303, "Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations" and will be within the terms of the USAID Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-Governmental Recipients, as well as the RTI International grants procedures.

ADS 303 references two additional regulatory documents issued by the U.S. Government's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the U.S. Agency for International Development:

- 2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, Subpart E (U.S. applicants are subject to 2 CFR 200 in its entirety)
- Full text of 2 CFR 200 can be found at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-12-26/pdf/2013-30465.pdf> and 2 CFR 700 at <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi>.

The project is required to ensure that all enterprises receiving USAID grant funds comply with the guidance found in the regulations referenced above, as applicable to the respective terms and conditions of their grant awards. RTI International staff will work closely with applicants to ensure that these requirements are met.

SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION AND ADMINISTRATION

a. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the APS is to solicit proposals from prospective Small and Medium Enterprises/Organizations for implementing activities under the Uganda Biodiversity for resilience Activity, focused on biodiversity in the various sectors of Climate-smart agriculture, Eco-Tourism, Wildlife-based Enterprises, Renewable Energy, Aquaculture and Forestry.

Biodiversity Impact Criteria.

The B4R/SIF aims to stimulate business investment into the “nature-based” economies in its target landscapes. The impact criteria follow several components. Eligible businesses must:

- Demonstrate a positive and measurable¹ impact² and contribute to biodiversity in the B4R target landscapes by following the impact methodology.
- Operate or plan to operate in or around one of the B4R target landscapes.
- Be compliant with the USAID Environmental Review process.

Impact Methodology

The business activities interface with society and environment in many ways. The three categories are introduced here as follows. Category I on Habitat Conservation will be the primary focus of the B4R impact:

1. Habitat Conservation and Restoration: Delivering improved management of critical biodiversity habitat: land or water.
2. Inclusive & Equitable Business: Creating more equitable and resilient business processes and systems.
3. Green Business/Service: Reducing environmental and carbon footprints in operations and supply chains.

In addition, all B4R supported projects will comply with:

1. Adherence to all relevant USAID and GOU legal and licensing requirements, including applicable environmental and social standards and regulations.
2. Adoption of the industry best practice and certifications (where applicable).

b. Award Information

i. Program Duration

The duration of programs funded under this APS is for a maximum period of 12 months

¹Measurable: it should be possible to measure the impact of the business on both conservation and social/economic improvement. For example: number of hectares of land/water set aside for conservation, number of conservation agreements with stakeholders.

² Impact or contribution is action or activities in a target area which result directly in improving the state of biodiversity compared to before the action or activities.

from the date of award. RTI International reserves the right to incrementally fund activities over the duration of the program, if necessary, depending on program length, performance against approved program indicators and availability of funds.

RTI International anticipates a rolling selection process. There is no submission deadline, but grants will be awarded following a quarterly review process. All interested enterprises are encouraged to submit their concept submissions as early as possible.

ii. *Anticipated Funding Availability*

Final funding levels will depend on content, quality number of applications received, needs, availability of funding, and competing priorities. Individual grants awarded as a result of this APS and submission of a final application are intended to NOT to exceed USD 50,000 for a period of 12 months. Applications may be wholly funded under this round, or incrementally funded by this round and subsequent rounds, subject to the availability of funds.

Applicants are expected to contribute towards the overall activity cost in the form of a 1 to 1 match. (A match refers to the resources a grantee contributes to the total cost of implementing an intervention or activity. The match may be in cash or kind or both). The match requirement is essential to demonstrate the commitment and ownership buy-in of the grantee. For example, an applicant that requests \$50,000 should also match that 1:1 with \$50,000 of their own resources. (See section d. below.) Ability to demonstrate long term commercial viability and clearly explain how the activity will be sustainable after the closure of the B4R project is the most important criteria for determining whether concepts will be invited to submit a full application. One-off support that is not sustainable or does not create a lasting impact on sector performance and small holder incomes will not be considered.

iii. *Type of Award*

Grants awarded under this APS could either be fixed amount award grants (FAA) or in-kind grants.

For FAAs, RTI International will make payments based on submission and acceptance of specific verifiable milestones. Once an award is issued, it will include a fixed price payment schedule with milestones and deliverables negotiated during the final application and award process.

