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Deadline for Questions: January 7, 2020
Closing Date: February 18, 2020
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Closing Time: 11:59 a.m. (Eastern Standard Time)

Subject: Request for Applications for a Development Food Security Activity in Mali

Title: Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Development Food Security Activity in Mali

Funding Opportunity Number: 72DFFP20RFA00001

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Food for Peace (FFP) is seeking applications for funding for a Development Food Security Activity (DFSA) in Mali.

To be considered for a Community Development Fund (CDF)-funded award, the applicant must be a U.S. or non-U.S. Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) or consortium, or an organization designated by USAID as a Public International Organization (PIO).

Note the USAID ADS definition for NGO is: Any NGO or entity, whether non-profit or profit-making, receiving or providing USAID-funded assistance under an assistance instrument or contract.

Subject to the availability of funds, under this Request for Applications (RFA), FFP plans to make one award, as described in detail in the Program Description. Please refer to the Program Description for a complete description of possible locations and activities.

USAID reserves the right to use any assistance mechanism available to the Agency (e.g., grant, cooperative agreement, leader with associates award) and to adjust the number of awards, funding levels, sources of funding, and/or procedures. The funding source for the award will be CDFs. The applicant's activity design informs funding levels, which FFP sets for successful applicants. Successful applicants will be notified of any changes or updates, accordingly.

FFP intends to award one cooperative agreement with the objective to improve **food security and resilience of communities in conflict-affected areas through strengthening local systems and community participation** in up to four regions of Mali: Mopti (all communes), Tombouctou (all communes), Gao (Gao and Ansongo cercles), and Segou (Niono cercle). Subject to availability, the anticipated funding for the Mali multi-year DFSA is approximately \$60 million (\$60 million of CDF / \$0 of Title II) over a five-year period.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of USAID, nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of the comments/suggestions or an application. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant.

Given the unique challenges related to conflict in the targeted geographies of Mali, FFP will follow a “three-phase merit review process” of application selection. Phase 1 is the submission and review of a written Initial Application. Applicants will be evaluated and scored based on the Phase 1 (Initial Application) and successful applicants will be invited to participate in Phase 2 (Oral Presentation). Applicants will be evaluated and one Apparently Successful Applicant will be notified and invited to participate in Phase 3.

During Phase 3, the finalist selected, referred to as the “Apparently Successful Applicant” from Phase 2, will collaboratively develop with FFP a Final Application for consideration and subsequently submit a written Final Application. Applicants not selected for the subsequent phase will be notified at the end of Phase I. Please See Section IV and V for more details on this process.

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, apportioned, allocated, and committed. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award.

For the purposes of this award, the RFA consists of this cover letter and the following:

[SECTION I – PROGRAM DESCRIPTION](#)

[SECTION II – FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION](#)

[SECTION III – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION](#)

[SECTION IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION](#)

[SECTION V – APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION](#)

[SECTION VI – FEDERAL AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION](#)

[SECTION VII – FEDERAL AWARDED AGENCY CONTACTS](#)

[SECTION VIII – OTHER INFORMATION](#)

[APPENDIX I: Definitions and Program Areas and Elements](#)

[APPENDIX II: Past Performance Reference Questionnaire](#)

[APPENDIX III: FY 2020 Pre-Award Co-Creation / Refine and Implement \(R&I\)](#)

[APPENDIX IV: Annotated Bibliography of Key Resources for the Mali DFSA](#)

[APPENDIX V: Maps of USAID Programming and Relevant Vulnerability Indicators](#)

[APPENDIX VI: FEWS NET Enhanced Market Analysis Mali 2019](#)

To be eligible for the award, the applicant must provide all required information in the application, including the requirements found in any attachments to this opportunity on www.grants.gov. Any future amendments to this RFA can be downloaded from www.grants.gov. This information may also be posted on the FFP website. It is the responsibility of the applicant to use the most up-to-date versions of all of the documents related to this RFA.

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section IV.2. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process.

Please send any questions to the email address identified in Section IV. **The deadline for questions is January 7, 2020.**

Applicants should refer to the Development Activity Application Guidance [on the Development Activities section of the FFP website](#), including Technical References and the Monitoring and Evaluation Policy.

Per 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700, USAID regulations do not award profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the agreement activity and which are in accordance with applicable cost standards, may be paid under the agreement.

USAID may (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept applications for reasons other than cost, or (c) accept more than one application (see Section V - Application Review Information). USAID intends to award predominantly cooperative agreements, but reserves the right to award any other form of assistance agreement. USAID may waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.

In the event of any inconsistency between this RFA and the documents referenced in the RFA, the RFA takes precedence over any referenced documents (including the Technical References), *except* statutes and regulations. In the event of an inconsistency in the RFA documents or in the text of the RFA, it will be resolved at the discretion of the Agreement Officer (AO).

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

/S/

Clyde Hicks
Director, Office of Food for Peace

Section I – Program Description

1. Overview

This RFA provides information on a funding opportunity for a multi-year DFSA in Mali. Development activities are mandated in the Food for Peace Act and are aligned with the [FFP 2016-2025 Food Assistance and Food Security Strategy](#). This funding opportunity is authorized under the Food for Peace Act, as amended. The resulting award will be subject to 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and USAID’s supplement, 2 CFR 700, as well as the additional requirements found in Section F.

FFP intends to award one cooperative agreement with the objective to improve **food security and resilience of communities in conflict-affected areas, through strengthening local systems and community participation** in up to four regions of Mali: Mopti (all communes), Tombouctou (all communes), Gao (Gao and Ansongo cercles), and Segou (Niono cercle). Subject to availability, the anticipated funding for the Mali multi-year DFSA is approximately \$60 million (\$60 million of CDF / \$0 of Title II) over a five-year period. Applicants may request variable funding levels over the life of the activity. Any extension beyond the initial five-year award is subject to the Justification of Restricted Eligibility (JRE) approval process in USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) 303.

The Mali DFSA is expected to bridge humanitarian assistance and longer-term development programming in conflict-affected areas. FFP has not historically programmed development assistance in conflict-affected environments; however, levels of humanitarian need in conflict-affected areas have increased markedly in the last 10 years, both in Mali and globally. Because of this trend, FFP recognizes the need for different approaches to address such protracted and complex crises, including efforts to layer development programming onto humanitarian responses. To that end, the DFSA will be part of the USAID/Mali general resilience activities as described in the [Country Development and Cooperation Strategy](#) and the [Global Food Security Strategy Mali Country Plan](#), and will be expected to complement and coordinate with other USAID humanitarian and development activities in the target geographic zones.

Given the unique challenges related to conflict in the targeted geographies of Mali, FFP will follow a “three-phase merit review process” of application selection. Phase 1 is the submission and review of a written Initial Application. Applicants will be evaluated and scored based on the Phase 1 (Initial Application) and successful applicants will be invited to participate in Phase 2 (Oral Presentation). Applicants will be evaluated and one Apparently Successful Applicant¹ will be notified and invited to participate in Phase 3.

During Phase 3, the finalist selected, referred to as the Apparently Successful Applicant from Phase 2, will collaboratively develop with FFP a Final Application for consideration and

¹ Per 2 CFR 700.1, Apparently Successful Applicant(s) means the applicant(s) for USAID funding recommended for an award after merit review, but who has not yet been awarded a grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance award by the Agreement Officer. Apparently Successful Applicant status confers no right and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award, which still must be executed by the Agreement Officer.

subsequently submit a written Final Application. Applicants not selected for the subsequent phase will be notified at the end of Phase 2. Please See Section IV and V for more details on this process.

2. FFP Global Strategy and DFSA Background Information

FFP, an Office within USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), is the U.S. Government lead operating unit overseeing international food assistance. FFP works to reduce hunger and malnutrition and assure that adequate, safe, and nutritious food is available, accessible, and well-utilized by all individuals at all times to support a healthy and productive life.

Through FFP, USAID supports multi-year DFSAs to improve and sustain the food and nutrition security of vulnerable populations. These activities work at the individual, household, community, and institutional levels to address the underlying causes of food insecurity and strengthen transformative opportunities. Particular sectoral or activity focus under DFSAs are context dependent, but broadly encompass food access, nutrition, health, agriculture, livelihoods, natural resource management, WASH, early warning, and disaster preparedness and mitigation. DFSAs are intended to strengthen resilience in populations vulnerable to acute, chronic hunger and recurrent shocks, stresses and crises, and to reduce future need for ongoing or emergency food assistance. These activities are increasingly integrated with other USAID efforts to promote resilience and reduce extreme poverty.

- **Co-Creation within FFP Programming:**

The unique challenges associated with long-term programming in a complex crisis necessitate new approaches to not only activity design, but also to approaches for collaboration, learning, and adapting. Based on these challenges and lessons learned from co-creation efforts in Mali and elsewhere, the Mali DFSA will include both pre-award co-creation and post-award Refine and Implement (R&I) approaches. The overarching purpose of this approach is to collaboratively develop an activity that responds to the unique challenges and goals of FFP in Mali, and that firmly establishes a process for collaboration, learning, and adapting required to succeed in the rapidly changing operating environment in the target geographic zone. Please see Section IV, Section V, and Appendix III for a detailed description of the pre-award co-creation process.

Since FY 2016, FFP has awarded DFSAs under a co-creation model² called R&I³, which is intended to improve activity's design, fit to context and implementation planning. In the case of the Mali DFSA, the goal of the two-fold approach to co-creation is to employ the FFP R&I approach in a way that is appropriate and beneficial to the changing context, with a significant emphasis on community consultations, trust building, and implementation-driven learning.

² USAID/FFP (2017). Frequently asked question for Refine & Implement Pilot approach:

<https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1866/frequently-asked-questions-refine-and-implement-pilot-approach>

³ FSNNetwork-TOPS (2015). USAID Consultation on the FY2016 RFA Refine and Implement Pilot in the Democratic Republic of Congo: <https://www.fsnnetwork.org/usaaid-consultation-fy2016-rfa-refine-and-implement-pilot-democratic-republic-congo-0>

R&I includes multiple stages:

During an initial refinement, new awardees may carry out a number of activities including traditional start-up tasks and additional activities which may be, but are not limited to:

- participatory stakeholder engagement and community consultation for strengthened local partnerships;
- initial implementation of interventions that have clear evidence base and/or meet urgent needs;
- preparation for implementation through hiring;
- local capacity building;
- procurement of goods and services;
- pre-implementation activities that address evidence and knowledge gaps and strengthen understanding of local context;
- implementation research (e.g., pilots) of new approaches and implementation strategies;
- refining the staffing pattern to fit the programmatic needs; and
- refining the activity Theory of Change (ToC) and related documents.

At the end of the initial refinement period,⁴ the Theory of Change (ToC) and related documents may be revised in consultation with FFP and the implementation plan updated accordingly. FFP expects that throughout the award, as a matter of strong adaptive management and continued program quality improvement, awardees will continue with efforts to close knowledge gaps, refine planning, test innovative approaches, update the theory of change and related documents and continue stakeholder engagement and coordination with other relevant actors.

After an external evaluation in year four, R&I will allow highly successful activities to be extended. The R&I model creates the opportunity for FFP DFSAs to more closely align with FFP strategic and programmatic priorities (See Section 2). Any extension beyond the initial five year award is subject to the Justification of Restricted Eligibility (JRE) approval process in USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) 303.

3. FFP Strategic Priorities

In FY 2017, FFP launched a new [Food Assistance and Food Security Strategy 2016-2025](#) (FFP Strategy) which laid out new priorities for the future around sustainability⁵, systems approaches, and a new set of cross-cutting areas of focus addressing gender equity and youth empowerment, social cohesion, and social accountability. In seeking improved and more sustained food and nutrition security for vulnerable populations, the FFP Strategy works through two parallel objectives: to protect and enhance lives and livelihoods while strengthening and transforming communities and institutions.

The FFP Strategy's Results Framework is a global framing of FFP's work, outlining what is considered within FFP's mandate, as well as what is expected to be within the skill sets and

⁴ Please refer to Appendix III for description of Refine and Implement Process and Timeframe.

⁵ Sustainability: The degree to which services or processes continue once inputs (funding, materials, training, etc.) provided by the original source(s) decreases or discontinues.

capacities of our implementing partners. At the field level, the exact contours of a program will depend on context, needs, available resources and the skills, capacities and roles of other food and nutrition security actors working in that space. This RFA is also grounded in [USAID's Local Systems Framework](#)⁶, which emphasizes a “systems approach” that focuses on multiple interconnected actors and relationships.

- **FFP Strategic Objectives (SO)**

SO1: Lives and livelihoods protected and enhanced

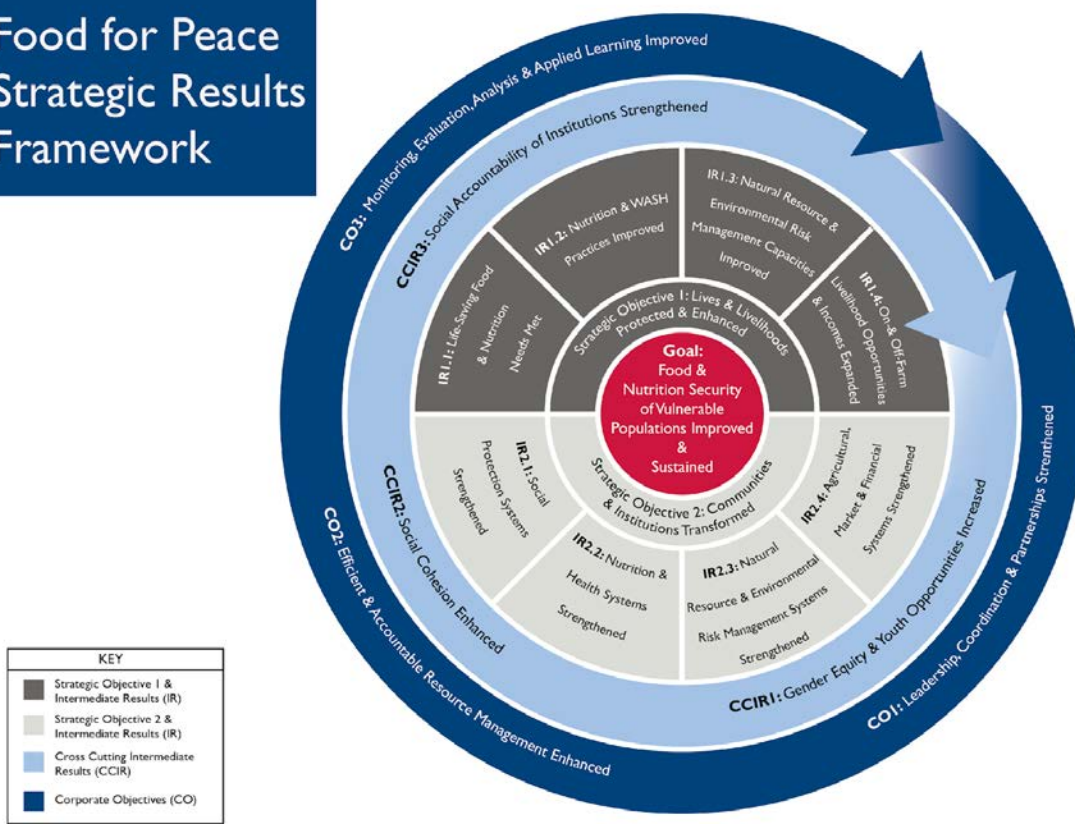
FFP works to protect and enhance the lives and livelihoods of those affected by crisis, and those vulnerable to crisis due to chronic poverty and hunger. In acute emergency situations, this may be by meeting immediate food and nutrition needs of those most vulnerable to food deficits through direct resource transfers accompanied by complementary programming that seeks to maximize the impact of those resources. In recovery and development settings, the emphasis may shift more strongly towards improving the lives of the most marginalized and protecting development investments through capacity building, knowledge transfer, household asset-building, or other productive investments contributing to improved food and nutrition security outcomes across a range of sectors.

SO2: Communities and institutions transformed

Even in the most acute crisis, work that avoids doing harm and succeeds in strengthening local systems - including both social dynamics and formal and informal institutions - can lay an important foundation for transformative change. Under SO2, FFP works to strengthen communities and institutions that then serve as catalysts for greater and more sustainable change in emergency response and long-term development settings alike. SO2 provides a pathway to address the root causes and drivers of food insecurity, through efforts at the community level and, where appropriate, up to national policy and planning, in ways that strengthen the capacity of both formal and informal institutions, reduce risks, and provide engines of growth, opportunity and change.

Food for Peace Strategic Results Framework

- **FFP
Strategy
Intermediate
Results**



The SOs in the FFP Results Framework (RF) are each supported by four Intermediate Results (IRs) that address social protection, nutrition, environmental management, and increasing incomes and assets. The IRs under SO1 focus on the individual- and household-level capacities required for positive change, while those under SO2 address the community and institutional capacities required to promote, support, and sustain those changes.

Across all IRs, FFP's strategy calls for a broadened concept of risk management that, in addition to natural hazards such as drought and flooding, addresses risks posed by fragility, conflict, pandemic disease and climate change, as well as idiosyncratic shocks, such as the death of a household head. Working at multiple levels, protecting and enhancing the lives and livelihoods of individuals and households while also strengthening local systems, creates synergies between the two SOs and the IRs under them. It also increases the need for FFP and its partners to sequence, layer and integrate activities within FFP programs, as well as with other USAID, local government and donor-funded efforts.

- **FFP Strategy Cross-cutting Intermediate Results**

A set of cross-cutting IRs underpins the SOs and IRs, to support the empowerment of women, men, girls and boys, enhance social cohesion and strengthen social accountability. They are intended to bring new focus and clarity to work to positively influence the local systems – including both social dynamics and formal and informal institutions - in which FFP emergency and multi-sectoral development food security activities are implemented.

- **FFP Strategy Corporate Objectives**

The FFP strategy also includes three Corporate Objectives relevant to FFP and partners alike. These are designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of FFP's work through strengthening partnership and influence, capacities of staff and institutions, and the evidence base underlying work in food and nutrition security.

- **Other U.S. Government and USAID Strategic Priorities**

The FFP Strategy and programming contribute to a country's [Journey to Self-Reliance](#), by improving capacity and commitment of government and local systems, and USAID's mission to end extreme poverty and promote resilient democratic societies; and to the DCHA Bureau's strategic objectives, notably "supporting areas of recurrent crisis to become more resilient."

The FFP Strategy also contributes to and reflects the [USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy 2014-2025](#); USAID policy and program guidance "[Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis](#);" USAID's policy on [Gender Equality and Female Empowerment](#); USAID's policy on [Youth in Development](#); USAID's "[Local Systems Framework](#)" and [USAID's Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Strategy](#). Notably, through FFP's development food security activities, the

Strategy also contributes to the [U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy, 2017-2021](#), launched in October 2016.

