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**Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiative (LAVI)
Annual Program Statement (APS)
Request for Concept Papers**

Promoting Best Practices and Information Sharing Among Civil Society Actors for
Advocacy and Policy Reform: Natural Resource Management and Concessions Sector

Funding Opportunity Title:	Promoting Best Practices and Information Sharing Among Civil Society Actors for Advocacy and Policy Reform: Natural Resource Management and Concessions Sector
Announcement Type:	Annual Program Statement (APS)
Funding Opportunity Number:	LAVI-APS-003
Applicant:	Non-governmental entities (including but not limited to civil society organizations, community-based organizations, universities, professional associations, faith-based groups, unions and trade associations, and private sector firms)
Grant Type:	To be determined
Issuance Date:	9 January 2017
Questions:	15 January 2017 to USAID/LAVI Project Office or LAVIgrants@dai.com
Pre-Submission Meeting:	16 January 2017 at 9am-11am at iCampus, 150 Carey Street, Sniper Hill. Confirm participation to LAVIgrants@dai.com prior to event.
Submission of First Round Concept Notes:	1 February 2017 to USAID/LAVI Project Office or LAVIgrantapplication@dai.com
USAID/LAVI Project Office Address:	18 th Street and Warner Avenue, Sinkor, Monrovia
APS Final Closing Date:	31 January 2018

TO INTERESTED APPLICANTS:

The Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiative (LAVI) project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), calls for concepts papers to implement innovative knowledge management and learning activities focused on advocacy and policy reform in the natural resource management (NRM) and concessions sector. LAVI is interested in creative strategies to bring actors together in the NRM and concessions sector to collaborate, share best practices, and exchange information that will enhance advocacy in favor of more inclusive, participatory policy reforms that represent the needs of the people in Liberia.

Eligible applicants should be registered non-governmental Liberian entities as well as West African entities with experience in Liberia, including but not limited to civil society organizations, community-based organizations, universities, professional associations, faith-based groups, unions and trade associations, and private sector firms.

LAVI will review concept papers in a first round review. If a concept paper is shortlisted for a second round review, applicants will be invited to develop and submit a full application, with the award of successful applications expected in the first quarter of 2017. DAI on behalf of USAID anticipates awarding **multiple grants of no more than \$50,000 each for a maximum period of one year** to fund successful applications.

Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiative (LAVI)
18th Street & Warner Avenue, Monrovia

SECTION I - FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

A. Background

The Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiative (LAVI) project is a five-year, USAID-funded project implemented by DAI to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships to advocate for and monitor policy and accountability reforms in Liberia. The LAVI project aims to increase the influence of citizens and media in the governance of public goods and services, as well as to create more effective, accountable, and inclusive governance in Liberia.

One of LAVI's main objectives is to work with individuals and organizations engaged in advocacy efforts in order to strengthen and support collaboration in how they share relevant information with each other. LAVI holds the view that multi-stakeholder advocacy efforts will be improved if these groups actively engage with each other in ongoing-learning and sharing – for example, best practices, lessons on success and failures, research and analysis, and story-telling from stakeholders.

B. Funding Opportunity Description

LAVI currently supports a coalition of eight Liberian civil society organizations in an effort bring about policy reform and improved citizen participation in the monitoring and management of County Social Development Funds across Liberia. LAVI also works with government entities in the NRM sector to support their mandate and strengthen government-citizen engagement. To complement the coalition's advocacy and government-citizen engagement around NRM issues, LAVI is establishing this APS, *Promoting Best Practices and Information Sharing Among Civil Society Actors for Advocacy and Policy Reform*.