Under in-kind grants, goods and/or services will be procured directly by RTI and provided to the grantee.

c. *Applicant Eligibility*

- Applicants must be a registered Small and Medium Enterprises/ Organizations company/enterprise (including micro-enterprises or groups of micro-enterprises), associations, cooperatives, and cooperative unions. All Applicants should:
 - Be legal persons.

- Be formally constituted at the time of grant award.
 - Be compliant with government of Uganda regulations (submit tax compliance certificate)
 - Have their principal place of business in Uganda.
- Grant award(s) resulting from this solicitation that are not in-kind will be required to provide a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number at the time of award. If the applicant already has a DUNS number, it should be included in their application. Otherwise, applicants will be expected to get a DUNS number before an award is made. The B4R Activity will assist successful applicants with this process. DUNS numbers can be obtained online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>
 - Applicants must display sound management in the form of financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures and present a system of internal controls that safeguard assets; protect against fraud, waste, and abuse; and support the achievement of program goals and objectives. RTI International will assess this capability prior to awarding a grant. Any falsification of proposal information may result in rejection/cancellation of the award.

d. Matching Funds

Applicants must be willing to make a significant investment in their business activities related to the RTI International value chains and counties.

Applicants should be able to contribute a match of 1:1 of the total project cost. Preference will be given to applications where the contribution exceeds this minimum. The match can be done through capital or equity and in-kind contribution.

In the concept paper, applicants need only estimate their match and explain in general terms where that match is coming from. Selected applicants will be required to submit a detailed proposal for matching funds as an annex to the cost proposal at the full proposal stage.

e. Environmental Compliance

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID funded activities on the environment be considered and that environmental sustainability be considered in designing and carrying out development programs. The environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities must be identified prior to a final decision to proceed and appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities.

As part of its application/proposal, the recipient, in collaboration with the B4R technical staff shall review all planned activities under the grant to determine if any environmental action and/or documentation must be completed prior to implementation.

SECTION III. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

a. Instructions to Applicants

Applicants must propose strategies for the implementation of the program scope described

above, introducing innovations that are appropriate to their enterprise strengths.

b. Concept Paper and Full Proposal

This is a two-stage application process: a concept paper and final proposal.

Step 1: Concept paper development

The first stage is for the applicant to submit a concept paper. Concept paper forms (Annex A) will be evaluated against the merit review criteria listed in Section IV below.

Step 2: Final Proposal

If the applicant successfully meets or exceeds the merit review criteria, the B4R staff will work with the applicant to develop a final more detailed proposal with specific implementation and impact plan.

Instructions and a template for developing the concept paper are provided in Annex A. Applicants shall present their concept paper in the formats provided and shall follow the instructions and guidelines listed in this annex.

All grant activity costs must be within the normal operating practices of the applicant and in accordance with its written policies and procedures. The budget may include direct costs that will be incurred by the applicant to provide identifiable administrative and management costs that can be directly attributable to supporting the grant objective.

The concept paper must be signed by a senior representative authorized to make commitments on behalf of the applicant.

c. Ineligible expenses

RTI International grant funds may not be utilized for the following:

- Construction or infrastructure activities of any kind.
- Ceremonies, parties, celebrations, or “representation” expenses.
- Prohibited goods under USAID regulations, including but not limited to the following: abortion equipment and services, luxury goods, Alcoholic beverages. etc.
- Any purchase or activity, which has already been made.
- Purchases or activities unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by the B4R Activity.
- Prior obligations of and/or, debts, fines, and penalties imposed on the Grantee.
- Purchase of second-hand goods or used machinery unless prior approval has been given by RTI International based on sound justification.
- Creation of endowments.

d. Eligible Expenses

Grant monies may be used for the following types of costs:

- Operational costs related to the provision of the proposed activities, including salaries of personnel, relevant equipment, supplies, financial administration, and other costs directly related to implementing the project.

- Operational costs for activities related to the delivery of proposed activities, including trainings, workshops, and communication initiatives.
- Materials development, production, and distribution.
- Purchases of restricted goods, such as: restricted agricultural commodities, motor vehicles including motorcycles, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, contraceptive products will require USAID approval.

Similarly, any of these categories of expenses can be considered as matching funds if paid by the grantee and clearly justifiable as necessary to successful implementation of the intervention.

e. **Submission Information**

Concept papers shall be submitted in the format provided in **Annex A - Concept Paper Form** and completed in English and may not be more than five (5) pages (excluding cover page, executive summary, and annexes).