The FFP Mali DFSA Goals and Objectives (sub-Section 5 below) align with the [USAID Mali Country Development Cooperation Strategy \(CDCS\)](#) with the goal: “Maliens secure a democratic, resilient and prosperous future.” In particular, this RFA is expected to align with the CDCS Transition Objective 1: Stabilization of Conflict-Affected Areas Reinforced and Development Objective 2: Resilience – Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable Communities and Households Improved. Furthermore, FFP aligns with and supports the [Global Food Security Strategy \(GFSS\) Mali Country Plan](#) with the goal: “Sustainably Reduce Global Hunger, Malnutrition and Poverty.”

In addition, FFP activities are expected to align with the planned USAID Health activities as described under the [Request for Information](#) “Integrated Community, Health, Nutrition, and Governance,” “Quality Improvement” and “Health Systems Strengthening.” FFP activities may further align with other USAID activities in the area of governance such as the Mission’s [Peace, Democracy and Governance](#) activities and [Education activities](#) that target youth leadership and livelihoods. Applicants are encouraged to review background documentation provided in Appendix IV, such as the Food Security Desk Review and Stakeholder Mapping for further USAID/Mali priorities and programming.

4. Country Background

Note: The following is meant to provide a brief summary of the programming context in Mali, with themes and analysis that are particularly salient to the DFSA goal and objectives. Applicants are encouraged to consult the RFA appendices and attachments for more detailed analyses of the context: Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) Enhanced Market Analysis (Appendix VI); Annotated Bibliography of Key Resources (Appendix V).

Selection of Mali DFSA and Country Profile:

Mali⁷ represents a significant and ongoing caseload of humanitarian need for USAID, partially attributable to the deterioration in security and the increase in violent conflict since 2012⁸. Poverty, droughts, floods, and other climate-related shocks were large drivers of food insecurity before 2012, and continue to affect food security and malnutrition in much of the country. Many international development actors-- both humanitarian and development-- have a legacy of programming in Mali. USAID/FFP, in particular, has had a presence in Mali since the mid-1960s, with responses that have ranged from urgent, humanitarian assistance (e.g. life-saving food and nutrition programming, treatment of severe acute malnutrition), to long-term, multi-sectoral development activities. Owing to the chronically high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition, USAID/FFP programming has been largely concentrated in the Sahelian agro-ecological zones of Mali, including Timbuktu, Gao, Mopti, and northern Segou. FFP’s current

⁷ UNOCHA (2019). Mali Humanitarian Response Plan 2019: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/mali>

⁸ Tronc, Grace, and Nahikian (2019). Realities and Myths of the ‘Triple Nexus’: Local perspectives on peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian action in Mali: https://hhi.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/publications/haf_-_mali.pdf

portfolio of programming includes both humanitarian and development assistance in these areas, including one DFSA in Mopti (2015- 2020).

In spite of such investments, Mali ranks 179 out of 188 on the United Nations Development Program's 2015 Human Development Index, 4.6 million and 1.1 million Malians remain food insecure and malnourished, respectively.⁹ Across Mali, poverty and recurring shocks are pervasive, as are low education and literacy rates, high fertility, severe gender inequality, ongoing political instability, low levels of hygiene, sanitation, and access to safe drinking water, and conflict-driven internal migration and displacement.

In selecting Mali for a DFSA, FFP is responding to the acute vulnerability of many Malians, but is also responding to the increasing proportion and level of humanitarian assistance that is targeting conflict-affected areas. Drawing on the lessons learned from programming in Mali and similar contexts, the Mali DFSA is expected to bridge humanitarian assistance and longer-term development programming in conflict-affected areas (See 5. Activity Goal and Objectives).

Governance, Natural Resource Management, Inter-communal Violence, Violent Extremism, and Conflict Intersections: Mali has been engaged in political reform since 1993, but with limited progress to date towards democratizing institutions and decentralizing processes and resources. In 1993, the country's political and administrative units were broken out into *eight regions*, *49 Cercles*, and *703 communes*. However, continued political instability, uneven resource distribution, and economic and social inequalities have contributed to persistent degradation of these governance efforts, and increases in armed conflict and destabilization.

Historically, violent conflict was more common in northern Mali, rooted in its geographic isolation, ethnic and cultural divisions, and perceptions of economic and political neglect from Bamako. The desire for northern independence was a factor in the cycles of rebellions in the early 1960s, 1990-1995, and 2007-2009. Malian authorities were challenged to provide governance to the north in a manner that responded to northern Malians' expectations for security, as well as economic and social development. This was a primary driver of the 2012 rebellion and its evolution into the current, multidimensional crisis.

The current dynamics of insecurity in central Mali are multifaceted. Though deeply connected to the conflict in northern Mali, the insecurity in central Mali is local and is fueled by anxieties related to the control of natural resources (e.g., land, pasture, water) and grievances toward the Malian state. Ethnic tensions between sedentary farmers and pastoralists and government repression are at the core of the region's insecurity, and contribute to wide reaching poverty and food insecurity. The nature of the farmer-herder conflict is changing in the Inner Niger Delta region, with the emergence of non-state armed groups (NSAGs), including violent extremist organizations and local self-defense militias. These groups seek to exploit such inter-communal tensions and to endorse particular local factions in order to strengthen their hold on the region. Since 2017, the increase in violence has been driven primarily by NSAG attacks on civilians, and to a lesser degree, clashes between opposing NSAGs. The recent increase in violence has been concentrated in Mopti and Gao regions, though dynamics differ by region. In Mopti, much of the

⁹ FFP Mali Fact Sheet: <https://www.usaid.gov/mali/food-assistance>

inter-communal violence has been driven by farmer (often Dogon) attacks on herder (often Fulani) communities and vice-versa, although other ethnic groups and livelihoods are also implicated, including farmers (Bambara) from the Segou region. In Gao, violence is more directly tied to counter-terrorism operations, and trafficking in persons and illicit goods.

The proliferation of NSAGs, including violent extremists, in Northern and Central Mali contributes to a fragile and dynamic security situation that has displaced hundreds of thousands of Malians to southern Mali or adjacent countries. As of July 31, 2019, the Government of Mali and the United Nations estimate that there are now 168,515 IDPs within Mali, 138,623 Malian refugees in neighboring countries (Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania), and 73,989 refugee returnees.

The consequences of the increase in conflict include limited pastoralist mobility and reduced agricultural production and market activity through disruption of supply routes, labor shortages, lack of agricultural extension, and hampered humanitarian access. The conflict creates supply chains for conflict actors and potential recruitment into illicit markets which further affects potential for long-term development investments in the formal sector.

Nutrition: The Mali Demographic Health Survey indicates significant improvements in key health and nutrition indicators from 2012 to 2018, including a reduction in stunting from 38 percent to 24 percent and in wasting from 12.7 percent to 9 percent.¹⁰ The 2018 National SMART survey reported a prevalence of wasting at 10 percent.¹¹ While acute malnutrition levels have not reportedly increased in the crisis-affected areas of Mali compared to previous SMART surveys, the available data may be constrained by access and other factors. At the sub-national level, the 2018 SMART survey reported wasting levels of 9 percent, 14.2 percent, 12.5 percent in Mopti, Gao, and Tombouctou, respectively.¹² Infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices remain poor throughout Mali. As demonstrated by these statistics, there is continued, acute need for health and nutrition services, and nutrition-sensitive approaches in much of the country. In particular, there is a demonstrated need for continued support for prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition, and for approaches that protect optimal IYCF practices.

Economy: Mali is a vast land-locked country in the heart of the Sahel Region, with two-thirds of the country within the arid Sahara and semi-arid Sahel. The target geographic zones of the DFSA-- Mopti, Timbuktu, Southern Gao, and Northern Segou-- largely lie within the Sahelian agro-ecological zone. The rural economy in the target geographic zones is focused on agriculture, livestock, and fish production and marketing. Each part of the target geographic zone encompasses vastly different natural resources, agricultural production areas, market integration, and cultural practices which need to be considered in the design of a program. For example, the most important livelihood is pastoralism in the arid North (Timbuktu & Gao), but in Mopti it is mixed crop/livestock production. Rice is the most widespread irrigated crop and is a main staple in the Inner Niger Delta floodplain. However, labor income is the main source of income for

¹⁰ Mali Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), 2018.

¹¹ 2018 SMART Survey for Mali. Note: both DHS and SMART reported severe acute malnutrition (SAM) above 2%, which indicates an emergency level for SAM.

¹² 2018 SMART Survey for Mali.

very poor and poor households across the majority of livelihood zones. Regional migration also serves as a key source of income through remittances.¹³

Mali's agrarian and pastoralism systems are highly sensitive to droughts and rainfall variabilities and count for 80 percent of employment. However, 95 percent of agriculture is rainfed, and rainfall is a major constraint for crop production. Smallholder production includes cereals such as millet and sorghum, market gardening, and export crops such as rainfed cotton.

Natural Resources and Environment: Land use has changed dramatically in Mali with large portions developed for agriculture or commercial use in Mopti, Segou, and across the south. Some development has occurred within the borders of natural protected areas, which indicates the need for better protection and coordination with government and civil society, which is invariably of limited capacity for oversight. Population growth has increased demand for natural resources, and much of the encroachment into these undeveloped protected areas has been driven by agricultural expansion, both for food and cotton production.¹⁴ A series of political and economic opportunities to address root causes of environmental degradation in Mali have been identified, including support of local Malian and international environmental NGOs in generating policies and technologies encouraging growth of renewable energy sector and diversification of non-farm livelihoods).¹⁵

Mali is also particularly vulnerable to climate change. USAID has conducted numerous analyses¹⁶ to map and better understand climate vulnerability and adaptation options. Climate projections for Mali include an increase in temperature, increased variability for rainfall, and increased intensity and frequency of extreme events such as drought. It is anticipated that these projections will have detrimental impacts on agriculture, water availability, and human and ecosystem health.¹⁷

While multiple stressors affect the semi-arid landscapes, wetlands, as focal zones of resilience, are under threat and represent risks to encroaching agriculture, such as flood damage to crops. Mali is fortunate to have 4.2 million hectares of wetlands of international importance, including the Inner Niger Delta, one of the largest Ramsar sites in the world.¹⁸ The delta provides a crucial habitat, flood protection, and water purification. The floodplain resources are utilized by over 1 million people for their livelihoods, including for rice cultivation, fishing, and livestock grazing, and are home to more than 140 bird species. These wetlands already face soil erosion, desertification, poaching, recurrent droughts, salinization, and desiccation, all of which may be

¹³ A full market analysis is included as an Appendix to this RFA: *FEWS NET Enhanced Market Analysis. Refer to the Enhanced Market Analysis for more in-depth information on each region.*

¹⁴ USAID West Africa Biodiversity and Tropical Forestry Assessment, 2018

¹⁵ USAID Mali Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment, 2015

¹⁶ USAID Climate Links knowledge portal on climate change and international development: Mali studies.

Available: <https://www.climatelinks.org/countries/mali>

¹⁷ Refer to the Mali Climate Risk Profile 2019 for more in-depth analysis of climate risks in the targeted geographic zone for Mali.

¹⁸ The Convention on Wetlands, called the Ramsar Convention, is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Convention was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975.

exacerbated by climate change. Local conservation groups and government leaders have designated the Ramsar site, but capacity to protect and manage these sites are limited. Natural resource management challenges in Mali extend beyond wetlands and include the semi-arid ecosystems of the Sahel.

Youth: The median age of Mali's population is 16.2 years, making it the third youngest in the world. It is estimated that over 60 percent of the Malian population is under the age of 25 and that the majority of these youth live in rural areas. Adolescent pregnancy and early childbearing are widespread, which increases the risk of child and adolescent stunting. Early marriage and pregnancy during adolescence is associated with adolescent malnutrition and contributes to the intergenerational cycle of stunting in Mali. The high prevalence of early marriage and childbearing combined with low access to education and high rates of violence, leave young people socially and economically vulnerable. With the rise in violent extremism since 2012, youth have become vulnerable targets for recruitment and radicalization by extremist groups and non-state actors.

Gender: Gender inequality is deeply entrenched in Malian society, and women and girls face significant barriers in accessing health care and livelihoods opportunities without prior authorization and financial support from their husbands. In traditional Malian society, women, girls, and youth have limited legal rights to land and productive resources as well as access to services, thus constraining their full engagement in social, economic, and political life.

Progress on improving gender equality in Mali has slowed over recent years in part due to the conflict, but also in part due to a reversal in national policies that undermines efforts to empower women. In 2012, the Government of Mali adopted a new family code that identified men as the heads of households further curtailing women's rights, and the legal age of marriage was reduced favoring early marriage. In tandem with the conflict in the region this has increased the likelihood that more girls will be forced to marry in early adolescence and begin childbearing. Mali ranks among the top ten countries with the highest prevalence of child marriage and is the second-highest ranked country in the world with the highest prevalence of early pregnancy, with 10 percent of girls giving birth before the age of 15, and 36 percent between the ages of 15 and 18. The average fertility rate has risen from 6.1 children per mother in 2012 (Mali DHS 2012) to 6.3 in 2018 (Mali 2018 DHS) and in 2018, nearly 60 percent of girls aged 19 had begun childbearing, indicating that early marriage and childbearing remains a widespread practice in the country. This is particularly important to consider in the context of programming for nutrition and food security, because the prevalence of childhood stunting is 20 percent higher among children born to adolescent mothers aged less than 18. In Mali, analysis of the 2012 DHS data suggests that the prevalence of stunting among children born to adolescent mothers is 48 percent for mothers aged 18 years or less compared to 26 percent among mothers aged 23 years or more. Girls in Mali are deprived from completing their education in favor of early marriage, and this practice has been further exacerbated by mass school closings in northern and more recently central Mali as a result of the conflict.

In 2015, the Government of Mali also adopted a new land reform law in 2015 to better define customary land access and distinguish from government controlled land, however this law did not address gender discrimination and did not further secure women's access to land. The only

provision that was included was that groups of women and youth be allowed access to 15 percent of irrigated land. However, it is unclear how well this law has been implemented. The majority of women in Mali access land through marriage, and data show that they are more risk averse to investing in the land they are allocated as their land tenure is extremely insecure. More information is needed to understand how conflict and climate change are changing access to land for women and youth in Mali and what the implications of these changes are for food security.

Gender Based Violence (GBV) continues to be an important issue in Mali. In the 2012-2013 Demographic and Health Survey, 44 percent of women reported recent physical, sexual, or emotional abuse perpetrated by their husbands further indicating how deeply entrenched gender inequality is in Mali. It is likely that the current conflict in Mali has increased GBV and this is an important consideration in the context of improving food security and nutrition.

5. Activity Goal and Objectives

Activity Goal: Improved food security and resilience of communities in conflict-affected areas, through strengthening local systems and community participation.

The inclusion of local systems and community participation as strategies within the goal statement of the Mali DFSA intentionally reflects the need for approaches that account for social dynamics in the context of Mali's Center and/or North. The DFSA goal statement is informed by significant lessons learned regarding the operating environment, challenges, and successes encountered by partners working in the target geographic zones. Active participation, buy-in, and strengthening of communities and local systems is envisioned at all stages of the DFSA, from planning, to design, and implementation. This strategy will be paramount to ensuring access to participants, communities, and services, improving social dynamics, and achieving the goal of improved food security and resilience. It is envisioned that community and systems strengthening efforts—both formal and informal—will be a critical link to bridging short- and long-term food security efforts, and to building a clear pathway for households to move from humanitarian assistance recipients to development participants within the DFSA. It is also envisioned that such community and systems strengthening approaches will require significant thought leadership to ensure they are conflict-sensitive and do not result in unintended, negative consequences (e.g., reinforcing biases, and inequities), but rather strengthen social cohesion and longer term stability at the local level. To that end, the DFSA can help local actors promote peace processes and peaceful co-existence.

All objectives of the DFSA seek the meaningful participation of young people and women for positive change, while responding to their unique needs.

With respect to the intended meaning of 'local systems', applicants have the discretion to select local systems of primary relevance to the stated goals of food security and resilience.

Objective 1: Stabilize vulnerable households by reducing the impact of shocks and connecting households to basic services.

In order to improve food security outcomes and reduce the damaging effect of conflict on food security and nutrition, it is imperative that vulnerable households basic needs are met. In the context of the center and north of Mali, an ongoing, complex crisis contributes to a wide range of intersecting shocks and stressors affecting vulnerable households (e.g., conflict, drought, floods, displacements/returns). This directly contributes to households' inability to consistently meet basic needs without external support. Objective 1 of the DFSA is intended to stabilize the food and nutrition security of vulnerable groups, particularly those impacted by such shocks. A layered approach¹⁹ and a layering of objectives is envisioned for the Mali DFSA, and objective 1 is envisioned as a **base layer** that will address the acute needs and food security gap of those affected by the ongoing, complex crisis. One intended outcome of this objective is to maintain and/or prevent significant deterioration in the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable groups. A second intended outcome of this objective is to allow households to resume key activities that may have been impacted by shocks and/or reduced access. A third intended outcome is to create the conditions and stability needed for vulnerable households to enable them to invest time, energy, and resources into longer-term recovery and development activities. In the target geographic zones of Mali, the DFSA also seeks to respond to the unique needs of both sedentary and pastoral communities.

Within this objective, the DFSA will work through existing actors and platforms, wherever possible, to facilitate access to basic services.²⁰ These could include formal government structures where present, but could also be informal local systems, USAID program platforms, etc. When and where possible, the DFSA will strengthen the ability of these existing actors and platforms to respond to shocks and to reduce the impact of future shocks. One example of this would be a "community first" approach that mobilizes and encourages communities to plan for and respond to humanitarian needs, and that links communities to appropriate government, civil society, or non-governmental groups for advocacy and further support. These efforts should help build community level cooperation to help prioritize needs and accountability for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Objective 1 approaches that work in alignment with ongoing government and civil society planning (e.g., Plans de Développement Économique, Social et Culturel - PDSECs) and the incorporation of traditional coping mechanisms and other appropriate shock response tools are desired.

Objective 1 of the DFSA will layer, sequence, and integrate with the substantial planned USAID/Mali health and nutrition investments in the target geographic zones,²¹ as well as other promising efforts to innovate on community-level nutrition approaches in Mali.²² Given the other planned USAID investments, especially in Mopti, any proposed health or nutrition approaches under the DFSA will work collectively with these activities to maintain and improve the nutritional status of vulnerable groups through tailored, sequenced approaches. Where

¹⁹ Please see Section IV for further description of Layering, Sequencing, and Integration of Activities.

²⁰ 'Basic services' include, but are not limited to, general government administrative services (such as identification documents), health and nutrition services, basic education, agricultural extension services, safety and security, justice and dispute resolution.