Through this window, LAVI seeks concept papers from organizations with ideas and capacity to implement activities that are innovative and locally-driven, and have the proven ability to increase collaboration, application of best practices, and information sharing among actors involved in advocacy efforts to promote reform in the NRM and concessions sector. LAVI is interested in making awards for activities that include but are not limited to the following:

- Host civil society round table discussions, conferences, and challenge or prize competitions, and other innovative events to promote creative problem-solving methodologies and multi-stakeholder collaboration to address issues in the NRM and concessions sector.
- Organize and lead Communities of Practice (online-platform or in-person meet-ups or working groups) around key issue areas in the NRM and concessions sector or advocacy strategies in Liberia to encourage sharing of best practices and collaborative advocacy activities.
- Create the strategy for and/or implement an artistic and/or digital platform to showcase and disseminate
- NRM and concessions sector advocacy best practices, successes, and lessons-learned.
- Facilitate the collection of NRM and concessions advocacy best practices – illustrative techniques include but are not limited to audio-recordings, photography, written stories, live story-telling, social media platforms, online platforms, visual recording – in which organizations can document what advocacy activities were done, how it was done, and, more importantly, why it was successful and how it can be replicated.
- Host “lightening talks” where organizations make short presentations on innovative and successful advocacy strategies for reform in the NRM and concessions sector.

A strong concept paper should include an explanation of the actors who will participate in the proposed activities, as well as a brief discussion of participants' incentives, motivations, and role(s). Actors can be

broadly defined as government institutions and non-governmental entities who share a vested interest in NRM and concession sector issues that may affect the general population. Actors may include but are not limited to civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), marginalized groups, private sector, universities, faith based group, women and youth organizations, professional associations and trade unions.

A strong concept paper should incorporate innovative tools and approaches including digital media, film, art, radio, and music as appropriate, and include activities that engage marginalized communities, youth, and women.

Applicants should plan for Monrovia-based activities and events to utilize the **LAVI Learning Lab based in iCampus at 150 Carey Street, Sniper Hill, Monrovia**. More information on iCampus can be found at: <http://icampus.io/>.

SECTION II- AWARD INFORMATION

DAI intends to award as a result of this APS multiple grants of no more than \$50,000 each for a maximum period of one year. Applicants should be realistic about the actual award size and period of performance needed and not simply list the maximum award ceiling amount and period. DAI reserves the right to deviate from this ceiling at our discretion. DAI may choose to fully fund or incrementally fund the chosen application(s). The number of awards and amount of available funding is subject to change and LAVI reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this APS.

All concept papers for review in the first round of evaluations are due by **1 February 2017**. **It is likely that all of the available funds for this APS may be allocated to awards resulting from the first round of evaluations.** At the discretion of DAI, applications received after the first round of evaluations may be considered on a rolling basis or as part of another round of evaluations until **31 January 2018**.

SECTION III- ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

In order to be considered, concept papers must meet all of the following requirements:

- Be submitted by a legally registered non-governmental Liberian entity or West African entity with experience working in Liberia. Registration must be valid.
- Be submitted by an entity with demonstrated experience designing innovative program activities for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and learning.
- Support results consistent with LAVI's Objective Four

SECTION IV- APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Application Process

In the first stage of the application process, applicants must first submit a concept paper directly to the LAVI project. The Grant Evaluation Committee (GEC) will review all concept papers. Papers that score well against the selection criteria will be included on the GEC's shortlist. Short-listed applicants will then be requested to submit a Full Application for consideration; this marks the second stage of the application process. Further detailed instructions on submitting a full Application will be sent later to all short-listed applicants.

Please note: Only short-listed applicants will be requested to submit Full Applications.

B. General Instructions for the Concept Paper

Concept papers will be no longer than five (5) pages consisting of a cover page, technical approach, and cost proposal, that is specific, complete and concise (cover page does not count towards the 5 pages). Concept papers must be in English and in size 11 Times New Roman Font, and include page numbers.

1. Cover Page: The cover page must include (and is limited to):

- a. Name of entity and acronym
- b. Entity contact information
- c. Contact point (lead contact name; relevant telephone, e-mail information);
- d. Name of other donors funding this proposed activity (if applicable);
- e. Signature of authorized representative of the applicant.