Concept papers and other supporting documents shall be submitted in electronic copy to the RTI email address below and should reference **APS-B4R SIF-2021-002** in the subject line of the email.

RTI will continue to accept concept papers on a quarterly basis through **July 14, 2022**. Late applications will not be considered.

RTI Submission email: **SIF@ugandabiodiversity.rti.org**. Concept papers or applications submitted other than to this email will not be counted as official submission and the applicant will be asked to re-submit to the RTI grants email.

In addition to the concept paper, applicants should attach the following:

- A copy of the Applicant's valid legal registration,
- A copy of tax compliance certificate.

Please submit all questions concerning this solicitation to the attention of B4R, via email to **SIF@ugandabiodiversity.rti.org**. Responses to submitted questions will be posted to your organizational emails on a regular basis. RTI will assist applicants in understanding the application process and can provide guidance in application development at the request of applicants.

SECTION IV. APPLICATION MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

As described above, applications will be evaluated in a two-step evaluation process:

- The first step is for the applicants to submit a concept paper.
- If the concept paper is accepted, the applicant will be assisted by the B4R technical staff to develop a final and more detailed proposal, workplan and Budget.

All concept papers and applications will be reviewed by a Technical Evaluation Committee comprised of B4R technical implementation staff. Concept papers will be evaluated against the criteria below:

Evaluation Criteria for the Concept Notes:

- Alignment with the B4R Objectives – 10 points
- Technical approach – 50 points
- Organization's Capacity & Experience – 15 points
- Commercial Sustainability – 15 points
- Financial Proposal – 10 points

These merit review criteria elements are described more fully below.

A. **Alignment with the B4R Objectives (10 points):** The extent to which the proposed activity contributes to the stated B4R objectives and desired conservation and social impact outcomes.

B. **Technical Approach (50 points)** – the following aspects will be evaluated:

- *Business Viability*
 - Feasibility of the Approach,
 - Business Model Sustainability
 - Track Record
 - Innovation
 - Implementation Plan and Operations
- *Biodiversity Conservation*
 - Geographical Fit
 - Addressing Biodiversity Values/Threats
 - HWC Mitigation Aspects
 - Potential for Conservation Management & Financing
 - Scale of Impact
 - Nature-based Values Communication
 - Impact through Supply Chain
- *Inclusive Business:*
 - Employee Rights/Benefits
 - Quality of Jobs
 - Ownership (local, foreign, employee)
 - Scale of Social Impact
 - Youth/Women/Indigenous Groups Benefits and Impact
 - Bottom of the Pyramid focus"

- *Green Business/Service*
 - Environmental Regulations Compliance
 - Sustainable Resource Use (e.g., water, waste, energy)
 - Waste Management/Recycling
 - Pollution Avoidance
 - Carbon Emissions (reduction and offset)

C. Organizational Capacity and Experience (15 points)

- Top Management and Key Technical staff technical skills
- Other Internal Capacity (facilities, assets, systems, technologies)
- Relevant Successful Experience
- Ability to manage growth.

D. Commercial Sustainability (15 points)

- Long term plan
- Projection of business growth
- Timeline for profitability

E. Financial Proposal (10 points)

- Planned funds use (e.g., capex)
- Budget for both B4R support and the applicant investment
- Matching Funds (cash or in-kind)
- Efficiency of the proposal

Additionally, B4R will ensure environmental soundness and compliance in design and implementation as required by 22 CFR 216.

SECTION V. AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

All grants will be negotiated, denominated, and funded in Uganda Shillings (UGX).

All costs funded by the grant must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Grant applications must be supported by a detailed and realistic budget.

Issuance of this APS and assistance with application development do not constitute an award or commitment on the part of RTI, nor does it commit RTI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. RTI reserve the right to accept or reject any or all applications received. RTI also reserves the right to ask for further clarifications from the applicants or negotiate for adjustments on the nature, scope, or scale of the investment. Applicants will be informed in writing of the decision made regarding their application.

The following Annexes are included with this APS:

ANNEX A: Concept Paper Form Template.

ANNEX B: Budget Template

ANNEX C: Key Biodiversity Threats and Priority Species/Ecosystem