²¹ USAID (2019). USAID/Mali Health Request for Application (Household and Community Health and Health Systems Strengthening, Governance and Financing Activities, #72068819RFA00004): <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=313641>

²² FFP Mopti Nutrition Partner assessment. (June, 2019).

significant gaps exist, the DFSA will serve to fill gaps, if and where needed, in nutrition and nutrition-sensitive programming, but may not be a fully integrated health and nutrition approach throughout the entire zone of intervention. The applicant is expected to use analytical tools and assessments to identify gaps and opportunities to layer, sequence, and integrate activities in order to identify the required basic services. There should be clear justification to support providing services and demonstrate there is no duplication of services. USAID/Mali is striving for an integrated approach across U.S. Government investments in zones of intervention, but the DFSA will not necessarily be a stand-alone, comprehensive activity covering all aspects of food security.

This objective is also intended to allow for implementation flexibility throughout the life of the award. Because of the potential for significant changes in the operating environment, context, and/or needs of the target population in the life of the award, the DFSA may need to shift activities or approaches, or it may temporarily pause, expand or contract implementation, whether geographically or sectorally.

Objective 2: Youth are empowered as key drivers of the economic and social development of their communities.

In order to improve food security outcomes and reduce the damaging effect of conflict on food security and nutrition, it is imperative that youth be empowered as key drivers of the economic and social development of their communities. As reflected in Section IV (Country Background), Malian youth are the majority of the population but they encounter significant economic, social, and cultural challenges that limit their ability to prosper and become positive, contributing members of society. Such challenges include limited education and vocation training (particularly for young women), access to financial services, and employment opportunities; recruitment by criminal and violent organizations; gender-based violence; early marriage and pregnancy; and cultural norms that often do not empower youth and engage them in decision making. Despite these challenges, Malian youth present a great opportunity for development as the future social, political, and economic leaders in their communities.

Objective 2 envisions youth—both young women and young men—as active participants and drivers for positive change within the DFSA. Youth are envisioned as active participants in the planning, design, and implementation of activities that will work toward food security and resilience in their communities. The activity will work to develop thoughtful, conflict-sensitive approaches that allow youth to become the future social, political, and economic leaders in their communities. Preparing and empowering youth to fill these roles and become positive and contributing members of Malian society is critical to the stability and prosperity of their communities. Male and female youth have great potential to increase household food security and be productive members of their communities. For the purpose of Objective 2, youth refers to men and women between the ages of 15 and 29.

Reflecting the intersecting drivers of youth, livelihoods, and conflict in Mali, Objective 2 will work to integrate and engage youth in their communities. This includes identifying and increasing viable livelihood opportunities that link them to sustainable employment opportunities

(i.e., that go beyond training). Significant space exists to build on innovation and thought leadership around livelihood approaches that incorporate young men and women's aspirations, that encourage youth to consider livelihoods beyond traditional gender-roles or social divisions, and that can be sustainably scaled to reach meaningful levels of youth.²³ In particular, approaches are needed that reflect a strong understanding of youth demographics, livelihood strategies, and seasonal/annual migration patterns. It is envisioned that these aspirations and youth-centered participatory approaches will be incorporated more broadly into Objectives 1 and 3 of the activity.

Objective 3: Communities drive approaches to manage natural resources and community assets sustainably and productively.

In order to improve food security outcomes and reduce the damaging effect of conflict on food security and nutrition, it is imperative that communities drive their own approaches to manage natural resources and community assets sustainably and productively. As in other countries in the Sahel, long-term peace, prosperity, and food security will not be achieved without equitable and sustainable solutions to natural resource management, particularly around land, water, and pasture. This objective stems from current analyses that natural resource allocation, management, and authorities (formal and informal, at national and local level) are strong and intersecting drivers of both food insecurity and conflict in the north and central Mali.

Objective 3 will empower communities to use processes inclusive of vulnerable groups to strategically identify critical community resources, opportunities to improve their management and productivity, and ensuring that vulnerable groups and households benefit from these improvements. It is envisioned that interventions under Objective 3 would span both facilitative and direct implementation approaches to advance community-identified priorities. Communities will be supported to lead in identifying the most vulnerable among their population, including IDPS, socially vulnerable, persons with disabilities, etc. For the purpose of Objective 3, resources refer to natural resources (e.g., land, water, forests, fisheries), as well as valued community assets (e.g., infrastructure and services).

This objective recognizes the importance of community ownership in natural resource management to ensure that interventions and approaches are tailored and appropriate to the context and resource base of local communities. This objective further seeks to strengthen social cohesion, reduce inter- and intra-communal disputes over resources, and recognize that these disputes constitute a major source of conflict. Understanding and addressing the gender and age-specific relationship to community access, use, and management of assets will support these efforts. This objective takes into account the many drivers affecting natural resource use in target communities beyond their direct control. Drivers include climate variability and change, transhumance routes and corridors, and decisions made by other actors, such as the Government of Mali (GOM), outside the community that affect resource availability and use. Where possible and strategic, the interventions under this objective will work with other actors, such as the Government at the national and regional level, the private sector, and donors to mitigate negative

²³ World Bank (2018). The evidence is in: how should youth employment programs in low-income countries be designed? <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/837861530219586540/The-evidence-is-in-how-should-youth-employment-programs-in-low-income-countries-be-designed>.

forces and pursue sound policy.²⁴ Objective 3 of the DFSA will leverage any potential USAID investments in natural resource management in the target geographic zones, including the substantial planned USAID/Mali Feed the Future (FtF) investments in the focus geography.²⁵

6. Activity Programming Principles

The following principles are highlighted below as cross-cutting guidance that FFP considers particularly important in the context of FFP programming in the target regions of Mali. These considerations aim to ensure that the design process builds on lessons learned, best practice, and needed advances for programming in a complex crisis, and that the design leverages ongoing initiatives and programming in Mali. Applicants should consider these principles as they develop their Initial Application, which is further detailed in Section IV.

- ***Design for People-Centered and Community-Driven Approaches***

FFP is committed to keeping the interests and the voice of the most vulnerable at the center of its work and crafting development responses based on the strengths, priorities, risks, and needs of the target population. For the conflict-affected targeted areas of Mali, people-centered and community-oriented approaches that are both designed and implemented with the participation of local communities are critical to ensuring continued access and sustainability. Community-driven approaches in Mali require working with traditional and formal institutions and decision-making groups, while ensuring impartial representation of the most vulnerable and marginalized in decision-making processes. Applicants should propose an approach that leads to interventions that are identified as a priority by targeted communities and leverage existing resources, capacities, and systems available to meet the activity's goal and objectives. Given the ongoing conflict, applicants should pay particular attention to community dynamics that could affect the approach, including drivers of conflict as they relate to community power dynamics, existing community tensions/conflict related to ethnicity, livelihoods, gender, age, religious beliefs, social class, physical capabilities, and political affiliation.

- ***Prioritization and Focus: Keep it Simple***

A highly complex set of determinants affect the availability, access, utilization, and stability of food resources. Food security in the target geographic zones of Mali is further impacted by the continued effects of a complex crisis, including violent conflict. Given the many complex challenges facing food insecure households in the target geographic zones of Mali, applicants are not expected to respond to all the context-specific needs and opportunities, as these can easily exceed the capacity of any one activity to respond comprehensively and effectively. There are limits, in addition, to the level of change in knowledge, attitudes, and practices that individuals, households, and communities can absorb, particularly in conflict-affected areas.

Applicants should identify leverage points that address key drivers of food insecurity, and seek to prioritize and sequence a limited number of interventions that are feasible, realistic, and

²⁴ FFP encourages applicants to review USAID's Nature, Wealth, & Power 2.0 <https://rmportal.net/library/content/nwp-2.00>

²⁵ USAID/Mali Request for Application (Mali GFSS Implementation Activities, #72068819RFA00005): <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=Mali>

achievable in a non-permissive environment.²⁶ Analysis and prioritization of factors should be completed for each system and objective. Once those are prioritized and targeted, FFP encourages partners to address the most limiting factors of each desired outcome sequentially (i.e., the most limiting factor is targeted first, the second most limiting factor is targeted second, etc.). This approach broadly follows *Liebig's law of the minimum*, which states, in summary, that a system is constrained not by total resources available, but by the scarcest resource (limiting factor). This will ensure responses are feasible, catalytic in nature and tailored to the needs of each subpopulation, while also ensuring they can be implemented with a high degree of quality and impact. A fully integrated approach to address all drivers of food insecurity will not be feasible in most areas of the targeted geographic zones.

Furthermore, availability and access of highly qualified technical experts may be limited in many parts of the target geographic zone, thus applications should reflect the capacity for quality implementation given challenges around sustained access. Additionally, access to communities in the target geographic zone is constantly changing so keeping interventions focused and simple will be key as it may be necessary to temporarily suspend programming due to insecurity.

- ***Bridge Humanitarian to Development Assistance for Sustainability***

FFP is committed to investing in improved food security for vulnerable populations in a manner that supports long-term and self-perpetuating change, and the continued well-being and stability of the vulnerable populations with which FFP works. Applicants should propose approaches that enable communities and households receiving recurrent humanitarian assistance to engage in development activities and to work towards a nexus approach between humanitarian and development assistance. As part of continued efforts to reduce the need for humanitarian assistance, applicants should consider how households may transition from humanitarian to development assistance. Applicants should consider how these shifts in household needs will affect the design approach, as well as adaptive management that allows for changes to programming based on contextual needs. This will include strengthening formal and informal systems that address acute and chronic food insecurity, while increasing the potential for sustained motivation, capacity, resources and linkages in support of continued food security impacts.

- ***Develop Context-Specific and Tailored Approaches***

The drivers of food insecurity in Mali vary by village, commune, cercle, and region. Food insecurity will further vary by contextual factors including Malians' level of vulnerability; coping capacity; ethnicity; age; gender; religious and cultural beliefs, practices, and taboos; livelihoods; access to natural and physical capital; transportation access; environmental change; shocks including conflict; and the governance of institutions and service providers. This RFA aims to stress the importance of developing a tailored, focused approach that responds to the

²⁶ USAID describes a non-permissive environment as a context, at the national or sub-national level, in which uncertainty, instability, inaccessibility, or insecurity constrain USAID's ability to operate safely and effectively. The vast majority of the countries in which USAID works have experienced some degree of non-permissiveness over the last 20 years, with backsliding, dramatic downturns and disruptive shocks not uncommon.
https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/Fact_Sheet_Working_in_Non-Permissive_Environments.pdf

context and challenges currently faced by Malians. It is not expected that the DFSA will be able to address all drivers of food insecurity, nor is it expected that “one size fits all” approaches would adequately respond to the context and challenges in Mali’s center and north. It is expected, however, that a good understanding of these drivers and the challenges faced by participants is critical to developing a more tailored, focused, and prioritized approach²⁷. Understanding local context, limiting interventions to increase impact, and working alongside local communities will provide opportunities for transformative change that can create growth, strengthen systems and improve wellbeing for the most vulnerable.

- ***Leverage and Link to Strengthen Collective Impact***

The target geographic zone for this award, which stretches from Northern Segou to Gao, is a region that represents a significant and ongoing humanitarian and development investments for USAID and other donors. Applicants should plan to closely coordinate with these investments, including FFP and the USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) emergency activities, and other key USAID/Mali development activities²⁸ that feed into the USAID Mali Resilience Approach.²⁹ Linking to the Government of Mali’s food security and resilience initiatives³⁰ and strategies,³¹ is expected of the DFSA, as is aligning with commune-level economic and social development plans (Plans de Développement Économique, Social et Culturel - PDSECs). The DFSA should strategically and operationally work in line with relevant national and local government policies and systems, and work to leverage and link with other actors such as local civil society organizations and projects funded by other donors to address the drivers of food insecurity, and create opportunities for positive change.

Assume Conflict and Environmental Shocks

Communities within the target regions are expected to experience continued shocks and stressors related to conflict, high food prices and cyclic droughts/floods throughout the life of the activity. These shocks and stressors bring negative impacts that often reduce households’ well-being, food security, and economic potential, ultimately leading to cycles of chronic poverty that may increase violent conflict. The type of shock or stressor will vary within the target geographic zone and level of vulnerability (age, sex, ethnicity, etc.), and applicants should plan for and anticipate context-specific shocks and stressors, and enable pivoting and/or mitigation of negative effects through response planning at the activity level and strengthening of relevant resilience capacities within the local system and relevant local partners. Applicants should

²⁷ Levine & Mosel (2014). Supporting Resilience in Difficult Places. Humanitarian Policy Group. Available: <http://www.odi.org/hpg>.

²⁸ USAID (2019). USAID/Mali Health Request for Information: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=313641>

²⁹ USAID (2018). GFSS Mali Country Plan. Available: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1867/Mali_Country_Plan.pdf

³⁰ Government of Mali (2019). National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (Politique Nationale de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle, PoINSAN). Available: <https://fscluster.org/mali/document/csa-politique-nationale-de-securite>

³¹ Mali National Resilience Priorities/Priorités Résilience Pays (PRP/AGIR 2018-2025). Available: <https://www.oecd.org/site/rpca/agir/nrpagir.htm>

propose approaches that integrate flexibility and adaptability to respond quickly to the impact of shocks.

- ***Strengthen Local Systems: Conflict Sensitivity, Social Dynamics, and Local Governance***

Food insecurity, undernutrition, climate change, poverty, and conflict are multidimensional challenges that require a thorough understanding of contributing factors, potential drivers, potential change agents, and existing bottlenecks down to the sub-population level. Social norms, power dynamics, levels of inclusion and nature of participation within local systems have the potential to undermine development impacts when left unaddressed, or conversely, to provide engines of positive change when enhanced in ways that increase motivation, equity, social cohesion and transparent socially accountable service delivery. In Mali, it is recognized that the breakdown of inter- and intra-community relationships and traditional conflict resolution methods have contributed to the rise in violent conflict. Class disparity is known to be a hurdle for reaching poor and very poor households in Mali. Applicants must consider how to implement the activity without creating new social tensions between classes. Successful programming must do no harm and account for participant and staff personal safety during implementation, but also take into account opportunities to positively impact the situation through conflict-aware and conflict-sensitive programming. Partners are encouraged to review conflict literature provided in Appendix VI and utilize appropriate tools for conflict analysis and monitoring.

Social dynamics and social cohesion are another key consideration in the conflict-affected environments of Mali. The applicant must take into account the different needs of different vulnerable groups such as women, youth, IDPs, and persons with disabilities as well as incorporate considerations for how communities interact among themselves and with other communities and how the DFSA may impact these dynamics.

While formal government institutions may not be present in some areas, FFP remains committed to understanding and working within local systems, particularly at the village and commune level. Applicants must consider how activities work with and support the National Food Security System in Mali (DNSA) including coordinating with relevant decision making groups at the local, regional, and national level, as appropriate. FFP seeks to strengthen social cohesion and systems that address food insecurity in a conflict-sensitive manner. This will require applicants to fully understand local social dynamics, priorities, and conflict-sensitivities before engaging with substantial interventions to abide by the principle of ‘do no harm.’ Applicants must further incorporate strong systems to monitor changes in social dynamics and conflict to ensure that activities continually adapt to changing dynamics and that any disputes are addressed quickly.

- ***Use Evidence and Learning for Context-Specific, High Quality, and Adaptive Responses***

FFP programs should incorporate Mali-specific research and evidence and take an approach that reflects the social, political, economic, and climatic factors that affect food security, resilience, and stability. Programs should especially incorporate evidence-based design approaches that are conflict-sensitive and draw from best practices for working to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development assistance with the goal of focusing on limited activities that will

have high impact. The applicant should utilize analytical tools to identify and prioritize activities. These tools may include political economy analysis, conflict assessments, or other relevant tools. Programs must incorporate clear processes to ensure adaptive management that allows for new data and experiential learning to be consistently applied throughout the life of the award. Programs must incorporate best practices of youth engagement based on the local context and local opportunities. Adaptive management based on learning should ensure more effective implementation, quick problem identification, and timely course corrections through feedback loops from the field to senior management. Given the dynamic conflict and demographic movements in the targeted geographic zone, processes should ensure feedback on quality issues, unintended consequences, and incremental change in strengthening resilience capacities. Programs should have contingency plans for different types of changes in the local context that will impact day-to-day implementation and future results. FFP encourages innovative approaches that actively and continually engage community members as well as evidence-based approaches that will move highly vulnerable communities on a path towards sustainable change and out of the existing poverty traps in the targeted areas.

7. Authorizing Legislation

The Food for Peace Act, Section 201 (7 U.S.C. 1721) General Authority, authorizes the USAID Administrator to establish programs to:

- Provide agricultural commodities to foreign countries on behalf of the people of the United States to address famine and food crises; combat malnutrition, especially in children and mothers;
- Carry out actions that attempt to alleviate the causes of hunger, mortality and morbidity; promote economic and community development;
- Promote food security and support sound environmental practices; carry out feeding interventions; and
- Build resilience to mitigate and prevent food crises and reduce the future need for emergency assistance.

The Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) authorizes USAID to provide development assistance. FFP receives certain funds appropriated for this purpose. These funds are referred to as Community Development Funds (CDF) and may be used to support FFP development activities. Funding for development activities through this RFA will be with CDF funds.

For more information, particularly concerning eligible uses of CDF funding, please refer to FFPIB 19-01 “Eligible Uses of Section 202(e); Internal Transportation, Storage and Handling; Inland Freight, Monetization Proceeds; and Community Development Funds for FFP Awards”.

8. Activity Eligibility Requirements

Applications are not required to include the direct distribution of food commodities. Applications should propose a sound, contextually appropriate, approach to address high levels of acute and chronic malnutrition and food insecurity. Any proposed direct distribution of locally, regionally, and/or internationally procured (LRIP) commodities and/or cash transfer/food voucher must

clearly support interventions that sustainably reduce vulnerability to food insecurity and strengthen local systems that address food and nutrition insecurity. This includes increasing the availability of and access to nutritious food, building incomes/assets to increase year-long access to a diverse and adequate diet, and/or improving knowledge and behaviors to ensure that food consumption supports health and healthy growth.

9. Award Administration

Awards will be made and administered in accordance with the Food for Peace Act, as applicable, and U.S. Government regulations. As applicable, the award will be administered under 22 CFR 211, 22 CFR 216, 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 700, USAID Standard Provisions, FFP Information Bulletins, which are available on the USAID website.

Public international organizations (PIO) are subject to different requirements, so USAID reserves the right to make awards to such organizations on different terms and conditions than those made to private voluntary organizations (PVOs) and cooperatives.

Section II – Federal Award Information

1. Estimate of Funds Available

Subject to the availability of funds under this RFA, FFP plans to make one award of up to \$60 million in CDF funds.

USAID reserves the right to adjust the number of awards, funding levels, and/or sources of funding. Note that not all funding is interchangeable and some budget adjustments may need to take place. Successful applicants will be notified of any changes or updates accordingly.

