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

Core Funding Support for Civil Society Actors: Strategic Research and Public Policy Partner

Funding Opportunity Title:	Core Funding Support for Civil Society Actors: Strategic Research and Public Policy Partner
Announcement Type:	Annual Program Statement (APS)
Funding Opportunity Number:	LAVI-APS-005
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)
Issuance Date:	9 May 2017
Questions:	19 May 2017 to USAID/LAVI Project Office or LAVIgrants@dai.com
Pre-Submission Meeting:	22 May at 2pm-4pm at iCampus at 150 Carey Street, Sniper Hill, Monrovia. RSVP to LAVIgrants@dai.com prior to event.
Concept Paper Submission:	31 May 2017 to USAID/LAVI Project Office or LAVIgrantapplication@dai.com
Project Office Address:	18 th Street and Warner Avenue, Sinkor, Monrovia
APS Final Closing Date:	30 May 2017

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 from mature and influential Liberian organizations interested in being LAVI's **Strategic Research and Public Policy Partner**.

One of the main LAVI project objectives is to increase the organizational capacity of Liberian civil society organizations to participant in issue-based reforms. In support of this, LAVI will identify one well-established and influential Liberian organization that **specializes in research and public policy reform** to play a lead role in helping LAVI and its partners achieve their programmatic objectives for its upcoming research and public policy reform activities.

To complement this work, the organization will be provided with organizational capacity strengthening assistance through implementation of a customized capacity development plan (CDP). The CDP will define specific operational gaps and capacity development targets for the organization. This core funding is intended to promote the organization's mission and strategic plan, programmatic impact on its beneficiaries, and long-term financial sustainability.

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 the successful application expected in the second or third quarter of 2017. LAVI anticipates awarding **one grant of no more than \$150,000 for a maximum period of one year** to fund the successful application. LAVI may increase this ceiling and period of performance at its discretion.

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, organizations and coalitions engaged in advocacy efforts in order to strengthen their ability to participate in issue-based reform to bring about tangible impact, such as revised laws. LAVI works on select advocacy issues by strategically aligning networks and enabling the formation of impact-focused, issue-based coalitions. In addition, LAVI invests in the capacity of its partners to achieve impact. LAVI provides both technical and operational skills development in key capacity domains, such as the ability to conduct research and collect evidence to inform advocacy initiatives; form flexible, impact-focused advocacy coalitions; monitor and report on outcomes; conduct outreach and strategic messaging; and grow into more sustainable and professional organizations.

B. Funding Opportunity Description

LAVI is starting on its second advocacy area- **education**. LAVI is in the process of conducting a political economy analysis and social network analysis to better understand the education sector and position itself to support advocacy actors form ad hoc, issues-based coalitions to drive policy reform on various issues in the education sector.

To bolster its advocacy and government-citizen engagement activities around education, LAVI is establishing this APS, *Core Funding Support for Civil Society Actors: Strategic Research and Public Policy Partner* to identify a long-term **Strategic Research and Public Policy Partner** to support LAVI's policy research and writing, and selection of potential local partners. LAVI expects its Strategic Research and Public Policy partner to provide expert technical guidance in selection and outreach to potential partners; understanding evidence-based research methodologies, tools, and approaches; drafting evidence-based policy, including the process, content and outcomes of the policy; analytical thinking and writing; navigating the policy reform process; and monitoring policy reform outcomes. LAVI anticipates funding the Strategic Research and Public Policy Partner to:

- Provide input and assistance to LAVI in the design or review of LAVI Annual Work Plans
- Provide expert technical guidance and support in selection and outreach to potential partners in education
- Participate in discussions on LAVI program outputs, outcomes, and overall progress
- Provide technical support and oversight to LAVI's multiple partners, including review of technical reports and outputs
- Facilitate information sharing and collaboration among LAVI partners
- Provide technical assistance and training to LAVI's partners on research development. Support and provide oversight and guidance on research implemented by LAVI's partners
- Guide LAVI's partners on public policy reform processes
- Support LAVI partners in developing, communicating and monitoring policy reform
- Provide mentorship, coaching, and training to LAVI partners

- Strengthen the capacity of county level CBOs that are not well-experienced to participate in issue-based reform

The Strategic Research and Public Policy Partner will provide close support and mentorship to LAVI partners in meeting their policy reform milestone targets and achieving optimal impact. Applicants should propose ideas for how to support LAVI and LAVI advocacy partners. Applicants should have senior level technical expertise in evidence-based research and developing policy reform and be mature, established, and operationally responsible organizations. Applicants should have a track record of successful policy reform accomplishments and experience training other local entities in planning and carrying out research activities and policy reform initiatives.