2. Technical Approach (no more than four (4) pages): This section should reference Section 1: Funding Opportunity Description and briefly provide the following information:

- a. Background of entity
- b. Background, objectives, activities, and intended outcomes of the proposed activities
- c. Description of how the proposed activities include best practices, experiences, and innovations in advocacy that will be used for further advocacy in the NRM and concessions sector in Liberia.
- d. Describe how the proposed activities will improve the uptake of advocacy best practices in the NRM and concessions sector among a diverse array of actors, including marginalized groups and actors not traditionally engaged in advocacy efforts.
- e. Explanation of how the proposed activities are relevant and innovative for the Liberian context.

3. Cost Proposal (no more than one (1) page):

- a. Present a brief estimate of main cost items for your proposed activities, which may include labor, transportation, program activities, equipment, and operational costs/indirect costs.
- b. Applicants should be realistic about the actual award size needed and not simply list the maximum award ceiling amount.
- c. Applications should ensure that estimated proposal cost elements are realistic for the work to be performed, reflects a clear understanding of the requirements, and is consistent with the methods of performance and materials in the technical proposal.
- d. Although LAVI will support organization staff and operating costs that are necessary for reaching activity goals, applicants should direct their resources primarily to project implementation, rather than organization operating costs.

You will need to request for the Concept Paper Form to draft your concept paper. You can request this via LAVIGrants@dai.com when you confirm participation to the Pre-Submission Meeting.

C. Questions for Concept Papers

All applicants can submit clarification questions to LAVIGrants@dai.com no later than the deadline on the cover page of this APS or subsequently announced deadlines if additional reviews are announced. Responses to all relevant questions will be emailed to all applicants. Please review the APS and Concept Paper template closely before submitting questions.

Oral explanations or instructions given before award of a grant will not be binding. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this APS will be furnished promptly in writing to all other

prospective applicants as an amendment of this APS, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicants.

D. Submission Instructions

Concept Papers must be submitted by **February 1, 2017** to be evaluated in the first round. Concept Papers submitted thereafter may be considered on a rolling basis depending on available funding. Concept Papers and modifications shall be submitted in pdf (preferred) or other electronic format to LAVI at LAVIgrantapplication@dai.com or in hard copy in a sealed envelope and dropped in a delivery box at the following address: USAID/LAVI Project Office, 18th Street and Warner Avenue.

Applicants should retain for their records one copy of all parts of the concept paper and all enclosures that accompany their application. Erasures or other changes must be initialed by the person signing the application. Issuance of this APS does not commit DAI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

SECTION V – APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The review panel will consist of at least three (3) LAVI project representatives and one (1) USAID representative as a non-voting member, when available. USAID maintains a substantial involvement in the award process. Throughout the evaluation process, 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 entities whose applications are under review. Members of the panel shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from parties to the awards. All members of the review panel will sign a non-disclosure agreement; the ideas in the concept papers will be kept confidential.

All concept papers that meet the eligibility requirements will be reviewed by the Grant Evaluation Committee (GEC). Concept Papers will be reviewed according to the evaluation criteria and scoring system identified below. LAVI may request clarifying information if an application / concept paper is on the threshold or missing critical information. Applicants will be shortlisted that offer the best value and align with Section 1- Funding Opportunity Description above.

Description	Points
Applicant demonstrates track record and expertise in designing and implementing innovative knowledge sharing or learning forums.	20
Proposed activities include best practices, experiences, and innovations in advocacy that could be used for further advocacy in the NRM and concessions sector in Liberia.	25
Proposed activities promote learning among a diverse array of actors in the NRM and concessions sector, including marginalized groups and actors not traditionally engaged in advocacy efforts in Liberia.	30
Proposed activities are relevant and innovative for the Liberian context.	25

Excellent = 80-100 points, Very good = 60-80 points, Good = 40-60 points, Average = 20-40 points, Poor = 0-20 points

SECTION VI – DAI PROJECT CONTACTS

The points of contact for this APS and any questions during the APS process are:

DAI LAVI Grants Team
 Phone: 0775333525 or 0888906293
 Email: LAVIgrants@dai.com

ANNEX 1: SPECIAL GRANT REQUIREMENTS (FOR AWARDED GRANTS)

This annex is for your information only. Please note that the following requirements will apply to those who are awarded grants.