2. Anticipated Start Date and Performance Period

The anticipated start date of the new award(s) will be October 1, 2020. The award(s) will be issued for a performance period of five years during which the applicant will refine the activity design during an initial refinement, implementation, and piloting; and implement the activity with robust adaptive management and learning following the initial refinement. FFP anticipates the Mali FY 2020 DFSA to use both a pre-award co-creation model and the R&I model to continue co-creation throughout the award (see Appendix III).

3. Substantial Involvement

In accordance with the ADS 303.3.11, a cooperative agreement, as distinguished from a grant, provides for substantial involvement between the Federal awarding Agency and the recipient in carrying out the activity contemplated by the Federal award (The examples of substantial involvement below are a guide, not a checklist. The Agreement Officer must determine the appropriate level of substantial involvement based on the programmatic requirements of the award and include only those elements of substantial involvement as needed. Examples of potential areas of substantial involvement during performance include the following:

- Approval of the recipient's implementation plans during performance.
- Ability to immediately halt an activity if the recipient does not meet detailed performance specifications (for example, construction specifications).
- Review and approval of one stage of work, before work can begin on a subsequent stage during the period covered by the cooperative agreement.
- Review and approval of substantive provisions of proposed subawards or contracts (see definitions in 2 CFR 200). These would be provisions that go beyond existing policies on Federal review of recipient procurement standards and sole-source procurement.
- Involvement in the selection of key recipient personnel.
- USAID and recipient collaboration or joint participation, such as when the recipient's successful accomplishment of program objectives would benefit from USAID's technical knowledge.
- USAID monitoring to permit specific kinds of direction or redirection of the work because of the interrelationships with other projects or activities.
- Direct USAID operational involvement or participation to ensure compliance with statutory requirements such as civil rights, environmental protection, and provisions for the handicapped that exceeds USAID's role that is normally part of the general statutory requirements understood in advance of the award.
- Highly prescriptive USAID requirements established prior to award that limit the recipient's discretion with respect to the scope of services offered, organizational structure, staffing, mode of operation, and other management processes, coupled with close monitoring or operational involvement during performance over and above the normal exercise of Federal stewardship responsibilities to ensure compliance with these requirements.

For specifics and additional details, please refer to ADS 303.3.11 - Substantial Involvement and Cooperative Agreements. Substantial involvement requirements will be further discussed in the co-creation phase.

4. Authorized Geographic Code

The anticipated authorized geographic code for procurement of goods and services under the prospective award(s) is 935; USAID reserves the right to modify this.

5. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Awardee

The principal purpose of the relationship with the awardee under the subject award is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the activities as described in the RFA, which is authorized by federal statute. The successful awardee will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the award objectives and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The awardee will assume responsibility for administering federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, award objectives, and the terms and conditions of the federal award.

6. Assistance Awards

USAID may (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept applications for reasons other than cost, or (c) accept more than one application. USAID intends to award predominantly a cooperative agreement, but reserves the right to award any other form of assistance agreement. USAID may waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.

USAID may award the resulting assistance award(s) on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions, negotiations and/or oral presentations. Therefore, each initial application must contain the applicant's best terms from a technical and cost standpoint. However, as part of its evaluation process, USAID may elect to discuss technical, cost, or other pre-award issues with one or more applicants. Alternatively, USAID may proceed with award selection based on its evaluation of initial applications received, use an alternative process (e.g., keep or drop oral presentations), and/or commence negotiations solely with one applicant.

Section III – Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

To be considered for a CDF-funded award, the applicant must be a U.S. or non-U.S. NGO or consortium, or an organization designated by USAID as a PIO.

Note the USAID ADS definition for NGO is: Any NGO or entity, whether non-profit or profit-making, receiving or providing USAID-funded assistance under an assistance instrument or contract.

In the case of a consortium, the applicant must be the consortium lead and must identify any other members of the consortium or individuals tied to the implementation of the activity as described in the application, along with all sub-awardees. The respective roles of any other members of the consortium or individuals, including all sub-awardees, must be described, and separate budgets must be attached for each. For more information, see Section IV: Application and Submission Information.

2. New Partners and Local Organizations

USAID encourages applications from potential new partners (i.e., those who have not received any USAID funding previously) and local organizations. Applicants are highly encouraged to propose approaches that include local contributions demonstrating strong commitment to sustainability and self-reliance. This may include private sector engagement that supports the activity's goal and objectives.

Applications that build strong coalitions with local partners and progressively hand over management, implementation, and technical responsibilities through the course of the award will be favored. Applicants must propose a clear plan for 25 percent of the total budget to be allocated to local partners in sub-awards or sub-contracts. Local partners may include, but are

not limited to, local government, local private sector, local NGOs, non-profit organizations, formal or informal community-based organizations, and/or civil society groups. Applicants should demonstrate how they plan to progressively handover management and resources to local partners over the life of the activity. Applicants should also describe how they will support and monitor local partners to facilitate the transition. Applicants are not required to identify all local sub-awardees at the time of initial application. Note that sub-awards to local government institutions will require additional internal approvals.

Note that sub-awardees may be on more than one application to this request, and applicants may sign non-exclusive letters of commitment with sub-awardees (international and local partners), if applicable. Additionally, applicants may apply to be a prime in one application and a sub-grantee in another application.

3. Cost Share

Cost share is not required.

4. Limit on Number of Applications

Each applicant is limited to one application to this request. In addition, an applicant may also be a sub-awardee on applications submitted by other organizations. Sub-awardees may be on more than one application to this request.

Section IV – Application and Submission Information

Given the unique challenges related to conflict in the targeted regions of Mali, FFP will follow a “three-phase merit review process” of application selection. Phase 1 is the submission and review of a written Initial Application. Applicants will be evaluated and scored based on the Phase 1 (Initial Application) and successful applicants will be invited to participate in Phase 2 (Oral Presentation). Applicants will be evaluated and one Apparently Successful Applicant will be notified and invited to participate in Phase 3.

During Phase 3, the Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA)³² selected from Phase 2 will collaboratively develop with FFP a Final Application for consideration and subsequently submit a written Final Application. Applicants not selected for the subsequent phase will be notified at the end of Phase 2. The ASA selected after Phase 2 will receive an Issues Letter before the pre-award Co-Creation Workshop for further discussion and incorporation into final Program Description of the award.

This modified process is intended to reflect the challenging operating environment in Mali and allow for greater flexibility and engagement with applicants before and after the award.

³² Per 2 CFR 700.1, Apparently Successful Applicant(s) means the applicant(s) for USAID funding recommended for an award after merit review, but who has not yet been awarded a grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance award by the Agreement Officer. Apparently Successful Applicant status confers no right and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award, which still must be executed by the Agreement Officer.

Applications must be emailed to FY20-DFSA-RFA-Mali@usaid.gov. Note that emails including all attachments must not exceed 25 megabytes (MB). Please therefore use multiple emails or zip files if needed. The ASA will be invited to upload its final application and applicable annexes to the [FFP Partner Portal](#).

1. Application Format

Phase I - Initial Application

The Initial Application is a reduced and condensed format application with a reduced number of pages and reduced Annex requirements, as compared to the Final Application. If submissions exceed the page number maximum, only the pages up to the limit will be reviewed, and pages exceeding the maximum will not be considered. Initial Applications that do not meet the requirements of this RFA will not be considered. The Initial Application is divided into the following sections, with the maximum number of pages given per section, excluding the table of contents, but including any endnotes and/or footnotes, as follows:

- a) Cover Page (1 page, see paragraph a)
- b) Executive Summary (1 page, see paragraph b)
- c) Activity Design (18 pages, paragraph c)
- d) Adaptive Management and Staffing (5 pages, see paragraph d)
- e) Cost Application (no page limit, see paragraph e)
- f) Environmental Compliance (see paragraph f)
- g) Phase 1 - Initial Application Annexes (see paragraph g)

Applicants are expected to submit an Initial Application that focuses on the strategy and approach to implementing the Goal and Objectives. In particular, the Activity Design should focus on the intended approach and strategy, rather than significant detail at the intervention-level. The initial activity design and refinement process will be further clarified during the pre-award Co-Creation Workshop with FFP and expanded upon in a complete Final Application, with illustrative interventions and updated expected results.

a) Cover Page (1 page)

The cover page must include:

- Name of the applicant's organization;
- Name and title of the organization's representative who has signatory authority and authority to submit the application;
- Name, title, and contact information of the organization's point of contact with whom USAID will coordinate on matters related to the application (if different from the organization's representative with signatory authority and authority to submit the application). Contact information should include mailing address, e-mail, and telephone number;
- Total funds requested (in U.S. dollars)
- Valid Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number;

- Activation date in System for Award Management (SAM) – note that successful applicants must maintain SAM registration; and
- Participant information as requested in the table below:

Number of Activity Participants

Total Direct Activity Participants	
Total Direct Activity Participating Households	

- Total Direct Activity Participants: The number of unique individuals who will directly participate in activity interventions during the period of performance (if someone participates in three interventions, only count them once).
- Total Direct Activity Participating Households³³: The number of unique households targeted by the project.

b) Executive Summary (1 page maximum)

The executive summary must include:

- Problem Statement, including the underlying causes and major determinants of food insecurity and malnutrition to be addressed;
- Overarching ToC that describes the hypothesized series of changes to address the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition; and
- The proposed design approach to achieve the activity's food and nutrition security objectives.

c) Activity Design (18 pages maximum)

In the Activity Design, the applicant should present an overall vision for reaching the activity goal and objectives of the Mali DFSA, and the strategy that will be taken to achieve these objectives for the target geographic zone and participants. It is not necessary to present a full and detailed technical application at the Initial Application phase as the vision, strategy, and approach will be further refined in the Phase 3 Co-Creation Workshop.

The applicant must clearly present a technical approach and vision, and must demonstrate its understanding of the challenges and opportunities to implementing the Mali DFSA, including the following sub-sections. This section must also adequately describe how the Applicant intends to feasibly achieve the desired outcomes.

- (1) Context Analysis (1-2 pages); Conceptual Framework (1-2 pages); Targeting (1-2 pages);
- (2) Design Approach (8-12 pages);
- (3) Local Systems Strengthening and Sustainability
- (4) Gender, Youth, and Social Dynamics Integration

³³ A household is categorized by people who live in the same homestead (dwelling structures and adjoining land occupied by family members) and also share the same eating arrangements. If people live independently in separate homesteads and do not share the same eating arrangements they will be treated as separate households. Households size should reflect the context of proposed geographies.

(1a) Context Analysis (1-2 pages)

A context-appropriate and effective activity requires a deep understanding of targeted participants' needs, their communities, and the constraints they face. A brief description of the context must demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge of the participants, target geographic zones, and the larger enabling environment in the country. Applicants should not repeat information already included in the RFA or accompanying attachments, but should provide any targeted analysis of the context that supports the proposed approach. Elements **may** include:

- Identification of the geographic area of intervention and the profiles of the target participants.
- A map of proposed intervention areas at the Administrative Level 2 (i.e., cercle level) may be put in an annex and will not count towards the page limit.
- A description of how the current food security context relates to the design approach.
- A brief description of localized socio-economic, political, and climatic context; status of infrastructure, and market; and safety and security that may positively or negatively influence the implementation of the activity and anticipated outcomes.
- A description of the capacity of the host government, civil society, NGOs, and private sectors in the targeted areas as they relate directly to the proposed design approach
- A description of other development and humanitarian actors in the target geographic zones, including their goals and ongoing interventions. This may be further elaborated in Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Plan (Annex 6).

(1b) Conceptual Framework (1-2 pages)

Theory of Change (ToC): A ToC is the conceptual foundation of an activity's design. At the Initial Application stage, the applicant should develop a high-level ToC that illustrates the conceptual framework of the design. The high-level ToC should illustrate the hypothesized series of changes **at the purpose and sub-purpose level** that are expected to occur to a specific target population in a given context. For Mali, the high-level ToC should account for assumptions in the Conceptual Framework, particularly around insecurity and access, and should reflect the reality of the context. At the Initial Application stage, FFP does not expect the high-level ToC to go below the sub-purpose level (for example down to the intervention or output level), but anticipates working with the ASA during the pre-award Co-Creation Workshop to refine and detail their activity design. Applicants will then be expected to develop a full, detailed ToC to submit with the Final Application following the pre-award Co-Creation Workshop. Further instruction on the high-level ToC is provided in Application Information, section (g) *Phase 1 - Initial Application Annexes*.

Applicants should submit a ToC diagram as Annex 5.³⁴ A ToC described in the Initial Application will be further expanded and detailed to be submitted as part of the Final Application following the pre-award Co-Creation Workshop.

³⁴ The ToC should be developed based on evidence, independently confirmed and not strictly based on project reports. A few common research repositories include [3ie Impact Evaluation Repository](#) and [J-PAL's library of randomized evaluations](#). Papers

Logical Framework: In their Initial Application, all applicants must submit a brief Logical Framework (LogFrame) with anticipated high-level results, indicators, and assumptions. FFP anticipates working with the Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA) during co-creation to develop a mutually agreed upon monitoring and evaluation strategy for the Mali DFSA that will also integrate with the Mali GFSS Results Framework and fit within the Mission M&E strategy. This will include the selection of impact- and outcome-level indicators and indicator targets that still enable meaningful program evaluation in the event of programmatic shifts because of the operating environment. During and after co-creation, the ASA will develop a full log frame with all associated indicators based on the ToC. The ASA will then be expected to submit a full LogFrame with the final application that is in accordance with the FFP Policy and Guidance on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting. For more information, please see the FFP Policy and Guidance on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting.

(1c) Targeting (1-2 pages)

Geographic Targeting: The target geographic zones stretch from Northern Segou to Gao—a region that largely falls into the Sahelian agro-ecological zone.³⁵ As reflected in Section 1.4 (Country Background), this region represents a significant and ongoing humanitarian caseload for USAID and is currently impacted by violent conflict³⁶ and the presence of armed groups.³⁷ Applicants are not expected to target the entire target geographic zone and should propose a more narrow, focused geography. FFP does not have a preference for any particular part of the target geographic zone over another, but the applicant should explain the criteria used for selection of that particular area(s) as well as a coverage plan (e.g. does the applicant plan for complete coverage of a cercle or only a percentage of villages).

Because of the rapidly evolving security context in much of Mali, FFP has elected to maintain a broad target geographic zones for the purpose of this RFA. However, applicants are strongly encouraged to review and ensure coordination and alignment with the USAID/Mali's resilience activities as defined in the CDCS and GFSS Country Plan,³⁸ and other donor activities, both geographically and thematically. Applicants should demonstrate how they will consider current humanitarian and development activities (both operational and planned) to avoid duplication of activities as well as how they will adapt targeting throughout the R&I process. Furthermore, applicants are encouraged to target geographically contiguous areas to facilitate programming and security in a semi-permissive environment, and to improve cost-savings related to staff resources, time, and travel.

published in peer-reviewed journals could also be used as sources. For more information, please see the FFP Policy and Guidance on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting and TOPS' ToC Curriculum.

³⁵ FEWSNet (2015). Mali Livelihood Zones 2014. Available: <http://fews.net/west-africa/mali/livelihood-zone-map/march-2015>

³⁶ FEWS Net: Mali: <http://fews.net/west-africa/mali>

³⁷ FEWSNet (2019). FEWSNet Mali Food Security Outlook June 2019 - Jan 2020. Available: http://fews.net/sites/default/files/documents/reports/MALI_Food_Security_Outlook_Juin_2018%20Final_EN_06Jul18.pdf

³⁸ USAID (2019). GFSS Mali Country Plan. <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1867/global-food-security-strategy-gfss-mali-country-plan>

In the Initial Application, cercle-level (admin 2) targeting is expected from applicants, with a succinct description of the methodology and criteria used to select cercle(s). Targeting methodologies should clearly demonstrate that the activity will reach those cercles in greatest need, as determined by food security and vulnerability criteria described below in ‘Participant Targeting’ and ‘Systems Targeting’. Targeting methods should also account for access, customs, ethnicity, pre-existing programming, local resources, etc. The applicant should demonstrate an implementation strategy that accounts for conflict and variable access. For example, standard procedures and protocols should be developed that allow for activity, intervention, and/or geographic adaptations and shifts that avoid significant delays or programmatic hurdles (e.g. proactively planning for the need to temporarily suspend activities due to insecurity, and then re-enter and resume activities if/after access improves; pre-designation of certain trigger indicators that would indicate the need to change approaches, designing activities which don’t require full staff presence at all times, context monitoring, indicators which inform program shifts, etc.). Contingency planning based on possible escalations or de-escalation in the conflict situation and effects on access to the target geographic zone should be considered.

Participant Targeting: Participant targeting should be briefly described as it relates to the proposed approach in Phase I Initial Application and as it falls in the FFP mandate to target the most vulnerable and those impacted by food insecurity. Further detail will be required at the Phase 3 Final Application Stage as described in Annex 21.

In developing the targeting strategy, applicants should examine how gender dynamics influence each element of food security (food availability, access, and utilization). For example, applicants should consider gender equity in decision-making, access to and control of resources, livelihood options, and time burdens. Building equitable food secure futures requires attending to the different experiences and needs of women, men, boys and girls, and deliberately engaging these gender and age groups across all development interventions.

Systems Targeting: Targeting of particular systems will be equally important to the targeting of particular villages, communes, or households. Particular targeting of systems should align with the DFSA goal and objectives. It is envisioned that applicants will begin to identify key local systems as part of the application process (Phases 1 and 2), and will continue to prioritize and refine the approach to engaging local systems during the pre-award Co-Creation Workshop of Phase 3 and refinement after the DFSA is awarded.

(2) Design Approach (8-12 pages)

Applicants should present their overall vision and strategy to achieve the activity goal and three (3) Objectives as described in Section 1. Program Description

Activity Goal: Improved food security and resilience of communities in conflict-affected areas, through strengthening local systems and community participation.

Objective 1: Stabilize vulnerable households by reducing the impact of shocks and connecting households to basic services.

Applicants should describe how their proposed approach will facilitate access to or maintain a minimum level of basic services for targeted vulnerable households, enabling them to invest time and energy into longer-term development activities. Applicants should detail how they will address this objective in the context of an active conflict, where access may be challenging and households may not be fully equipped to meet these needs consistently through displacements, returns, and seasonal shocks without support from some external source. The applicant is expected to use analytical tools and assessments to identify gaps and opportunities to layer, sequence, and integrate activities in order to identify the required basic services. There should be clear justification to support providing services and demonstrate there is no duplication of services. Where prioritization is needed, the Applicant should prioritize those basic services that directly contribute to food and nutrition security. Applicants should describe how they will assess and adapt programming requirements related to changes in vulnerable population needs and shocks to household food security.

Objective 2: Youth are empowered as key drivers of the economic and social development of their communities.

