SOLICITATION TYPE:	REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)
PROGRAM NAME:	E3/Land and Urban, Communications, Evidence and Learning (CEL) Project
SOLICITATION NO.:	SOL-OAA-17-000062
ISSUANCE DATE:	Friday, March 17, 2017
DUE DATE:	Friday April 7, 2017 to **hmarshall@usaid.gov** and **lmarko@usaid.gov**

Dear Partner Community,

The U.S Agency for International Development (USAID), Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and Environment (E3), Office of Land and Urban (LU) is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) which is intended to:

- Obtain details concerning partner community interest in the E3/LU's anticipated requirement described herein;
- Obtain information on the level of capacity of potential contractors relative to the tasks and objectives described in the draft Statement of Work (SOW) titled "E3/Land and Urban, Communications, Evidence and Learning (CEL)" project;
- Solicit and obtain input, advice, knowledge, and best practices from organizations interested in participating in USAID's evaluations, research, communications, knowledge management, training, and technical assistance within the land tenure, resource governance, and sustainable urbanization sectors.

USAID welcomes all segments of the public (in the U.S. and abroad) to respond to the RFI. Small businesses are highly encouraged to respond. All responses to this RFI must be submitted by the due date via email to the addresses noted above.

General Instructions:
Please organize responses in the following format and provide the information requested below;

1. **Level of Interest** - Indicate your organization type (e.g. small business, large business) and whether or not it is a possibility your organization would respond to any solicitation resultant from the market research conducted herein. Note this information is considered procurement sensitive and will not be shared with the public. Only the USAID acquisition planning team will have access to responses and information gathered from this RFI.

2. **Organizational Capabilities relative to the draft SOW** – Please provide your relevant organizational capabilities relative to the draft SOW/illustrative tasks as outlined under both program components in **Attachment 1**.

   Respondents may include organizational information such as: past experience working in any of the noted technical areas; core capabilities; experience working with other stakeholders; or other information relevant to an organization's ability to successfully perform the tasks outlined in this RFI.

3. **Technical feedback on the draft SOW** - Include information on other potential activities or successful approaches and provide responses to USAID's noted technical questions in **Attachment 2**.

Submission Instructions/Response Format:
Please provide one (1) electronic copy of your response in Microsoft Word format as a single email attachment to hmarshall@usaid.gov and lmarko@usaid.gov. Please number pages consecutively beginning with Page 1.

To be of most help, use the following response format guidelines; Responses should not exceed ten (10) pages (not including cover page) total typed, 12-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced with one inch margins on the electronic equivalent of 8.5 x 11 inch paper.

Suggested page count:

   - Cover page to include the organization name, address, contact information, business type (e.g. large, small), date, and solicitation number

   - Two to three (2-3) pages to present organizational capabilities

   - Four (4) pages to provide responses the technical questions and/or provide feedback on the draft SOW,

   - One to three (1-3) pages to respond to USAID's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA) questions and/or questions to USAID and to provide statement of level of interest in responding to any future requirement.

In accordance with FAR 15.201(e), responses to this notice are NOT considered offers and CANNOT be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract. Therefore, USAID is not seeking technical or cost proposals at this time. Please do not submit a full proposal as these will not be reviewed and will be discarded.

Responses to this RFI are strictly voluntary and USAID will NOT reimburse respondents for the preparation of information submitted in response to this RFI. Submissions in response to this RFI will NOT be returned and respondents will NOT be notified of the results of the review. Respondents may however receive a confirmation of receipt of the response.

If a solicitation is issued for the E3/LU CEL project, it will be announced on the Federal Business Opportunities website: http://www.fbo.gov at a later date, and all interested parties must respond to that solicitation announcement separately. It is the organization's responsibility to monitor this site for the release of any further information. By responding to this RFI, there will be no advantage to any entity in any subsequent procurement. This RFI does NOT restrict the Government's acquisition approach on a future solicitation.

USAID appreciates any feedback provided. Thank you for your time and interest in USAID's activities.

Sincerely,

Hillary A. Marshall
Contracting Officer, M/OAA/E3

NOTICE: THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ONLY. The RFI is solely issued to gather information for planning purposes as an attempt to identify capabilities of potential contractors and to gain feedback on the draft SOW. Therefore, respondents are advised that any information submitted may be used to inform the development of the anticipated SOW. This RFI is NOT a Request for Proposal (RFP), a Request for Quotation (RFQ), an Invitation for Bids (IFB), a solicitation, or an indication that USAID will contract for the requirement contained in this RFI.