Mandatory Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Recipients:

(<http://www.usaid.gov/missions/sa/usaidsa/mandatorystandard.pdf>)

Separate Account: A separate account must be established to house all funds provided under the grant, as well as all interest income.

Permitted Uses of Program Income: The Grantee will inform DAI of any program income generated under the grant and agrees to follow USAID's disposition requirements for such program income, which is in accordance with 22 CFR 226.24. Program income earned under this agreement shall be applied and used in the following descending order:

1. Added to funds committed by USAID and the recipient to the project or program, and used to further eligible project or program objectives;
2. Used to finance the non-Federal share of the project or program; and
3. Deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

If the terms and conditions of the award do not specify how program income is to be used, then number 2) shall apply automatically. Grantees who are commercial organizations may not apply Option 1) to their program income.

Use of Funds: Funds provided under any grant awarded shall be used exclusively to support the project as agreed in the grant award. Diversion of grant funds to other uses will result in cancellation of award and retrieval of funds disbursed to the grant recipient.

Reporting Procedures: All grantees will work with the USAID/LAVI Project team to establish a clear set of reporting requirements based on an agreed upon deliverable schedule or reporting period. A performance monitoring and evaluation plan, using established baseline data and specific, measurable targets and indicators may also be agreed upon. A description of reporting requirements will be included in the Grant Agreements.

Project Monitoring: DAI staff will monitor projects in terms of both programmatic and financial aspects. Grant recipients will be expected to facilitate monitoring by making relevant information available to DAI staff.

Restrictions: The Grant Funds provided under the terms of this Agreement shall not be used to finance any restricted items according to USAID regulations.

Statutory Restrictions: Applicants must meet minimum statutory restrictions; System for Award Management (SAM); Terrorism/Special Designated Nationals (SDN)/Blocked Persons/Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC)/etc.

Environmental Compliance: 1. The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. Potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities will be identified prior to a final decision to proceed and appropriate environmental safeguards must be adopted for all activities. In

addition, the contractor/recipient must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID.

DUNS Number: There is a mandatory requirement for the applicant to provide a DUNS number to DAI. The Data Universal Numbering System is a system developed and regulated by Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) that assigns a unique numeric identifier, referred to as a "DUNS number" to a single business entity. Without a DUNS number, DAI cannot deem an applicant to be "responsible" to conduct business with and therefore, DAI will not enter into an agreement with any such organization.

Branding and Marking: All USAID-sponsored assistance awards are required to adhere to branding policies and revised marking requirements for grants and cooperative agreements in accordance with ADS 320. This includes visibly displaying the USAID Standard Graphic Identity that clearly communicates assistance is, "From the American people" on all programs, projects, activities, publications, public communications, and commodities provided or supported through USAID assistance.

Foreign Assistance Act: This program is authorized in accordance with the Foreign Assistance Act.

Inventory Management: The Grantee will provide DAI with a complete list of all nonexpendable property, its location and condition included in the final project report prior to grants project close-out.

Allowable Costs and Eligibility Rules for Goods and Services. Expenses to be budgeted for under the grants program must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for funding or reimbursement: Reasonable Cost: Means those costs which are generally recognized as ordinary and necessary and would be incurred by a prudent person in the conduct of normal business. Allocable Costs: Means those costs which are incurred specifically for the award. Allowable Costs: Means those costs which are reasonable and allocable and conform to any limitations in the award. DAI is responsible for determining which costs are allowable and allocable under the grant.