Applicants should describe the approach to engaging youth as a critical target group for planning and implementing development activities in their communities, reflective of Section I, Objective 2 description and Programming Principles. Applicants should further describe their approach for identifying viable livelihood opportunities that go beyond training and link youth to employment and sustainable livelihoods. The applicant should describe how young men's and women's aspirations will be incorporated into programming and how these will be harnessed to address Objectives 1 and 3. Applicants should further describe an overall approach for Objective 2 that accounts for youth out-migration and seasonal moves that make common youth 'livelihood' interventions infeasible or not impactful. A youth approach that engages youth in their communities while enabling youth to meet the food security needs of themselves and their families is desired.

Objective 3: Communities drive approaches to manage natural resources and community assets sustainably and productively.

Applicants should describe their approach for Objective 3 that empowers communities to respond to food insecurity and conflict that is driven by poor or sub-optimal management of resources, including natural resources, assets, and infrastructure. Community ownership should be apparent from the inception of the design to the phase-out and handover of activities. Communities should be supported to lead in identifying the most vulnerable among their population, including IDPs, socially vulnerable, persons with disabilities, etc. The approach should enable activities to be demand-driven, linked to livelihoods and local aspirations, and seek to improve resilience and food security. The vision may also seek to strengthen and reinforce traditional dispute resolution methods to prevent violent conflict, especially as they relate to communal and productive resources such as water, fisheries, pastures, and agricultural land. Community-driven approaches should account for common social and ethnic divisions and power dynamics that exist, both inter- and intra-community, while meeting the needs of the most vulnerable. Also looking at how the decision making process, through conflict-sensitive measures, can be inclusive of youth, women, and other marginalized groups.

In addition to the activity goal and objectives, the Design Approach section should adequately respond to and incorporate the Mali Programming Principles (see Section I):

- Design for People-Centered and Community-Driven Approaches
- Prioritization and Focus: Keep it Simple
- Bridge Humanitarian to Development Assistance for Sustainability
- Develop Context-Specific and Tailored Approaches
- Leverage and Link to Strengthen Collective Impact
- Assume Conflict and Environmental Shocks
- Strengthen Local Systems: Conflict Sensitivity, Social Dynamics, and Local Governance
- Use Evidence and Learning for Context-Specific, High Quality, and Adaptive Responses

Applicants may provide details to illustrate *why* these approaches are justified and *how* the applicant will coordinate with other USAID, donor, government, or private sector partners to achieve the activity's goal and objectives. Applicants should present a clear strategy for selecting specific interventions based on target community needs and aspirations, opportunities, and evidence. The focus of the Design Approach description should be on the 'how' of activity implementation not on the specific activities to be implemented, understanding that the details of specific activities will need to be harmonized with community aspirations and refined intensively, particularly during the initial refinement.

The applicant should describe how it will utilize the R&I process effectively as part of the approach to achieving the objectives, recognizing that R&I will impact decisions around specific interventions and may lead to significant changes in the approach itself.

At the Initial Application stage, applicants are not requested to include a table of participant/household targeting by interventions. After the pre-award Co-Creation Workshop, the Apparently Successful Applicant will be expected to include this table in the final Program Description.

(3) Local Systems Strengthening and Sustainability Strategies

Applicants must develop and present succinct and realistic sustainability and exit strategies that will result in demonstrated improvement in target areas. Applicants are requested to demonstrate how sustainability is incorporated in the technical approach from the beginning of the activity. Given the challenging conflict-affected environment, applicants should propose feasible means to measure sustainability and consider opportunities for leveraging other USAID, GOM, and donor investments to sustain communities beyond the life of the award. The DFSA is expected to contribute to households and communities journey to self-reliance, while recognizing that complete self-reliance may be unlikely in a five-year timeframe. The sustainability strategy should identify how they will set up the activities to incorporate sustainability, how outcomes will be sustained throughout the award and not only at the end of the activity, critical services and systems that are necessary to sustain them, and strategies to strengthen the service delivery systems to ensure that they continue into the future.

Participatory development, where communities are empowered to take ownership of intervention activities, is critical to sustainability and should be an important aspect of all proposed interventions and a guiding principle over the duration of the proposed activity. Individual interventions should be designed to be self-financing and self-transferring both during and after the activity in order to reach the indirect participants that are needed in order to achieve real, and measurable community impact. FFP expects that a significant proportion of the population will adopt and adapt these models, helping to improve both sustainability and impact of the interventions.

Additionally, these strategies should ensure that traditional and formal institutions and decision-making groups, host country partners, the private sector, local government, and participants take ownership of their development processes to sustain the critical services and programmatic outcomes. Efforts to achieve these ends must be incorporated into the activity design at every level and for any specific tangible resource transfer the activity plans to provide to participants. This activity should not necessarily work on all aspects of the local systems, but to have a strategy on how to find the gaps in the system and find sustainable solutions to fill those gaps. This includes host government activities that work within local level governance structures such as the Jigiséméjiri Social Safety Net,³⁹ the PRIA-Mali initiative, local level government technical services, and other Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire (Food Security Commission) initiatives that may begin with the passage of the PolNSAN.⁴⁰

In Mali, local organizations often represent a way to gain access and trust of communities. However, many of these organizations do not have all of the skills and capacity needed. As a part of the local systems strengthening strategy, the applicant should discuss how they will target local organizations and work with them to increase their capacity (both technically and for project management) and accountability for results, as well as capacity to sustain activities after the life of award and after close-out. Capacity building should also include local field staff and their capacity to deliver quality development assistance.

The sustainability strategy should address issues pertaining to phase down, handover, or termination of FFP-resourced interventions. Considering that not all strategies, interventions, and partnerships will be identified until after implementation is underway, any feedback loops that will inform refinements in post-award design should be presented. FFP encourages applicants to review the Sustaining Development: A Synthesis of Results from a Four-Country Study of Sustainability and Exit Strategies among Development Food Assistance Projects paper and the four case studies to develop the sustainability strategy. When working with local systems and partners, applicants are also encouraged to review USAID's Local Systems: Framework for Supporting Sustained Development.

Note: If volunteers are included as service providers, applicants must understand and outline how to address the motivation of volunteers to deliver and continue to deliver high quality services to the target communities or households. The use of volunteers should also address

³⁹ Supported by the World Bank and the GOM, Jigiséméjiri is an emergency safety net assistance program to support the most vulnerable households in Mali. <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P165064?lang=en>

⁴⁰ Government of Mali (2019). National Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (Politique Nationale de Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle, PolNSAN). Available: <https://fscluster.org/mali/document/csa-politique-nationale-de-securite>

gender concerns, understanding that women volunteers may already be marginalized and the impact of any additional unpaid work, and that women's time burden can be negatively impacted by reliance on volunteer labor for crucial service delivery.

(4) Gender, Youth, and Social Dynamics Equity and Integration

Applicants must consider gender, youth, and social dynamics throughout each section of the application.

Gender Equity and Integration:

Integration of a gender responsive approach must be context-appropriate and reflected throughout the activity. Female empowerment—promoting women and girls' self-determination—and transforming gender relations for the better are equally vital for attaining equitable food security that will be sustained over time.

Applicants should demonstrate factors of gender integration including, but not necessarily limited to:

- Examples of how gender and age dynamics and roles could affect interventions and outcomes at key steps in the proposed ToC;
- Recognition of the potential impact—positive or negative—of interventions on access to and control over resources and benefits for girls, boys, women, or men, and how any negative consequences will be avoided or mitigated;
- Consideration of how proposed interventions could affect girl's and women's time use and how this will be taken into account in planning interventions (e.g., mothers' participation resulting in less time for child care);
- Plans for how the activity will ensure equitable participation and input from women and men from different age and socio-economic groups, with examples for different technical interventions;
- Ascertain any unintended consequences related to gender and gender-based violence.
- Anticipation of how interventions could lead to, exacerbate, or affect gender-based violence (GBV) at the household and community level, as well as sexual exploitation and abuse of recipient communities, and the steps the activity will take to prevent or mitigate its occurrence, should it occur; and
- How the applicant will address GBV issues linked to interventions and how they will be tracked over time to ascertain any unintended consequences related to gender and GBV.⁴¹

The applicant must describe how gender changes, including unanticipated outcomes, will be tracked over time. For more information, see the [Technical Reference on Gender](#). Note: A full Gender, Youth and Social Dynamics analysis is required at Phase 3 as described in Annex 17.

Youth Empowerment:

Investing in youth is a key pathway towards sustainably improving food security and building resilience, as skills and capabilities learned during these formative years are transformative life-long capabilities that can be drawn upon to bounce back from future shocks. Youth make up 35 percent of the population in Mali, and this is a rapidly increasing segment of the population

⁴¹ See the Administrator's Action Alliance for Preventing Sexual Misconduct (AAPSM) for additional detail.
https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1874/190225_AAPSM_Factsheet.pdf

given the country's rising fertility rate. Applicants should pursue Positive Youth Development strategies that view young people as key partners in all development and conflict-mitigation efforts, from nutritional programming to strengthening agricultural markets and building food secure communities.⁴² Youth are defined by USAID globally and for this award in Mali as between the ages of 10 and 29, although expects applicants to focus on the adolescence (15-19) and emerging adulthood (20-24), and transition into adulthood (25-29) age ranges. Programming should take into account the disparities and constraints faced by the different youth cohorts related to participation in the agriculture/food system and, as well as the differing nutritional needs by sex, gender, age and life situation.⁴³ In particular, applicants should consider approaches that aim to:

- Promote active, effective, and direct engagement of young people in all phases of the activity;
- Empower young women without disenfranchising young men;
- Consider carefully tailored opportunities for young women and young men given their life stage and context such as gender, marital status, societal place, ethnicity, economic class, livelihood, and other identity factors;
- Strengthen relations and build ties among youth across identities and socio-economic distinctions;
- Consider how to facilitate and support youth who are required to migrate to meet the food security needs of themselves and their families recognizing they may not be available to participate in activities that require a permanent presence;
- Recognize that youth are not all the same; life context and differences such as gender, marital status, societal place, ethnicity, economic class, livelihood, and other identity factors should be taken into account in all programming. How youth are affected by conflict (displaced, reintegrated, returnees, victims of violence, etc.) should be taken into account in all programming;
- Promote intergenerational dialogue and encourage improved standing and better relations for youth and young adults within their families and their communities;
- Respect the agency and aspirations of youth and young adults;
- Consider opportunities to mitigate increased risk of exploitation for the young, and advocate for their fair compensation and safe working conditions;
- The multiple roles that Malian youth represent (displaced, reintegrated, victims of violence, etc.) in conflict-affected areas should be considered into programming, with an emphasis on promoting the role of youth in community-based violent conflict prevention and resolution efforts, considering youth as peaceful agents and assets;
- In the context of maternal and child health and nutrition in particular, program efforts should be tailored to meet the unique needs of married and unmarried adolescent girls, given nearly 60 percent of adolescent girls have begun childbearing by age 19.

FFP encourages applicants to use Participatory Learning and Action tools to guide youth participation for positive community change. Youth have roles to play in assessment, design, implementation, learning of this activity. For instance, consultation with youth, youth-led or

⁴² <http://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development>

⁴³ See the [USAID Youth in Development Policy](#), Annex A: *Factors for Selectivity and Focus* for a description of these life stages.

serving organizations at co-creation and refinement phases should be considered as options for meaningful youth engagement during design and implementation. Approaches that engage youth in community problem-solving, create leadership opportunities for youth, especially in initiating community dialogue, and strengthen social ties between youth, their families, and communities, are highly encouraged.

Cross-Cutting Issues for Integration into Activity Design

Applicants overall design approach should reflect understanding and incorporating of the Mali-specific Programming Principles (See Section 1.6). The following cross-cutting issues are fundamental to FFP programming globally and should also be reflected in the application.

Responsive and inclusive of wetlands in planning:

Over time, human impacts threaten the function of the wetlands that hosts numerous species, manages water flow and quality, and serves as an economically and socially critical space for fisheries. Applicants must consider the flood risk threats and collaborative opportunities presented by the Inner Niger Delta and Sourou wetlands. As a key contributor to providing adequate, good quality food, Malian wetlands are fundamental to the health and food security of communities in the target geographic zones of Mali. Applicants working in wetlands should consider how these important natural resources may continue to provide food to keep communities healthy and strengthen community led and regional governance capacity. Applicants must describe how to manage the many human actions that negatively diminish the ability of wetlands to continue to provide food, fiber, habitat. Applicants should also consider contributions to the multi-donor coordination level for shared ecological services within these wetlands designated as significant by the international Ramsar Convention. USAID conducted the Mali Ramsar Wetlands Programmatic Environmental Assessment⁴⁴ which applicants will draw direction from when developing strategic approaches in these and other connected wetlands.

Layering, Sequencing, and Integration:

Within the Initial Application, applicants must include a description of how the activity will layer with other projects, initiatives, or organizations in the same area to achieve the goal and objectives of the RFA. In the target geographic zone, this should particularly focus on linking between humanitarian and development assistance programming. The applicant's strategy and approach should take into account for that when they develop their activities.

The sequencing, layering, and integration of interventions under this award should consider work under implementation or planned by the host-country government, implementing partners, and other donors including USAID and other elements of the U.S. Government. In particular, the applicant should consider how they will sequence, layer, and integrate the DFSA with the upcoming USAID/Mali Health and nutrition programs⁴⁵ and other USAID programs in the planning stages.

⁴⁴ USAID (2018). USAID/Mali Wetlands Programmatic Environmental Assessment:
https://ecd.usaid.gov/document.php?doc_id=51713

⁴⁵ USAID (2019). USAID/Mali Health Request for Application (Household and Community Health and Health Systems Strengthening, Governance and Financing Activities, 72068819RFA00004): <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=313641>

Within their Initial Application, applicants are encouraged to identify existing platforms, such as the Malian social registry, or propose a cost effective and efficient participant registration and tracking system that will enable cross-sectoral coordination at the participant level and verification of service delivery throughout the life of the award. This system should also facilitate tracking the “number of direct participating households receiving multiple interventions by sector, including community assets built.” Any use of existing or custom-built databases should respect the principles of data protection to ensure the privacy and safety of the use of participants' personally identifiable data.

Within the Final Application, applicants should articulate a package of prioritized and focused interventions that will work together to address the most critical needs through both direct service provision, and working to strengthen the capacities of systems that support the participants and the communities.

Within the Final Application, applicants must lay out their intervention strategy, including how they will tailor a package of interventions for the different targeted individuals and communities. Given the centrality of nutrition to FFP's Global Strategy, applicants should sequence, layer, and integrate nutrition-sensitive approaches within activities, and collaborate with other USAID/Mali activities in this effort to prevent significant deterioration in nutritional status for the most vulnerable individuals within households (children, adolescents, and pregnant and lactating women). Partners should propose how to identify critical needs and ramp up nutrition services to fill important gaps which may emerge over the life of the award. Depending on context, health and nutrition may not be fully integrated throughout the entire zone of intervention, yet partners should propose how to identify critical needs and ramp up nutrition services to fill important gaps, which may emerge over the life of the award.

Coordination and Linkages:

Applicants cannot address every sectoral need of a targeted population. Thus, it is critical that the application describe how the approach will improve food and nutrition security for a population. Describe how the proposed activity will:

- (1) leverage existing public, private, and donor investments to achieve the goal;
- (2) complement the activities of the local government, and donor-facilitated health, nutrition, agriculture, natural resources management, and Climate Risk Management (CRM) interventions; and
- (3) support proposed strategies to leverage the [GFSS Mali Country Plan](#) or other USAID investments in the region to reduce hunger and extreme poverty in vulnerable populations.

Applicants should include strong and specific coordination approaches, and joint planning with a broad set of stakeholders to ensure activity complementarity, impact and sustainability, and a focused understanding of the potential impact of layering, integrating, and sequencing activities and interventions with both other humanitarian and development actors. This should go beyond information sharing and quarterly meetings and may include embedding technical experts in government or implementing agencies.

Applicants should also build on and support sustainable local systems and initiatives that are designed to support the most vulnerable such as the Jigiséméjiri Social Safety Net, the PRIA-Mali initiative, and other Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire (Food Security Commission) initiatives that may begin with the passage of the PolNSAN. Activities should also leverage existing public, private, and donor investments to achieve the goal and complement the activities of the local government, and donor-facilitated health, nutrition, agriculture, natural resources management, and climate risk management.⁴⁶ Applicants should also consider linking to efforts of current USAID partners operating in Central Mali that are utilizing innovative approaches to implement community nutrition interventions, outside of the traditional system, such as incorporating nutrition prevention efforts into livelihoods and village-savings group activities.

Addressing Resilience Challenges:

In coordination with Mali's *Resilience Development Objective 2: "Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable Communities and Households Increased"* and the Global Food Security Strategy Country Plan *Objective 2: Strengthen resilience among people and systems*, FFP is committed to strengthening the resilience of individuals, households, communities, and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses, including conflict. Mali is a USAID Resilience Focus Country. USAID's Resilience Policy and Programming Guidance and more information on resilience can be found at: <https://www.usaid.gov/resilience/resources>. Applicants must (1) identify the underlying causes (stresses) that impede recovery; (2) propose strategies to enhance human and social capital, mitigate risks through diversified livelihoods in a climate sensitive manner, increase assets, access to financial services, and promote financial inclusion; and, (3) articulate how the activity approach will contribute to resilience and disaster risk reduction, how those activities will be rolled out, and how improvements will be measured and reported. Applicants should describe how the activity will strengthen absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities as well as identify risks of maladaptation stemming from agricultural, man-made stressors (e.g., market price volatility, pests, conflict and resource constraints), geological, and climate-related⁴⁷ shocks and stressors.⁴⁸

USAID/Mali aims to coordinate all partner interventions in the Mission-targeted "Resilience Focus Zone" to coordinate to increase adaptive capacity (i.e., the ability to respond quickly and effectively to new circumstances) and improve the ability to address and reduce risk. The list of communes (districts) to be included in USAID/Mali's Resilience Zone is still to be finalized, but it will include significant overlap with the FFP target geographic zone. Resilience Focus Zone

⁴⁶ Applicants may use the USAID Mali Climate Risk Profile (2019) as a reference.

⁴⁷ When describing how activities will address relevant climate risks, applicants should also highlight approaches in the Environmental Safeguards Plan in Annex 18. Climate risk management is further described in the Environmental Compliance section below. Applicants may use the USAID Mali Climate Risk Profile (2019) as a reference.