ATTACHMENT 1 – DRAFT STATEMENT OF WORK (SOW)

E3/Land and Urban, Communications, Evidence and Learning (CEL) Project

PURPOSE & SCOPE

The purpose of the Communications, Evidence and Learning (CEL) project is to create, expand, and disseminate the results of evidence-based knowledge around: 1) land tenure, property rights, and resource governance, and 2) urban development, urban-based programming and sustainable urbanization. Project activities and results will guide USAID and U.S. Government program design and implementation, inform policy discussions, and improve decision making to maximize the effectiveness of limited development resources to accomplish key U.S. Government development objectives such as: mitigating conflict, fostering economic growth, promoting resilience, improving women's economic empowerment, enhancing food security and nutrition, supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, improving urban service delivery, strengthening local and urban governance, and improving urban health.

Work under CEL will take a multi-disciplinary, integrated approach to the project's two primary functions:

1) <u>Knowledge Generation:</u> Building upon and expanding the body of evidence-based knowledge in the land and urban sectors through rigorous impact and performance evaluations, research and analysis, and possibly through targeted pilot activities in selected countries.

2) <u>Knowledge Dissemination:</u> Organizing, distilling and effectively communicating findings, lessons, best practices, and data to key target audiences, specifically USAID missions; other USAID/Washington technical offices; other USG stakeholders host country governments, organizations, partners, and communities; other donors and development partners; and to the broader development community through communication, knowledge management and training activities.

It is expected that these two primary functions be closely integrated to ensure that knowledge generation and dissemination are used effectively to inform decision making and build capacity.

BACKGROUND

<u>Land</u>

Land and the systems that govern land, resources, and property rights are central to many of our most pressing development issues. Land is the most critical economic resource for the vast majority of the rural poor who depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. For the urban poor,

land rights are often a prerequisite for gaining access to urban services. Yet an estimated 70 percent of land in developing countries is unregistered or undocumented.

A growing body of evidence demonstrates how clear, secure land tenure and property rights positively impact a number of key development objectives, such as household investment, agricultural productivity, food security and nutrition, more robust rental markets for farmland, and women's empowerment. Effective governance systems create positive incentives that enable more efficient and effective investment in land, labor, capital, and improved agricultural practices. Further, more secure land and property rights create opportunities for rights holders to negotiate voluntary transfers of valuable resources for their economic gain.

Women's land rights are particularly important for improving a variety of development outcomes, as women's ownership and control over land can affect what households produce and how the proceeds from agricultural production are allocated within the family. Yet, throughout many developing countries women have less access, control, and ownership of this key asset, and their land rights are less secure. Such barriers often limit women's economic opportunities and leave them more vulnerable to poverty, hunger, gender-based violence and displacement.

Good land and resource governance is essential for climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. In many developing countries, the land use sector is the largest contributor to climate change, with agriculture and forest loss and degradation causing greenhouse gas emissions. Deforestation and forest degradation often occurs due to poor land governance along with the lack of secure land and resource rights incentivizes individuals to convert forests to agricultural land. Clarifying property rights and strengthening land and resource governance deters land conversion and can improve land use. Reducing deforestation and agricultural emissions depends on a person's and community's ability to manage their land in the long term, which in turn depends on strong and clear resource rights. Clear and secure rights also positively influence the ability to adapt systems and livelihoods to climate change impacts. Secure land rights and clear resource tenure give all stakeholders confidence that their land and resources are safe, even under the uncertainty of a changing climate, allowing long-term investment decisions, including those that encourage better environmental practices and replanting trees.

Land is often at the center of violent conflicts, given its critical position as a source of identity, wealth, and power. Underlying conflict dynamics, such as increasing demand for land for agriculture or urban expansion or large-scale displacement due to natural disasters or climate change, can be exacerbated by poor land governance. Addressing weaknesses in land governance systems can help prevent, mitigate, and resolve such conflicts. In turn, this can yield significant development and humanitarian benefits. Conversely, the failure to address land issues may prolong or intensify conflicts and their costs.

Given the foundational importance of land tenure, property rights and resource governance to a variety of USAID development objectives, it is essential to continue to improve the Agency's

capacity to understand address these issues through evidence-based knowledge and improved programming and policies.