Applicants should plan for both Monrovia and county-based activities across Liberia depending on where LAVI advocacy partners are engaged in activities. Monrovia activities should 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/>.

In return, LAVI will fund a portion of a selected organization's strategic or operational plan. LAVI seeks to help the Strategic Research and Public Policy Partner become more successful by providing capacity development support for the organization to grow, develop, and demonstrate results. LAVI support can include organizational capacity strengthening assistance over the life of the activity through implementation of a customized capacity development plan (CDP). The CDP will define specific operational gaps and capacity development targets for the organization. Each organization will develop and strengthen its sustainability strategy and revenue streams during the period of performance of the grant. An institutional and advocacy capacity assessment will be facilitated with the organization to help it self-identify areas for growth and improvement to further promote its mission, impact on its beneficiaries and long-term financial sustainability. **This capacity development support may be in the form of a separate, complementary grant.**

SECTION II- AWARD INFORMATION

LAVI intends to award as a result of this APS one grant of no more than \$150,000 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. LAVI reserves the right to deviate from this ceiling and period of performance at its discretion. LAVI may choose to fully fund or incrementally fund the chosen application. 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 are due by **31 May 2017**.

For non-U.S. organizations, USAID Standard Provisions for non-U.S. non-governmental organizations would apply. Applicants may obtain copies of the referenced material at the following websites: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab> and for Fixed Amount Awards, please see: <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mat>

SECTION III- ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

In order for DAI to consider and evaluate the submitted concept paper, the applicant must meet all of the following requirements:

- Be a legally registered non-governmental Liberian entity. Registration must be valid.
- Be an entity with demonstrated technical expertise in evidence-based research and developing policy reform.

- Be an organization with a demonstrated track record of successfully influencing and passing policy reforms in government.
- Be an organization with demonstrated experience in training and mentorship
- Be an organization that is well-established and has a reasonably high level of operational capacity and resources.
- Not be affiliated with a political party.
- The concept paper support results consistent with LAVI's objectives.

*Note: Experience specifically in **education** policy reform not required.*

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.** Do not submit a full proposal unless requested by LAVI project. Only upon receipt of positive feedback on the concept paper is the applicant requested to put together a full proposal for LAVI consideration, using the criteria below.

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. Reference to APS LAVI-APS-005
- b. Name of entity and acronym
- c. Entity contact information
- d. Contact point (lead contact name; relevant telephone, e-mail information);
- e. Name of other donors funding this proposed activity (if applicable);
- f. Signature of authorized representative of the applicant.

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

- a. Organizational Profile specifying: (1 1/2 pages)
 - a. List your organization's demonstrated success in research development of social and political issues in Liberia
 - b. Describe your organization's past experience (1) writing policy, (2) getting policy reforms passed in government, and (3) monitoring policy reform in Liberia.

- c. Describe your organization's training ability and ability to transfer knowledge successfully
- b. Technical Narrative for Support to LAVI (2 pages)
 - a. What is your organization's understanding of the challenges working with civil society organizations (CSOs) on policy reform, including use of methodologies for inclusion of citizen's input?
 - b. Describe how you would provide technical oversight and training for national and community based organizations, professional organizations, trade unions, faith-based groups, and other atypical advocacy actors to advance their research-based advocacy and public policy reform capacity?
 - c. Describe 5 activities you would carry out to support LAVI partners carry out their research development and policy reform initiatives. Explain the goal, objectives and expected outcomes of the proposed research development and policy reform support you would provide.
- c. Technical Narrative for Core Funding (1 page)
 - a. Description of the organization's mission and goals
 - b. Background, goals, objectives, and expected outcomes of proposed organizational capacity strengthening assistance requested over the life of the grant.
 - c. Plan for the institutionalization or sustainability of the organizational capacity strengthening assistance.
 - d. Attach organization's strategic plan and board of directors and organizational chart
 - e. **Note: Shortlisted applicants will undergo an institutional and advocacy assessment to better understand the core funding support requested.**
 - f. **Note: The capacity development support may be in the form of a separate, complementary grant.**

3. Cost Proposal (no more than one (1/2) 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 the Concept Paper Form to draft your concept paper. You can request this from LAVIgrants@dai.com when you RSVP 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 **31 May 2017** to be evaluated. 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 LAVI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. LAVI will contact selected applicants and will provide solicitation instructions for the development of a full application based on the information provided in the concept paper.