⁴⁸ Absorptive capacity is the ability to minimize exposure or sensitivity to shocks and stresses (ex ante) where possible and to manage and recover quickly when exposed (ex post). Adaptive capacity is the ability to make proactive and informed choices based on changing environmental, climatic, social, political, and economic conditions. Transformative capacity includes system-level changes, such as investments or improvements in governance mechanisms, agroecological systems, infrastructure, formal and informal social protection mechanisms, basic service delivery, and policies/regulations. For more information on resilience capacities, please refer to the Global Food Security Strategy Technical Guidance for Objective 2: Strengthened Resilience Among People and Systems (available here: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/resource/global-food-security-strategy-guidance-on-resilience/>) and the reference materials cited in this document.

coordination means that all partners working in USAID/Mali's designated Resilience Zone are mandated to coordinate and harmonize their interventions in order to achieve the Agency goals for reducing the need for humanitarian assistance. To facilitate the collaborative process, all Resilience Focus Zone activities will be required to do the following:

- Proactively seek opportunities for joint programming that amplifies results;
- Describe joint interventions in annual work plans that clarify roles and responsibilities around specific programmatic linkages with other Resilience Focus Zone activities;
- Conduct joint site visits with other Resilience Focus Zone partners, when appropriate, to facilitate learning across activities;
- Actively participate in USAID partner meetings and learning events, including hosting those meetings when needed;
- Contribute to joint indicators linked to USAID/Mali's CDCS results framework (resilience), analysis, and the diffusion of reliable information in collaboration with other Resilience Focus Zone activities, the country government's reporting system, and other donors.
- Respond to information requests and taskers coming from USAID regarding Resilience Focus Zone coordination.

Learning and Refinement:

As part of the Initial Application, applicants must also describe how they will effectively tailor and use the refinement approach of the R&I model for Mali to better understand:

- needs, priorities, and opportunities, through community engagement and initial implementation;
- the nature of shocks and stressors with the potential to impact household and community level food security;
- capacities and gaps in local formal and informal institutions;
- the viability and fit to context of specific approaches;
- opportunities for complementarities with other actors working toward sustainable improvements in food security for the most vulnerable; and
- lessons learned from related programming, both prior and ongoing, including key successes, challenges, and needed adaptations or innovations to improve impact and sustainability going forward.

Applicants should use evidence gaps and uncertainties in their initial activity conceptual framework and proposed technical approaches, to serve as the foundation for lines of inquiry and other activities planned for the refinement period. Refinement period questions and activities should link to the activity's conceptual framework and have the potential to influence changes to targeting and the overall technical approach. The refinement approach should be woven into the applicant's technical approach, and applicants are strongly encouraged to review lessons learned from participant engagement strategies from R&I pilots (e.g., ensuring that beneficiaries are empowered as collaborators and active participants; balancing refinement and implementation timelines and methods). Management processes to support R&I should be detailed under Section D: Management and Staffing, while further detail on learning questions, needed assessments/studies, and refinement year activities and milestones should be expanded on in Annex 6: Activity Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting Plan.

d) Adaptive Management and Staffing (5 pages maximum)

The management section of applications must include the following:

The initial application must describe a management structure that ensures the efficient use of resources (See Annex 4), as well as effective and adaptive management, strong technical implementation, and administrative support. The management structure must demonstrate competency to implement the initial Activity Design, including competencies with both humanitarian and development programming, working in conflict settings and conflict-sensitive programming, semi-permissive and insecure environments, incorporating social and gender dynamics, and strong adaptive management approaches. The applicant must explain the management structure presented in the organizational chart; personnel management of expatriate and local staff; and lines of authority and communication between organizations and staff.

If sub-awardees or a consortium management model are proposed, applicants must describe how the partnerships will be organized and managed to use complementary capabilities most effectively. Applicants must specify the responsibilities of all principal organizations and the rationale for their selection (i.e., organizational strengths and weaknesses, technical expertise, etc.); proposed staff and reporting relationships within and between each of these organizations; and how the consortium will be structured to ensure cohesive and coordinated knowledge sharing, planning, decision-making, and implementation across roles and organizational boundaries. Note that sub-awardees may be on more than one application to this request, and applicants may sign non-exclusive letters of commitment with sub-awardees (international and local partners), if applicable.

The applicant must demonstrate the degree to which the applicant and all proposed consortium members or sub-awardees possess the depth and breadth of institutional capacity, technical expertise, and management systems to plan, implement and support the pathways and interventions described in the Technical Approach as reflected earlier in Section IV. The application should also outline how partnerships will support R&I, including the possible role of any research partners, if applicable, and how, in the case of major changes to the ToC, changes to management, staffing, and partnerships may be managed to better address capacity needs under a revised technical approach.

(1a) Adaptive Management Approach

In addition to the management structure, applicants must explain how their management approach will ensure holistic, integrated, and adaptive management.

This must include a description of:

- Planned consortium management approaches and processes that will foster integrated activity planning, implementation, and coordination within the proposed award. The applicant should also describe approaches to collaboration with other USAID-funded activities, especially resilience focused activities, working in Mali, as applicable, and with other external stakeholders, including government partners, other donor funded activities, private sector actors, local partners, and other change agents.

- Plan to maintain flexibility and agility in a dynamic context, including approach to incorporating shifts in program strategy/TOC into operations, logistics, partnerships/consortium arrangements and staff training.
- Adaptive management approaches and skills, at all levels of staffing including field agents, that will enable feedback cycles that foster experiential learning and analysis of data from assessments, surveys, research, and routine monitoring, as well as scenario planning around activity responses to anticipated shocks and/or changes in the political, social, environmental or market context. The applicant should describe the management processes that will enable the application of analysis and learning in adjustments to the ToC and other design elements, adaptations to ongoing implementation and management strategies, and updates to learning strategies and plans. These processes are expected to be carried out intensively during initial refinement, but continue throughout the life of the award. The summary description in the main application text may be further detailed in the Activity Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting Plan, Annex 6.
- Plan for adaptive management skills needed for field agents related to recruitment and training as well as how field agent feedback will be incorporated into adaptive management.
- Performance management strategies that measure the effectiveness of proposed interventions, and how these interventions contribute to achieve the intended outcomes in a sustainable fashion. Understanding that the best designed activities will have very limited impact without quality implementation, performance management strategies should include a description of how the applicant will monitor for, identify, and, through linkages with adaptive management strategies, address implementation quality issues throughout the life of the award.
- Monitoring & adaptive management for unintended consequences. In the initial application, FFP only requires applicants to describe its M&E approach considering the security situation and operational context. The abridged M&E plan should describe how the applicant will carry out performance monitoring both for adaptive management and reporting, how it will monitor the quality of implementation, and what M&E capacity it would require to implement its M&E. If additional narrative space is needed, applicants may provide additional information on the M&E approach in Annex 5. The applicant will be required to submit a detailed M&E plan with the full application, including a M&E budget disaggregated by key line items.
- Safety and security of project staff, particularly field staff.
- How the partner will plan for potential shifts from development to more humanitarian-focused approaches, including management, staffing, etc.

(1b) Staffing and Key Personnel

Applicants must provide a comprehensive staffing plan that demonstrates the ability to recruit highly qualified, technical, managerial, M&E, commodity management (as applicable) and learning staff that will be sufficient to implement the proposed interventions outlined in the Technical Approach and Management Approach sections of the application. The staffing plan should demonstrate:

- How staff, and consultants as required, will be encouraged to work collaboratively across teams

- How R&I will be supported with the appropriate technical expertise, and the increased need for specialized skills during initial refinement. The plan should also address how the activity will adjust staffing support based on learning during refinement
- How headquarters management and technical advisory staff will be actively engaged to support key personnel and field staff.
- Field level staffing and footprint to mitigate safety and security risks to partners and participants

Core competencies expected of staff

Core competencies described below are intended to reflect critical skills, knowledge and capacities within the staff of the award. Core competencies should reflect the proposed Activity Design and the Goal and Objectives of this RFA. Core competencies may rest within key personnel or the senior project management personnel⁴⁹.

- Demonstrated ability or experience to work in humanitarian and development settings, including working in conflict settings, semi-permissive, and insecure environments
- In-depth understanding and capacity to respond to Malian gender, age, and other locally significant socio-cultural factors in the context of food security programming;
- Demonstrated capacity in Positive Youth Development⁵⁰: including youth as key partners in all development efforts, taking into account the disparities and constraints faced by the different youth cohorts related to the differing nutritional and livelihood needs by sex, gender, age, and life situation;
- Demonstrated capacity to lead the collection, analysis, and utilization of information from a broad range of sources to monitor, evaluate, and learn to improve implementation;
- Skills in participatory learning & action and facilitating collaborative problem solving;
- Ability to foster commitment and build capacity among activity staff and in-country actors to ensure gender and youth integration and empowerment;
- In-depth understanding of food security programming;
- Quality control experience and capacities that ensure technically rigorous, food security integration and collaboration;
- Demonstrated understanding of a range of Social and Behavior Change (SBC) approaches that address change in social norms and structures as well as individual behaviors, and that go beyond messaging to catalyzing community action;
- Strong understanding of specific Malian political and economic considerations, including decentralization and governance issues as the commune level;
- Necessary staff skills should include adaptive management, integration and coordination, stakeholder engagement, capacity strengthening, community level governance and planning, facilitation, and conflict mitigation and conflict-sensitive approaches.

Key Personnel

Five (5) Key Personnel for Mali are envisioned under this RFA, which represents less than five percent of the anticipated number of employees in this award, based on an analysis of

⁴⁹ The TOPS 'Core Competency' series provides explanations of the basic skills and knowledge senior technical staff should possess, as well as suggested language for recruitment <https://www.fsnnetwork.org/core-competency-series>

⁵⁰ <http://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development>

comparable current awards. Within this RFA, specified Key Personnel include: Chief of Party (COP); M&E Lead; and Collaboration, Learning and Adapting Lead. Guidance on these positions is below. Applicants are expected to identify and propose two (2) additional key personnel at the Initial Application stage that reflect the proposed design, activity objectives, and approach. The two additional key personnel positions will be evaluated based on demonstration of core competencies and clear experience that relates directly to the proposed Activity Design and Adaptive Management and Staffing Approach.

Each key personnel position requires USAID approval as noted in the substantial involvement provision in Section II – Federal Award Information, 5. Substantial Involvement. All key personnel should be full-time positions (40-hour workweek) throughout the life of the award; however, if applicants anticipate all positions are not necessary at 100 percent level of effort (LoE) for the life of the award, applicants may propose and justify a key personnel plan with varying LoE for applicable positions. Required attributes for all key personnel include strong adaptive management and interpersonal skills, mentoring and facilitation skills, the ability to network and communicate with a wide range of stakeholders, and experience working overseas in low-resource environments.

Applicants must submit signed non-exclusive letters of commitment with key personnel, if applicable.

Chief of Party (COP): The COP is responsible for the overall management and representation of the activity. For management, the COP must have proven leadership skills managing projects of a similar size and scope in developing countries, ideally in conflict-affected and non-permissive environments. The COP should have demonstrated experience recruiting, developing, and managing staff, as well as experience managing programmatic and financial reporting. As the person responsible for the representation of the activity, the COP must have demonstrated ability to build and maintain relationships with host governments, donors, other donor-funded projects and stakeholders, local organizations, and partners. Additionally, excellent oral and written communication skills in English, and other language(s) as needed, is required. A master's degree in a relevant field (e.g. development studies, international relations, agriculture, nutrition, public health, business administration) and a minimum of 10 years of progressively increasing management responsibility in international development projects is required. Two years of applicable experience can substitute for a master's degree.

Monitoring and Evaluation Lead: The M&E Lead will provide technical expertise and leadership to generate and analyze quality evidence and data through monitoring, assessments, and evaluations. The M&E Lead is a technician with demonstrated experience in building or strengthening monitoring systems, quantitative and qualitative analysis, survey and sample design and effectively promoting evidence-based program management. A master's degree in a quantitative field (economics, agricultural/development economics, statistics, biostatistics; nutrition, applied sociology, anthropology, or other relevant subject) with significant training in quantitative methods plus eight years relevant experience, or a PhD in any of the stated field of study above, with at least six years relevant work experience is required. Additional required qualifications include demonstrated experience in leading the M&E of a large award, knowledge about TOCs, logic models, food and nutrition security indicators, M&E plans, data quality

assurance, data utilization, and gender integration into M&E and experience and expertise in developing and operationalizing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan (please see the FFP Policy and Guidance on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for the components of an M&E plan). Experience conducting M&E activities in conflict and non-permissive environments is highly desirable.

Collaboration, Learning and Adapting (CLA) Lead: The CLA Lead will work closely with all staff to ensure collaboration and learning with other activities in the applicants selected implementation area. This staff will ensure the activity includes active, intentional and adaptive learning within and across interventions, and will play a critical role in incorporating ‘refinement’ activities and learning into implementation. This includes but is not limited to U.S. Government, host country government, international donors, multilateral organizations, and private sector investments. Additionally, the CLA Lead will improve peer-to-peer learning, knowledge sharing and application, activity-based capacity strengthening, evidence and data utilization, and CLA in support of adaptive management both within and beyond initial refinement. The CLA Lead will also be expected to ensure appropriate and continued coordination and joint-planning with other USAID and donor activities, specifically the USAID Mali Resilience portfolio, host-government initiatives, and private sector engagement. Given the significant number of humanitarian and development activities planned and ongoing in the targeted geographic area, USAID expects significant time and expertise to be dedicated to coordination of activities. Demonstrated experience in facilitating learning and knowledge sharing processes, in establishing and managing dynamic feedback systems to capture experiential learning and unintended consequences, and fostering collaboration across teams or organizations is required. Additionally, excellent oral and written communication skills in English, and other language(s) as needed, is required. An advanced degree (PhD or Master’s) plus a minimum of three years relevant work experience or a Bachelor’s degree and a minimum of five years relevant experience required.

Additional two (2) Applicant proposed Key Personnel:

Applicants should submit short (one paragraph) position descriptions for the additional two (2) key personnel proposed. Applicants must submit CVs for the two additional key personnel that demonstrate academic qualifications and experience that reflects the specific position description. An advanced degree (PhD or Master’s) plus a minimum of three years relevant work experience or a Bachelor’s degree and a minimum of five years relevant experience are highly preferred.

During the issues letter phase, the Apparently Successful Applicant may be requested to identify and provide Curriculum Vitaes (CV) for other key technical staff, as available.

(2) Local Partner Inclusion and Capacity Strengthening

Applicants must allocate 25 percent of the total budget to local partners in sub-awards or sub-contracts. Local partners may include, but are not limited to, local government, local private sector, local NGOs, non-profit organizations, formal or informal community-based organizations, and/or civil society groups. Partnering directly with local leaders, networks, and institutions in Mali will better enable and empower communities to respond to acute and chronic

food security challenges in Mali with smarter, more resilient, and home-grown solutions. The applicant must include a strong approach for including local partners, which may be consortium members, sub-awardees, sub contracts or research with which the project will engage over the life of the award to increase local capacity to manage activities and increase the potential for sustainability and scalability over the life of the award.

Applicants must consider strategies to progressively shift development priority setting and response to local actors. Applicants should consider challenges and opportunities facing local partners and describe a context specific approach to build capacity to respond to challenges and take advantage of opportunities. USAID resources on Local Sustainability can be found online [here](#).

e) Cost Application (no page limit)

The cost application must be emailed to FY20-DFSA-RFA-Mali@usaid.gov with the technical application. While no page limit exists for the full cost application, applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible while still providing the necessary details. The cost application must illustrate the entire period of performance, using the budget format shown in the SF-424A and include a comprehensive budget and narrative (Phase 1) and detailed budget and narrative (Phase 3). Standard Forms, including the SF-424, SF-424A and SF-424B; can be accessed electronically at www.grants.gov. Failure to accurately complete these forms could result in the rejection of the application. Applicants must propose a clear approach for 25 percent of the total budget to be allocated to local partners in sub-awards or sub-contracts. Local partners may include, but are not limited to, local government, local private sector, local NGOs, non-profit organizations, formal or informal community-based organizations, and/or civil society groups.. Applicants should demonstrate how they will progressively handover management and resources to local partners over the life of the activity. Applicants should also describe how they will support and monitor local organizations to facilitate the transition. Applicants are not required to identify all local sub-awardees at the time of initial application.

For more information on the cost application, please see Section V. Application Review 2. Review of cost application. Cost applications include general budgets such as the SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, a comprehensive budget, detailed budget, and budget narrative. Cost applications (i.e., budget components) are not subject to the page limitation of the application, and will not be evaluated alongside the technical application. Cost applications must be in U.S. dollars only and include budget details as described below for the applicant, each member of the consortium (if applicable), sub-awardees, and/or sub-contractors. While maintaining activity quality, applicants should seek to minimize their administrative and support costs for managing the activity to maximize the funding available for interventions. More details on the budget annexes can be found in Section IV. Application and Submission Information 1. Application Format e) Annexes.

Cash, Voucher and LRIP information must be emailed to FY20-DFSA-RFA-Mali@usaid.gov: the following information is required: month, country, total request amount, program area or element, intervention (the intervention should be put in the activity column) fund type, and modality. If requesting LRIP, the following information is required: country, region/sub-region,

commodity, country of purchase, country of origin, commodity MT amount, commodity amount, transportation, storage, and distribution costs.

f) Environmental Compliance (Including Climate Risk Management)

USAID requires both an environmental impact assessment procedure (as codified in 22 CFR 216, Agency Environmental Procedures) and Climate Risk Management for USAID Projects and Activities (as required by ADS 201mal). FFP requirements for this solicitation are defined in the FY20 FFP RFA-level Initial Environmental Examination (RFA-IEE)⁵¹ which described the overall compliance strategy for both pre-award (i.e., during applicant activity design) and post-award for the development food security activity. Applicants at Phase 1 are expected to review these requirements and analyses, and Apparently Successful Applicants (ASA) selected in Phase 3 must submit a brief summary of how their proposed activity will meet these requirements in a four-page Environmental Safeguards Plan, as elaborated in Annex 18.

g) Phase 1 - Initial Application Annexes

The following is a list of annexes that must be included with the application. Any additional information provided in an annex will be considered supplemental and not considered in the scoring of the application. Please note, applicants may submit additional annexes as supporting documentation. Annexes, beyond those required below, do not replace the required application documents. All Annexes must be emailed to FY20-DFSA-RFA-Mali@usaid.gov. Please note that only Annexes 1-12 are required as part of Phase I Initial Application.

Annex Type
1. Comprehensive Budget (no page limit)
2. Comprehensive Budget Narrative (no page limit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motor Vehicle Procurement Table
3. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)
4. Resource Management (if applicable)
5. Abbreviated Log Frame with high-level results, High-level ToC graphic/narrative <u>- three pages maximum for ToC narrative at Initial Application. There is no page limit for the Abbreviated Log Frame and high level TOC graphic.)</u>

⁵¹ Please note that a FY20 FFP RFA-level IEE is under development and will be available to incorporate into Final Application and award language.