Urban

When USAID was founded in 1961, roughly 34 percent of the world's population lived in urban areas. By 2030, that figure will rise to over 60 percent as cities and towns become home to more than 1.4 billion additional people. Nearly all of this growth and shift will take place within the developing world, affecting every region where USAID works.

Urbanization in the developing world is an urgent development priority as cities' populations and spatial coverage are growing faster than the ability of national and local governments to plan, build for, and manage these changes. The urban poor suffer from lack of secure tenure and basic services, which cause instability and vulnerability; hence, threatening the overall prosperity and viability of cities and ultimately a country's path to sustainable development. Addressing these challenges in complex urban systems requires integrated approaches. It is nearly impossible to separate threats to human security and well-being (e.g. crime, violent extremism) from gender inequality, economic development, food systems, services, governance, and environmental issues.

Preparing for the growth of cities and equipping them with the capacity they need to manage this growth will help foster the sustainable provision of key services such as; water, sanitation, electricity, affordable housing, public health, education and workforce development. Urbanization also has implications for economic development, municipal finance, food systems, and climate change adaptation.

Further, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of strong urban-rural linkages. Urban areas and their surrounding rural lands depend on one another for sustained growth. Cities, especially secondary cities and towns, provide a market for rural goods and a source of remittances to rural areas. In this sense, urban growth supports rural incomes and livelihoods. Capitalizing on this opportunity and harnessing the potential of growing cities can improve development outcomes in both rural and urban areas.

Recognizing the importance of cities and the demographic trend of urban growth in the developing world, USAID released an urban policy in October 2013 entitled "Sustainable Service Delivery in an increasingly Urbanized World" (https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/USAIDSustainableUrbanServicesPolicy.pdf). This policy lays out the rationale for targeting USAID programs in urban areas, and explains the impacts that urbanization has on USAID's objectives for the following sectors: Food Security; Health, Climate Change; Economic Growth; Democracy, Human Rights and Governance; Humanitarian Assistance; Crisis Prevention and Response, and; Education. The policy is grounded upon the following four development principles: Ensuring Political and

Financial Sustainability; Advancing Accountable, Pro-Poor Service Delivery Models; Fostering Market Orientation and Public-Private Collaboration; and Supporting Municipal Resilience.

To address the various challenges to ending extreme poverty and building resilient urban societies, USAID will also prioritize supporting: inclusive and transformational economic growth, including for youth; accountable governments with equitable service delivery, with a focus on women and other marginalized groups; and resilient systems in the face of conflict, epidemics, climate change, food insecurity, and disaster.

USAID's E3/Land and Urban Office

USAID's Land and Urban (LU) Office within the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and Environment (E3) provides integrated technical assistance to USAID's bureaus, operating units, and missions and the U.S. Government (USG) interagency across a wide range of technical areas related to land and resource governance and/or sustainable urbanization. LU's primary development objectives are:

- Improve land and resources governance and strengthen property rights for all members of the society in developing countries, especially women; and

- Strengthen complex urban systems and the well-being of urban poor, especially women.

LU primarily works to build evidence-based knowledge, test innovative models, and disseminate best practices in the land and urban sectors, while working to build USAID's and USG's capacity to address land and urban challenges and improve programming and policies. LU also supports USAID's and USG's efforts to develop and implement key international agreements, such as the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security; the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems; the New Urban Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Agreement.

LU is committed to continuing to support USAID's efforts to make policy, programmatic and other investment decisions based on empirically sound evidence. Basing decisions on empirical evidence helps ensure that limited resources are put to the best use given many competing demands. In addition, basing policy and programmatic decision-making on rigorous evidence helps to build a better understanding of whether interventions do or do not accomplish their goals and why, enhancing learning and accountability.

Work conducted under CEL will help LU and USAID address these needs. It will also help to strengthen partner country policy, research, monitoring and evaluation capacity by working with local academic, research organizations, civil society, local governments, and local private organizations, including through the use of grants under contract.