SECTION V – CONCEPT PAPER 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, LAVI 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 in terms of responsiveness to the APS, appropriateness of subject matter, and creativeness. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed work will contribute to:

- Improved capacity of local Liberian civil society organizations (LAVI partners) to undertake effective evidence-based research on advocacy issues in Liberia
- Improved capacity of local Liberian civil society organizations (LAVI partners) to draft policy reform, navigate public policy reform processes, and monitor policy reform in Liberia.
- Promotion of your organization’s operational capacity to further its mission as it relates to research development and policy reform.

Note that experience specifically in **education** policy reform not required.

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.

SECTION VI – LAVI 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)

Standard Provisions: Pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, 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 (22 CFR 226, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organization, OMB Circular A-21 for universities, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 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, 22 CFR 226 (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/cfr.html#22>), OMB Circulars (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a122/a122.html>), and the Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients will apply. Please refer to the following website for more details on Mandatory Standard Provisions. Relevant provisions will be included in each award.

Mandatory Standard Provisions for US Nongovernmental Recipients:
<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303maa.pdf>

Mandatory Standard Provisions for Non-US Nongovernmental Recipients:
<http://www.usaid.gov/missions/sa/usaidsa/mandatorystandard.pdf>

Mandatory Standard Provisions for Fixed Amount Awards:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mat.pdf>

Separate Account: A separate account must be established to house all funds provided under the grant.

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 grant award shall be used exclusively to the activities stated 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. An annual performance monitoring and evaluation plan, using established baseline data and specific, measurable targets and indicators will also be agreed upon. A description of reporting requirements will be included in the Grant Agreements. Types of reports may include program reports, final program report, and financial reports.

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, including:

1. Goods or services which are to be used primarily to meet military requirements or to support police or other law enforcement activities,
2. Surveillance equipment,
3. Equipment, research and/or services related to involuntary sterilization or the performance of abortion as a method of family planning,
4. Gambling equipment, supplies for gambling facilities or any hotels, casinos or accommodations in which gambling facilities are or are planned to be located,
5. Activities which significantly degrade national parks or similar protected areas or introduce exotic plants or animals into such areas, or
6. Establishment or development of any export processing zone or designated area where the labor, environmental, tax, tariff, and/or safety laws of the country in which such activity takes place would not apply.
7. Pharmaceuticals,
8. Pesticides,
9. Logging equipment,
10. Luxury goods (including alcoholic beverages and jewelry),
11. Establishing or expanding any enterprise that will export raw materials that are likely to be in surplus in world markets at the time such production becomes effective and that are likely to cause substantial injury to U.S. producers,
12. Activities which would result in the loss of forest lands due to livestock rearing, road construction or maintenance, colonization of forest lands or construction of dams or water control structures,
13. Activities which are likely to have a significant adverse effect on the environment, including any of the following (to the extent such activities are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment):
 - i.) Activities which may lead to degrading the quality or renewability of natural resources;
 - ii.) Activities which may lead to degrading the presence or health of threatened ecosystems or biodiversity;
 - iii.) Activities which may lead to degrading long-term viability of agricultural or forestry production (including through use of pesticides);
 - iv.) Activities which may lead to degrading community and social systems, including potable water supply, land administration, community health and well-being or social harmony.
14. Activities which are likely to involve the loss of jobs in the United States due to the relocation or expansion outside of the United States of an enterprise located in the United States, or
15. Activities which the Grantee is aware are reasonably likely to contribute to the violation of internationally or locally recognized rights of workers,

16. Activities to support the production of agricultural commodities for export from Malawi when such commodities would directly compete with exports of similar United States agricultural commodities to third countries and have a significant impact on United States exporters.

Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS): There is a mandatory requirement for the applicant to provide a DUNS number to DAI. Applicants that will be receiving an award will be asked to either obtain a DUNS Number (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/index.jsp>) or fill out a Self-Certification for Exemption from DUNS Requirement prior to award.

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: Grant activities must meet the USAID environmental compliance standards.