6. Activity Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting Plan (five pages maximum)
7. Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan (no page limit)
8. Intervention Area Map(s) (no page limit)
9. Applicant Organizational Chart (and information on consortium or sub-awardee structure, if applicable) (no page limit)
10. CVs for Chief of Party, M&E Lead, CLA Lead, and two (2) additional key personnel (partner discretion) (three pages maximum per CV)
11. Letter(s) of Commitment
12. Glossary and List of Acronyms

Annex 1. Comprehensive Budget: The comprehensive budget must incorporate all planned costs by object class category, and funding type (funding source) for each year of the activity. Object class categories are logical groupings of costs, such as staff salaries, fringe benefits, non-employee labor, travel and transport, overseas allowances, supplies, staff training, equipment, USAID branding and marking, sub-awards, contracts, audits, construction, other direct costs, total direct costs, and indirect costs. Please see the [suggested budget format](#) available on the FFP website. The comprehensive budget must list funding types for each program area or element the partner proposes interventions within (see Appendix I for definitions). All costs must also be associated with an applicable funding source.

Annex 2. Comprehensive Budget Narrative: The budget narrative justifies proposed expenses and explains how costs were estimated. Applicants must provide their rationale for cost development, such as the methodology and assumptions used to determine individual costs. For ease of review, budget narratives must follow the order of line items in the comprehensive budget and should contain clear explanations. The budget narrative should include the motor vehicle procurement table, which should cover the information listed in Section VIII, paragraph 3.

Annex 3. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA): If applicable, please include the most recent U.S. Government-issued NICRA.

Annex 4. Resource Management (if applicable)

If applicable to the proposed approach, applicants must include a logistical management overview of any proposed resource transfers.

Food transfers: Applicants proposing commodity distributions must provide details on the ration amount, how this amount was derived, and delivery mechanisms that demonstrate the feasibility of the approach relative to the scale. Specific consideration should be given to proximity of distribution sites, security, and risk management. Staffing should reflect adequate support for technical delivery of resource transfers. Additionally, applicants proposing to include commodity distribution should address commodity-related issues including but not limited to, commodity type, commodity substitutions (if select planned commodities are not available from the U.S. or through LRIP), certifying commodities meet programmatic and/or contractual specifications and requirements, port/warehouse/road/rail infrastructure, commodity management, including fumigation, and commodity transportation (including inland and internal transport). Any LRIP interventions should describe the proposed procurement process (including relevant source and origin information), safety and quality assurance, and a guarantee that the FFP LRIP policy will be adhered to. Commodity distributions need to be planned and implemented in accordance with [FFPIB 19-02](#) “Procedure to Determine Compliance with the Conditions of the Bellmon Amendment.” Staffing should reflect adequate support for technical delivery of resource transfers.

Cash or Vouchers: Applicants proposing cash and/or vouchers must provide details on the transfer amount, how this amount was derived, delivery mechanisms, and any conditions to receive the transfer, demonstrating feasibility of the approach relative to the scale. Specific consideration should be given to proximity of outlets (cash or retailers), liquidity, security, and risk management. *Staffing should reflect adequate support for technical delivery of resource transfers.*

Annex 5. Abbreviated Log Frame, High-level ToC Graphic, and High-level ToC narrative (three pages for ToC narrative and no page limit for the Abbreviated Log Frame and high level TOC graphic.): The LogFrame consists of a matrix, often with five columns (identified below) and many rows, summarizing the key elements of the activity, namely:

- a. Narrative summary: The activity’s hierarchy of objectives, where each row corresponds to an activity Goal, Purpose, and Sub-purpose;
- b. Assumptions: Any conditions external to the proposed activity, but that must be accounted for to achieve results; the contextual environment and key external factors that are critical to success and must reflect the reality on the ground;
- c. Indicators: How the activity’s high-level achievements will be monitored and evaluated. In identifying indicators, applicants must review the [FFP Indicators](#). Only Goal, Purpose, and Sub-Purpose indicators are required for the LogFrame with the Initial Application.
- d. Indicators Targets: Applicants must provide quantitative targets (in percentage point change from the reference point) for baseline/evaluation indicators. These targets must be linked to the context, food security and nutritional analyses, and the ToC. For all other indicators, targets must be ambitious yet achievable.
- e. Data sources: Where the indicator data will come from, and how/when it will be collected.

An applicant's Abbreviated LogFrame will include high-level indicators to monitor and evaluate the performance of the activity. Applicants should keep in mind that FFP has a list of required and required if applicable [performance indicators](#). These should be reviewed carefully during the development of an applicant's LogFrame. Only Goal, Purpose, and Sub-purpose indicators are required for the LogFrame with the Initial Application. FFP anticipates working with the ASA to develop a comprehensive LogFrame with all relevant indicators as outlined in the [FFP Policy and Guidance on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting](#) with the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan.

At the Initial Application stage, partners are expected to propose indicators and life-of-award targets for high-level impacts that reflect the goal, objectives, and approach of the Mali DFSA. These indicators may be derived from key FFP baseline indicators.⁵² Note that FFP typically uses population-based surveys to measure the performance of an activity. Therefore, the impact level indicator targets will be measured at the significance level of the target population, rather than only at the level of activity participants. The targets for goal- and objective-level indicators should be achievable yet meaningful, and should reflect the operating environment for M&E in Mali's center and north.

The Co-Creation Workshop will be used, in part, to ensure mutual agreement and understanding of key activity indicators and targets, with final impact- and objective-level indicators and life-of-award targets incorporated into the Final Application. For key resources on FFP indicator selection and target setting, applicants can refer to the USAID/FFP List of Indicators⁵³ and recent updates to the list,⁵⁴ the USAID/FFP Indicator Handbook I for Baseline/Final Evaluations,⁵⁵ and key, accompanying guidance to assist with indicator challenges⁵⁶ such as qualitative and subjective indicators.⁵⁷ Applicants may also select custom indicators based on context or specific approaches and expected needs for activity management.

Note: FFP does not require applicants to submit an Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) as part of their application; successful applicants develop this tool during and after the M&E workshop. The M&E workshop typically takes place within three months of the start date of an award.

⁵² USAID/FFP (2015). USAID/FFP Indicators Handbook I for Baseline/Final Evaluations: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Part%20I_Baseline%20and%20Final%20Evaluation_04.13.2015.pdf

⁵³ USAID/FFP (2019). USAID/FFP Indicators List: <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1866/ffp-indicators-list>

⁵⁴ USAID/FFP (2019). USAID/FFP Indicators List with highlighted changes: https://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/2017_FFP_Indicators_List_091117.pdf

⁵⁵ USAID/FFP (2015). USAID/FFP Indicators Handbook I for Baseline/Final Evaluations: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Part%20I_Baseline%20and%20Final%20Evaluation_04.13.2015.pdf

⁵⁶ TOPS/FSNNetwork (2017). Stakeholder Consultation on Indicator Challenges for Food for Peace-funded Development Food Security Activities: <https://www.fsnnetwork.org/stakeholder-consultation-indicator-challenges-food-peace-funded-development-food-security-activities>

⁵⁷ FSIN (2015). Qualitative Data and Subjective Indicators for Resilience Measurement. <https://www.fsnnetwork.org/qualitative-data-and-subjective-indicators-resilience-measurement>

Annex 6. Activity Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) Plan: Applicants must develop an activity CLA that identifies how the activity will ensure robust cycles of learning, both during the initial refinement as well as throughout the life of the award. The activity CLA plan should seek to link evidence gaps and new knowledge to improved activity design, strengthened implementation planning and quality, and better preparedness and responsiveness to local context. The CLA plan should elaborate on management approaches to support collaborating, learning, and adaptive management. This annex should link to key sections of the Design Approach to articulate clear planning for:

- a. robust partner engagement and consultative processes with communities, local government, civil society, other donor funded projects, and local researchers and academics;
- b. identifying and filling knowledge gaps, including ongoing efforts to understand and assess local context, and community needs and capacities; as well as small-scale operational research and pilots of new approaches and interventions.
- c. capturing and sharing results, lessons learned, reflections, scenario planning, and promising practices;
- d. ensuring learning is operationalized in each year's Pipeline and Resource Estimated Proposal (PREP)
- e. ensuring analysis and application of innovations and new evidence, findings from reflection and scenario planning practices, and knowledge sharing to improve activity processes, approaches and overall effectiveness;
- f. strengthening capacity of staff, partners, and communities based on best practices and program learning.

The activity CLA should also provide a timetable of key milestones during the refinement year. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to indicate how the activity will learn from failures and how this will be subsequently addressed in the adaptive management of the activity.

Annex 7. Risk Assessment, Management, and Mitigation Plan: Applicants must examine any potential risk related to fraud, corruption, and/or mismanagement. This assessment should demonstrate that due consideration has been given to ensuring the security and protection of all participants, dependent on the intervention proposed. Applicants should further include plans for addressing issues of high turnover of both international and local staff, given the likelihood of this presenting a key issue for the targeted geographies in Mali.

Applicant must also discuss the local market factors and potential risks that may result from distribution of commodities, and/or cash/vouchers. Additionally, applicants must complete an assessment of risk as it relates to the proposed modalities and physical security of participants and relevant mitigation measures. Specifically, the assessment should examine potential risk related to fraud, corruption, and mismanagement. Applicants should demonstrate that due consideration has been given to ensuring the security and protection of all participants, especially with respect to: timing and location of distributions; amount of food or cash transfers or value of food vouchers of which participants will take possession; person(s) responsible for pickup; distance to distribution sites, etc. This assessment will be included as an annex. A sample risk matrix from the Remote Cash Project can be found on the [CALP website](#). Additionally, the USAID Office of Inspector General has a [fraud prevention and compliance guide](#).

Information on the status of the Host Country Agreement must be included under management and logistics as well. Please see Section VIII – Other Information, 2. Host Country Agreement.

Annex 8. Intervention Area Map(s): These maps should show any proposed areas of implementation and ongoing activity areas at the cercle level by the applicant, consortium members, or others if applicable. They should clarify who is expected to implement in the areas.

Annex 9. Applicant Organizational Chart: The organizational chart should include the structure of the prime, all members of the consortium, and sub-awardees. If possible, it should include locations, supervisory hierarchies, and relationships between all participants. The Organizational Chart should specify how the organization will adapt structurally based on refinement to the approach.

Annex 10. CVs of Key Personnel: The application should include CVs of key personnel, including the COP, M&E Lead, and CLA Lead, and two (2) additional key personnel proposed by applicant, including brief position descriptions for additional key personnel.

Annex 11. Letters of Commitment: Letters of non-exclusive commitment from key personnel are required.

Annex 12. Glossary and List of Acronyms: Please include a glossary of any application specific terms and acronyms with definitions, as needed.

h) Phase 2 - Oral Presentation

The Phase 2 Oral Presentation will follow Phase I Initial Application process and will be scored separately from the Phase 1 - Initial Application. The Applicant should assume Selection Committee present at the presentation have reviewed their Initial Applications and therefore the presentation should build on the concepts introduced in the Initial Application, highlighting the three topic areas described below. At least one proposed Key Personnel must participate, preferably the Chief of Party. The Key Personnel must be a presenter for at least a part of the presentation (i.e., they do not have to be the primary presenter).

USAID will not be responsible for costs associated with travel or presentation costs.

Oral Presentations and time for questions and answers is expected to be approximately two (2) hours. Applicants will be notified of the location, date and time of the presentation after review of written application. Oral Presentations may be conducted remotely. There is no specified order by which the information must be presented, although Applicants should be cognizant of the weighted importance of each of the Application Review criteria described for Phase 2 Oral Presentations and set forth in Section V.

One applicant will be selected from the Phase 2 Oral Presentation as the Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA).⁵⁸ The ASA will be notified by letter within approximately two weeks after the completion of oral presentations to establish a date and time to hold begin scheduling for the Phase 3 Co-Creation Workshop.

(1) Oral Presentation - Activity Design

Each Selected Applicant must present an explanation of their approach to achieving the goals and objectives of each of the components set forth in the Program Description. In describing this activity design, the Applicant must:

- Clearly articulate why the Applicant's high-level ToC and the proposed design approach are feasible conceptually and operationally to achieve the Goal and Objectives;
- Demonstrate how the Applicant will integrate youth and gender perspective discussed in the Design Approach;
- Clearly articulate approach to incorporating adaptation and learning, including the R&I Approach;
- Demonstrate how the "Do-No-Harm" and conflict-sensitivity will be applied and the Applicant's approach will maintain the sustainability of the approach;

(2) Oral Presentation - Adaptive Management & Staffing

Applicants should expound from the written Initial Application to explain, within the context of the design approach, the proposed organizational management, staffing, and capacity to operate efficiently and effectively in the target geographic zone of Mali. During the presentation, the applicants should describe how they intend to carry out activities by explaining:

- How the Applicant's approach will ensure effective coordination and collaboration with various partners as applicable, including the Government of Mali, other non-state organizations, and other USAID projects/activities;
- How the Applicant intends to engage with and build capacity of local partners (including consortium members) and include local communities throughout implementation;
- Defined roles and responsibilities of the Home Office and the field-based staff;
- How the Applicant intends to ensure access and flexibility in conflict-affected areas;
- How the Applicant's staffing plan and mix of staffing skills and knowledge will enable the Applicant to implement the proposed design approach effectively;
- How the Applicant will remain adaptable and refine management and staffing based on refinement to the technical interventions.

(3) Oral Presentation - Proposed Collaborative Design Approach

Applicants should explain an approach to co-design that reflects the timeline and general process described in the RFA, including a Co-Creation Workshop and the R&I process. The Applicant should describe how they envision the collaborative application design process and early engagement with USAID post-award, specifically coordination and communication with USAID and the role of the Applicant's organization. The response should detail the organization's experience with and approach to co-design processes.

⁵⁸ Per 2 CFR 700.1, Apparently Successful Applicant is defined as the applicant for USAID funding recommended for an award after the merit review, but who has not yet been awarded cooperative agreement award by the Agreement Officer. Apparently Successful Applicant status confers no right and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award, which still must be obligated by the Agreement Officer.

Notification of Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA)

Soon after the last Phase 2 Oral Presentation, USAID plans to inform the ASA if its application has been selected to proceed to Phase 3 Final Application and begin scheduling and arrangements for the Co-Creation Workshop. FFP will share an Issues Letter with the ASA, along with the invitation to proceed to Phase 3. Some issues may be addressed during the Co-Creation Workshop, but all identified issues must be addressed at the time of Final Application submission.

i) Phase 3 - Final Application

No funding will be made available prior to the award of the Cooperative Agreement. Applicants, including the organization selected to collaboratively develop the Program Description, are responsible for all costs incurred prior to the award of the Cooperative Agreement, including travel and all other costs related to the oral presentation phase and Co-Creation Workshop. Once the award is signed, the implementing partner may start incurring costs.

(1) Co-Creation Workshop

Approximately two weeks after the ASA notification, a collaborative workshop will be hosted by USAID in Bamako, Mali and is anticipated to be approximately one week. This workshop will be attended by the ASA (including consortium partners as applicable), USAID, and potentially other stakeholders.

The purpose of the workshop is to:

- bring together key stakeholders to further define the design approach and final Program Description for Cooperative Agreement;
- ensure early start-up of activities

Additional information regarding the logistics and content of the workshop will be provided as part of the ASA Notification Letter.

(2) Final Application

Following the Co-Creation Workshop, the ASA will have approximately one month to continue to work remotely to refine its approach and finalize the Application and accompanying Annexes. The Final Application will include additional detail to the Initial Application as described below and necessary Issues Letter revisions. USAID will review these documents and may provide additional clarification questions. The ASA will have one week to respond and submit its final application. Per USAID's requirements, the final technical and cost/business applications will be reviewed and an award will be drafted and submitted to the ASA for review.

Please note below that the revised Final Application allows for additional pages to give the ASA space to provide a more detailed approach based on co-creation process and engagement with USAID. The general content for each section will not change (except for Participant Targeting, see below) and should respond to the instructions in this section and reflect the discussion and

decisions made during the pre-award Co-Creation Workshop. Furthermore, additional Annexes described above in this Section (e) *Annexes* will be reviewed as supplemental information for final review.

Cover Page (1 page)

Executive Summary (2 pages)

Activity Design (45 pages)

Adaptive Management and Staffing (12 pages)

Cost Application (no page limit, see requirements in paragraph e)

Environmental Compliance (see requirements in paragraph f, above)

Annexes (see paragraph g)

(3) Final Application Annexes

Based on the pre-award Co-Creation Workshop discussion,

Below are Only required at Phase 3 for the Apparently Successful Applicant to submit after the Co-Creation Workshop as part of the Final Application.

13. Safety and Security Plan (no page limit)
14. Past Performance Supporting Documentation, including the Past Performance Reference Questionnaire (Appendix II) (no page limit)
15. Detailed Budget (no page limit)
16. Detailed Budget Narrative (no page limit) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motor Vehicle Procurement Table
17. Gender, Youth, and Social Dynamics Analysis Summary (four pages maximum)
18. Environmental Safeguards Plan (four pages maximum)
19. Monitoring & Evaluation Plan (five pages maximum)
20. Final Log Frame, ToC graphic, and ToC narrative (upload LogFrame and ToC graphic as separate documents) (six page maximum for ToC narrative)
21. Participant Targeting (3 page limit)

Annex 13. Safety and Security Plan: The Applicant must submit as an attachment, a Safety and Security Plan as a part of their application. The Safety and Security Plan must be based on a credible threat analysis and risk assessment. The plan must provide a coherent, integrated

security plan, which demonstrates that the Applicant has undertaken a thoughtful review of their security needs and includes an analysis of the various elements of a security system showing how threats will be mitigated. The Safety and Security Plan must include a point of contact to liaise with USAID/Mali's Partner Liaison Security Officer (PLSO) and answer questions or provide clarifications regarding security throughout the life of the program. The Applicant is encouraged to acquire professional advice from an expert of its choosing to assist in establishing an overall security plan/system.

Annex 14. Past Performance Documentation: Apparently Successful Applicants will submit past performance documentation, found in Appendix II of this RFA.

Annex 15. Detailed Budget: A [suggested budget format](#) is available on the FFP website. All budgets must be completed on a fiscal year basis. Applicants may use budget formats they have developed that contain the requested information or use budget formats, as appropriate, from other sources such as www.grants.gov. Please note that, per ADS303MAW ([USAID Implementation of Construction Activities](#)), construction activities must be detailed as an explicit section within the budget and budget narrative, see Section V. Application Review 2. Review of Cost Application) Construction, for more details on construction requirements under cooperative agreements. Note that per ADS 312, for restricted goods, the applicant must ensure that they are identified in each budget and follow up with any approvals, as required. As part of this application, 25 percent of the total budget must be allocated to local partners in sub-awards or sub-contracts. Local partners may include, but are not limited to, local government, local private sector, local NGOs, non-profit organizations, formal or informal community-based organizations, and/or civil society groups.