In the land sector in particular, LU has already invested significant efforts over the past five years in building evidence-based knowledge through rigorous evaluations and research (https://www.land-links.org/evaluations-and-research/). While the initial evidence is encouraging, important knowledge gaps remain in both the land and urban sectors. The anticipated work under the CEL project is expected to build on this existing body of work and expand beyond it to examine new priority issues such as:

- *What are the implications for peri-urban and rural tenure systems as cities in Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere expand horizontally?*
- *How does formal recognition of customary tenure impact tenure security, social cohesion, sustainable land and resource management, agricultural investment and productivity, incomes (on and off-farm), intra and inter-community conflicts and disputes, and interactions with external actors?*
- *What is the relationship between land and resource governance and gender-based violence and the health of women and children within the household?*
- *Under what conditions are urban planning efforts in secondary cities successfully implemented and enforced?*
- *How effective are alternative governance models or decentralized technologies in helping cities meet service needs in rapidly urbanizing contexts?*
- *Which approaches to improving public services and safety are most effective in restoring confidence in government and countering violent extremism?*
- *What are the most effective ways for cities to encourage the creation and uptake of innovative approaches to key development challenges such as food security, health, and resiliency to natural disasters and other shocks?*

In both the land and urban sectors, LU has also developed robust knowledge management platforms for organizing and sharing information with key stakeholders (www.Land-Links.org and www.Urban-Links.org). LU has also developed a significant number of resources--such as fact sheets, issue briefs, country profiles, infographics, videos, and tools--and dissemination channels such as online training programs, email newsletters, and webinars series--to spread knowledge and build capacity among key audiences in these sectors. Work under CEL will build upon, integrate, and expand these resources and develop new products and tools to better reach target audiences.

While there are important overlaps between the land and urban sectors, there are also separate and distinct challenges, issues, and opportunities. Therefore, to successfully address issues under both sectors, the CEL implementer will need sufficient technical expertise in the broad range of issues covered by both LU's land portfolio and its urban portfolio.

ILLUSTRATIVE TASKS

Knowledge Generation Component:

Task 1. Evaluation

The implementer will conduct rigorous performance and impact evaluations of a range of land and urban programs to test development questions relevant to eliminating extreme poverty, empowering women, enhancing food security, improving natural resource management, improving climate change mitigation and adaptation, mitigating conflict, improving urban service delivery, improving urban health, and promoting democratic governance and resilience.

Evaluations are expected to be as rigorous as possible, whether impact or performance evaluations, and their methodology must appropriate and feasible for the context. Evaluations are expected to follow a range of experimental and quasi-experimental designs, with methodologies including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method. Evaluations must adhere to USAID's Evaluation Policy (https://www.usaid.gov/evaluation/policy) and USAID's Research Policy (https://www.usaid.gov/policy/scientific-research) and are expected to supported by subject matter and country experts and involve a rigorous peer review process.

The implementer will be responsible for the overall design, implementation, and dissemination of the evaluation, including: developing a rigorous evaluation design; developing survey instruments or other data collection tools; ensuring the appropriate third-party review of evaluation materials and research protocols; implementing data collection, including the management of local data collection firms; cleaning, analyzing, interpreting results; developing evaluation reports; and coordinating with other Tasks under CEL to plan and disseminate key findings to target audiences.

Task 2. Research

The implementer will conduct primary research utilizing the evaluation data collected under Task 1 and under other USAID evaluation mechanisms to answer research questions posed in evaluation designs.

Research under CEL will also extend beyond individual impact and performance evaluations to develop and implement a broader research agenda related to critical land tenure and sustainable urbanization topics.

CEL may also include a grants under contract mechanism to support a limited number of research grants, primarily targeted to developing country research institutions.

The implementer will also be required to produce a variety of secondary research products, such as literature reviews, fact sheets, country profiles, case studies, and issue briefs that summarize

and clearly present essential information for target audiences.

Research activities are expected to be coordinated closely with communications, knowledge management, and learning tasks to ensure that findings and lessons are disseminated effectively to target audiences.

Task 3. Assessments and Pilots
Work under CEL will likely involve flexible, on-demand technical assistance in supporting LU in undertaking land tenure or urban assessments for specific USAID missions. Given the range of cross-cutting issues affected by land tenure and urbanization, the implementer is expected to draw upon a cadre of experts with different technical and geographic expertise to assist missions in assessing various development challenges and recommending programming options.

CEL may also have the opportunity to support a limited number of pilot or "proofs of concept" activities to test innovative methods or technologies, or determine the feasibility of certain approaches. In instances where this may occur, pilots will be of a limited nature and integrate impact evaluation as part of the initial project design as stated in USAID's Evaluation Policy. The nature, duration and size of any potential pilots to be implemented under CEL is undetermined at this time. However, given the potential availability of other mechanisms, it is anticipated that anticipated pilots under CEL would be more likely in the urban sector than in the land sector.

Knowledge Dissemination Component:

Task 4. Communications and Knowledge Management
The anticipated work under CEL is expected to build and improve LU's existing communications strategies, platforms, and tactics to reach key internal and external audiences. The implementer will be responsible for a variety of activities, including: developing a strategic communications plan and maintaining an editorial calendar to guide outreach efforts; creating audience-appropriate communications products, such as blogs, infographics, photo essays, and short videos; and planning and implementing multi-channel communications campaigns using direct email outreach, social media, engagement in key conferences and events; and hosting in-person and online webinars and events.

The implementer will be responsible for maintaining and improving two websites: www.Land-Links.org and www.Urban-Links.org. Work under CEL will include front and back-end design and web management; content strategy, organization and management; and technical enhancements to improve navigation, comply with USAID website regulations and user experience. The implementer will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on website analytics and interpreting and analyzing analytics data to recommend improvements to website design, functionality, and broader communications efforts.

In addition to serving as the communication platforms for the LU Office itself, LandLinks and UrbanLinks—and by extension the CEL project—will serve as the central knowledge management platforms for USAID's work in these sectors writ large. Therefore, the implementer will be responsible for collecting, organizing, posting, and promoting resources and information from a variety of USAID programs and activities operating in these sectors from Washington and across the globe. Furthermore, the implementer is expected to further develop these websites into robust, well-organized, and comprehensive knowledge management portals.

Task 5. Training and Learning
The implementer will be responsible for planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating audience-appropriate training activities to build capacity to address land tenure and urbanization issues among USAID and USG staff and targeted secondary audiences, such as host country governments, civil society, the private sector, and development partners.

Expected work under CEL is expected to build on and improve LU's existing training efforts, including the Massive Open Online Course on Land Tenure and Property Rights (https://www.land-links.org/event/land-tenure-property-rights-mooc-2-0/) and forthcoming online urban courses, while going beyond it to develop new stand-alone or integrated online, in-person, or blended learning programs in both the land and urban sectors. Additionally, work under CEL must facilitate knowledge-exchange and peer-to-peer learning platforms, and events to facilitate information sharing and learning across stakeholder groups.

The implementer will also support LU in developing training materials and modules to integrate land tenure or urban sessions into other USAID training programs, such as trainings for various backstops and sector workshops (e.g. Environment Officers Conference, Annual Infrastructure Workshop, etc.) to strengthen the linkages between land and urban and other sectors. The implementer will also support LU in developing and conducting customized in-person or online trainings or modules for specific Missions upon demand.

Learning activities will be closely coordinated with other CEL tasks to ensure that training programs draw upon the best available evidence-based knowledge and are communicated to stakeholders strategically.

ATTACHMENT 2 - QUESTIONS FOR PARTNER COMMUNITY

USAID/E3/LU welcomes input and comments in response to any or all the questions listed below. Please ensure comments are concise and specific to information referenced within the RFI.

Technical Questions (4 pages)

1.   Do you have any general feedback or recommendations on the RFI as a whole?

2.   Do the illustrative tasks outlined in the draft statement of work sufficiently capture the breadth of activities required to meet the program's stated purpose? Are there gaps or other issues in the draft statement of work that would impede achieving these objectives?

3.   In your previous experiences delivering similar and relevant services, what approaches/methods were most the beneficial under the land and urban sectors? What challenges proved to be barriers or limitations?

4.   Under the Knowledge Generation Component, Task. 2, are there any specific research questions you recommend this program should also focus on examining?

5.   Under the Knowledge Generation Component, Task 3, are there any specific urban-related pilot ideas you would recommend this program undertake?

6.   This project will require a number of specialized skills under the land and urban sector. What type of partnerships and/or alliance do you foresee as necessary to effectively and successfully carry out the tasks?

M/OAA Questions (1-3 pages)

1.   Do you have any recommendations or suggestions between a Statement of Work (SOW) versus a Statement of Objectives (SOO) in reference to the abovementioned illustrative tasks?

2.   In your experience delivering similar or relevant services, what contract type/mechanism has worked well?

3.   Do you foresee any organizational conflict of interest given the abovementioned illustrative tasks under both components?

4.   Do you have any feedback or recommendations that you would like to share with USAID regarding any anticipated solicitation for this requirement?