Annex 16. Detailed Budget Narrative: A [suggested budget narrative format](#) is available on the FFP website. The budget narrative justifies proposed expenses and explains how costs were estimated. Applicants must provide their rationale for cost development, such as the methodology and assumptions used to determine individual costs. For ease of review, budget narratives must follow the order of line items in the detailed budget and should contain clear explanations. The budget narrative should include the motor vehicle procurement table, which should cover the information listed in Section VIII, paragraph 3.

Annex 17. Gender, Youth, and Social Dynamics Analysis Summary: Consistent with USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (USAID 2012), all FFP multi-year development food security activities are required to complete a gender, youth, and social dynamics (GYSD) analysis within the first year, to inform design and strengthen programming. In this summary, the applicant should discuss illustrative points (three to four) along the proposed ToC where the applicant anticipates existing norms or relations around gender, youth, and social dynamics could facilitate or impede progress towards results and provide examples of information that would be collected in order to clarify the issues identified. Applicants are encouraged to take into consideration the interplay of gender and other social dimensions such as age, ethnicity, and status (displaced, reintegrated, returnees, victims of violence, etc.) that play a role in determining both opportunities and constraints for women, men, girls, and boys. The summary should also include the makeup of the team the applicant anticipates would conduct the gender analysis, a discussion of the tools likely to be

used for data collection, an estimated budget, and the process the applicant would use to incorporate analysis findings into the ToC and implementation plan.

Applicants will not be restricted to the specific details discussed in the summary should their application be awarded, but it should be evident from the summary that the applicant has:

- (1) an understanding of what a GYSD analysis entails within the context of an FFP activity,
- (2) the capacity to carry out the GYSD analysis, and
- (3) the intention to incorporate the analysis findings into the activity, and a practical means to do so.

Applicants should refer to [ADS 205: Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle](#) and the [Technical References on Gender](#) for more information.

FFP will host a three-day Gender, Youth and Social Dynamics consultation in the initial months of the award to bring together implementing partner staff with local leaders and government officials to explore gender, youth, and social dynamic issues and objectives and programming principles related to food insecurity and malnutrition in the selected geographic area and intended targeted participants. The consultation: (1) prepares Implementing Partner (IP) staff to apply a gender and youth lens to their activity-level Theory Of Changes (TOC), (2) lays the groundwork for development food security activity gender analyses that hone in on areas of the TOC that are most critical for gender and youth, and (3) builds a committed cohort to address GYSD throughout the life of the activity. This workshop enhances the awardee's ability to identify key themes and questions to investigate during the first year GYSD Analysis. The consultation will lay the groundwork for the Year 1 GYSD Analysis and for continuing collaboration between partner staff and local leaders in ensuring gender issues are addressed effectively and inclusively in all activity interventions. Partners will be asked to bring a field team that includes their activity's technical staff who understand the technical areas of the award, and at least one senior manager.

Annex 18. Environmental Safeguards Plan: Consistent with USAID's [Agency Environmental Procedures \(22 CFR 216\)](#) and [Climate Risk Management for USAID Projects and Activities \(ADS 201mal\)](#), USAID programming must properly consider and minimize the potential for environmental impact and susceptibility to climate risks. For this RFA, applicants are expected to design innovative approaches which promote environmental and climate risk management to improve and sustain food and nutrition security of vulnerable populations, as articulated in the IRs under both SO1 and SO2 of the [FFP 2016-2025 Food Assistance and Food Security Strategy](#). Applicants should also reference and incorporate findings from the Mali Climate Risk Profile (2019) as part of their Environmental Safeguards Plan.

The Environmental Safeguards Plan must thus summarize:

1. How strategies that reduce climate risks *to* the activity and environmental impacts *of* the activity have been integrated into program design;
2. How funds for environmental risk management have been allocated in the detailed/comprehensive budgets and described in the budget narrative;

3. How outcomes of the Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) will inform the performance monitored through the Log Frame and IPTT in M&E systems⁵⁹;
4. How staffing capacity for oversight of environmental compliance and climate risk management requirements will be ensured over the life of the activity and how those staff will coordinate and integrate with broader project management.

The [FY2020 FFP RFA-level Initial Environmental Examination \(RFA-IEE\)](#)⁶⁰ provides direction on environmental compliance and climate risk management procedures for both pre-award (i.e., Environmental Safeguards Plan) and post-award (e.g., Supplemental IEE, Climate Risk Management screening, PERSUAPs, Environmental Status Reports, etc) requirements. This RFA-IEE is a mandatory reference for environmental compliance and climate risk management of FFP development activities.

For successful applicants, a series of carefully thought out requirements (“Conditions” in the RFA-IEE) will be the responsibility of the awardee to ensure sufficient capacity to meet the demands. Especially for applicants that are new to FFP, in order to understand the full suite of responsibilities upon award, careful attention should be given to review the various Conditions of the RFA-IEE.

One of the requirements described in the RFA-IEE will be to conduct a Supplemental IEE that assesses environmental impacts and opportunities that are specific to the particular geographical zone of influence of the food security activity. An element of the Supplemental IEE will be a CRM screening, in accordance with [ADS 201MAL](#). These analyses are only required for successful applicants.

Annex 19. M&E Plan: Applicants must submit an abridged M&E plan that describes the applicant’s planned M&E approach. In the initial application, FFP only requires applicants to describe its M&E approach considering the security situation and operational context. The abridged M&E plan should describe how the applicant will carry out performance monitoring both for adaptive management and reporting, how it will monitor the quality of implementation, and what M&E capacity it would require to implement its M&E. The initial application should provide an M&E budget disaggregated by key line items. The applicant will be required to submit a detailed M&E plan with the full application.

Building upon the full ToC and LogFrame included with the final activity design, the M&E plan should illustrate:

- (1) the applicant’s approach to annual monitoring and M&E staffing (with M&E staff included in the organizational chart - see “Management and Staffing” section);
- (2) the strategy to strengthen M&E capacity of activity monitoring staff;
- (3) intervention monitoring;
- (4) a short summary budget that includes staffing, monitoring, data quality assurance, participant registration, and a database, and

⁵⁹ [USAID FFP Policy and Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for Development Food Security Activities](#), Section 2.4, Performance Indicator Reference Sheets, Page 36.

⁶⁰ A FY 2020 FFP RFA-level IEE is under development and will be available to incorporate into Final Application and award language.

- (5) a clear strategy for monitoring when physical access is an issue; this should demonstrate strong understanding of the operating environment in Mali and how to monitor for activity implementation fidelity and quality, and to mitigate risks associated with programming in a non-permissive environment.

FFP strongly encourages applicants to use or to inter-operate with existing identification systems, rather than issuing new IDs to beneficiaries, where possible and appropriate. When deemed necessary to create a new system for identification, FFP encourages partners to demonstrate how such a system can be built so that it can be leveraged and/or repurposed by other government ministries and/or development partners.

When it is necessary for partners to develop such a database, FFP requests that applicants make use of cost effective, and existing open source or widely available platforms (such as Google or Microsoft). FFP may not approve developing a database/MIS using proprietary codes.

In the case of the Mali DFSA and other non-permissive environments, international partners are strongly encouraged to explore the suite of emerging tools that integrate geospatial data with data collection to better facilitate remote monitoring in insecure environments. Such tools would enable partners to highlight needs, progress, successes, and challenges along a spatial and linear path, and are a strong tool in communicating with USAID/FFP and other donors, who may not be able to monitor or perform site visits, due to security restrictions.

FFP plans to conduct a performance evaluation using a comparison between a population-based baseline and endline surveys. FFP will contract and manage a third-party firm to conduct the activity's population-based baseline study and final evaluations. Because of this, FFP is not likely to support any other population-based surveys. The applicant should budget for a midterm evaluation. A description of required elements related to the M&E plan can be found in the [USAID FFP Policy and Guidance for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting for Development Food Security Activities](#).

Annex 20. Final Log Frame, ToC graphic, and ToC narrative : Applicants must submit a detailed Log Frame, ToC graphic, and ToC Narrative (six pages maximum). The revised documentation should revise and expand upon the initial submission (Annex 5), reflect discussion held and decisions made during the Co-Creation Workshop.

Annex 21. Participant Targeting: The ASA will be expected to further define the full approach for participant targeting in the Phase 3 Final Application in this Annex. FFP expects participant needs in the target geographic zone to shift over the life of the award and the targeting strategy should adapt to these changes. Applicants should target participants within the target geographic zone based on needs, priorities, and opportunities. Applicants should continuously assess who are the most vulnerable, what approaches are most appropriate for each type of vulnerable group, and how participants may shift between levels of vulnerability.

Applicants should also anticipate and plan for the possibility of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) entering or leaving target geographic zones.⁶¹

FFP expects applicants to describe participatory approaches when targeting households at the community, while ensuring information is triangulated by proactively discussing with community members how the targeting was accomplished. Under the Do No Harm principles, it is important that this activity not marginalize any particular group of people or cause increased tension or conflict due to the targeting (or non-targeting) of certain groups. Applicants should carefully consider conflict dynamics and access issues, as well as participant and staff safety. Applicants must propose a targeting approach that mitigates potential conflict around inclusion in activities and does not exacerbate current tensions in the conflict-affected targeted areas of Mali. These may include tensions around gender, age, livelihood groups, social classes, ethnic groups, political parties, religious beliefs or armed groups.

FFP requests applicants to present a participant targeting strategy that ensures inclusion of the following:

- Extremely poor households (i.e., those who live below the \$1.90 per person per day poverty line) that are chronically unable to meet their basic needs and have little chance of improving their circumstances without some form of assistance.
- Chronically vulnerable households (living at or above the poverty line) that are not extremely poor, but could slide down to abject poverty with either predictable or unpredictable shocks, such as extreme weather events, food price changes, etc., including female-headed households and those with disabilities.
- Households with adolescents, children, and women at risk of malnutrition to improve maternal and child health and nutrition, and infant and young child feeding practices; in particular, pregnant and lactating mothers and caretakers of infants and young children to minimize the risk of chronic and acute malnutrition.
- Youth-related targeting, as this is a key target group and the majority of Mali's population with 60 percent of the population under the age of 25. Applicants should consider the needs of different youth age groups, for example the needs of a 14 year-old are different from those of a 25 year-old. Applicants should also distinguish the needs of female and male youth, as they will face distinct barriers, issues, and opportunities. Additionally, different demographics will also play a part in activity participation such as education level, work-force participation, job migration patterns, and marital status (especially for young women) which should be taken into account.
- Whole-of-community targeting is appropriate for community managed assets such as pasture, water, and other natural resources or public assets and infrastructure and water and sanitation interventions.

As a matter of participant targeting and activity layering, applicants are expected to propose an appropriate wealth-ranking and targeting methodology that will ensure inclusion of extremely

⁶¹ FFP does not expect applicants to specifically target IDPs and IDP camps as that is normally covered by humanitarian assistance. However, with widespread population displacement in the target geographic zone due to conflict, IDP movement will likely impact targeted vulnerable groups.

poor households. It is not FFP's intention to categorically exclude moderately poor households from interventions, but rather to ensure that extremely poor households are included and their specific needs are addressed and included in sustainability plans. Applicants should also demonstrate how they will adapt targeting throughout the activity.

The ASA will also make any other necessary revisions to the Annexes 1 - 12 submitted as part of Phase I Initial Application. Depending on the decisions made during the Co-Creation Workshop, other Annexes or additional detail may be required as part of the Final Application.

2. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant, unless they have an exception approved by the federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d), is required to:

- Provide a valid DUNS number; and
- Be registered in the SAM – note that successful applicants must maintain SAM registration.

FFP may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. This is justification for not signing an award. Please note an awardee cannot make a sub-award to an entity unless the entity has provided a DUNS number.

3. Submission Date and Time

The Phase I - Initial Application submission deadline is February 18, 2020 at 11:59 a.m. EST. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the electronic application is received by the due date and time specified. Successful Applicants from Phase I will be informed of their status and the timeline and the requirements for Phase II separately. Further, the ASA will be informed of their status and the timeline for Phase III.

4. Funding Restrictions

For special considerations and information pertaining to ineligible and restricted goods, services, and countries, please see the USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) [Major Functional Series 300: Acquisition and Assistance, Chapter 312 - Eligibility of Commodities](#). Additionally, it is the legal responsibility of USAID awardees to ensure compliance with all U.S. laws and regulations, including those that prohibit transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, sanctioned individuals, groups, and organizations. Please note that the funding type for this award is not Title II, but Community Development Funds.

5. Pre-Award Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of the Recipient

Successful applicants must provide a signed copy of [Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of the Recipient and Solicitation Standard Provisions](#) as described in ADS 303.3.8 on the USAID website in response to the issues letter.

6. Other Submission Requirements

All applications must be sent to FY20-DFSA-RFA-Mali@usaid.gov

Note: Pre-award contact with any other U.S. Government personnel or FFP's institutional support contractors by an applicant which involves a proposed or submitted application in response to this RFA may result in disqualification of the application. All documents must be completed in accordance with the format detailed in this RFA and must adhere to the following:

- Written in English and in 12-point Times New Roman font;
- Text in tables or charts may be 10-point Arial Narrow font;
- Narratives must be prepared in Microsoft Word or compatible equivalent with print areas set to 8.5 x 11 inch, letter-sized paper with one-inch margins, left justification and a footer on each page including page number, date of submission, proposed country, and applicant name;
- Spreadsheets must be prepared in Microsoft Excel or compatible equivalent, with print areas set to 8.5 x 11 inch, letter-sized paper;
- Official (signed) documents, memoranda, and certifications may be submitted as Adobe PDF files, with one-inch margins;
- Faxed or hard copy applications are not accepted.

If any of the necessary documents listed in the RFA are not submitted according to the format and/or deadline referenced in the RFA, FFP will consider the application incomplete. Late or incomplete applications will be considered at FFP's discretion.

Please note that any applications submitted after the closing time will be automatically marked as inactive.

The applicant may be required to submit certain documents in order for the AO to make a determination of financial responsibility. Applicants may be required to submit any additional evidence of responsibility, as requested, to support the determination, such as:

- Adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the award;
- Adequate management and personnel resources and systems;
- Ability to comply with the award conditions, considering all existing and currently prospective commitments of the applicant, both NGO and governmental;
- Satisfactory record of performance - unsatisfactory past relevant performance is ordinarily sufficient to justify a finding of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance or the applicant has taken adequate corrective measures to ensure that it will be able to perform its functions satisfactorily; and
- Integrity and business ethics; along with qualifications and eligibility to receive a grant or cooperative agreement under applicable laws and regulations.

Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant, and all preparation and submission costs for the application are at the applicant's expense.

SECTION V – APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Evaluation Criteria

The Initial Application will be reviewed and evaluated according to the criteria detailed below. Highly scoring applicants from Phase I will be invited to move to Phase 2 Oral Presentations. Based on the Evaluation Criteria described below for Phase 2 Oral Presentation, an Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA) will be selected and will receive an Issues Letter before the Co-Creation Workshop for further discussion and incorporation into final Program Description of the award. Following the pre-award Co-Creation Workshop, the ASA will have approximately one month to continue to work remotely to refine its approach and finalize the Application and accompanying Annexes as described in Section IV (e). USAID will review these documents and may provide additional clarification questions. The ASA will respond to any final issues and submit its Final Application, which FFP will evaluate as “acceptable” or “unacceptable”.

Phase 1 - Initial Application

Merit Review Criteria	Maximum Possible Points
A) Activity Design	70
1. Context Analysis, Conceptual Framework, Targeting	10
2. Design Approach	30
3. Local Systems Strengthening and Sustainability	15
4. Gender, Youth, and Social Dynamics Integration	15
B) Adaptive Management & Staffing	30
1. Adaptive Management and Staffing Approach	20
2. Local partner inclusion and capacity strengthening	10
Total Possible Points	100

A) Activity Design

Seventy points are dedicated to Activity Design. Further information regarding the sub-categories are below. Applicants should adhere to the FFP Strategy and Programming Principles, the specific Goals and Objectives described in Section I. Program Description, and the criteria and themes listed under *Section IV. Application and Submission Information, 1.Application Format*. Per Section IV, the activity design should include:

(1) Context Analysis, and Conceptual Framework, Targeting(10 points)

Applicants will be evaluated on their adherence to the criteria articulated within RFA Section IV, C (1-3). Applicant’s context analysis should include a concise analysis and demonstrate a clear understanding of the needs of the targeted participants and their communities and the constraints they face—e.g., acute needs, livelihoods, and resource management—as well as understanding of the local governance and ongoing decentralization. Given the significant background information provided as Annexes to this RFA, applicants should focus specifically on contextual issues that will be directly linked to the activity design.

The conceptual framework should demonstrate the linkages between the underlying causes and influencing factors of food insecurity and malnutrition specific to the target area and reflecting the Programming Principles. It must include an abbreviated TOC that provides clear, logical steps showing how the proposed approach, and interactions by other actors, will produce all the necessary and sufficient outcomes/conditions to achieve the stated goal based on evidence and plausible reasoning.

Targeting strategies will be evaluated on adherence to the criteria described in Section IV.1(c) 3 *Targeting*, and on the DFSAs ability to leverage other humanitarian and development investments in the target geographic zone and to contribute to USAID/Mali's resilience goals⁶². Finalization and full detail of participant targeting strategies will be expected at the Final Application stage.

(2) Design Approach (30 points)

Applicants will be evaluated on their adherence to the criteria articulated within the Programming Principles and Section IV, C (4). Applicant's design approach should address the RFA Goal and Objectives collaboratively with local communities and partners. Given the requirement for flexibility, adaptability, and targeted community participation, applicants are not expected to propose a specific set of interventions. Applicants should demonstrate a clear, evidence-based approach for local engagement and local capacity strengthening. The applicant is expected to use analytical tools and assessments to identify the best approach for local engagement and local capacity strengthening. There should be clear justification to support which approach was chosen. The proposed approach should allow local actors to bring about transformative change to the food and nutrition security of the targeted population.

Applicants should describe an initial approach for integration, sequencing, and layering within the DFSA and with other stakeholders' (USAID, other donors, GOM, local NGOs, the private sector, and other stakeholders) investments to achieve the goal.

Applicants should further describe their plan for refining the approach, including identification and prioritization of knowledge gaps for refinement and how closing these knowledge gaps could impact possible changes to the ToC, the package of technical interventions and implementation planning.

(3) Local Systems Strengthening and Sustainability Strategies (15 points)

Applicants will be evaluated on their adherence to the criteria articulated within Section IV, C (5). The strategy should reflect their ToC, and describe, based on realistic assumptions, the resources, technical and managerial capacities, motivation, and linkages that will sustain activity outcomes and/or interventions after the activity ends. Any strategy that requires a transition from an activity financed service delivery system to a market-based or public service delivery system should include concrete timelines and benchmarks.

⁶² USAID (2019). GFSS Mali Country Plan.

(4) Gender, Youth, and Social Dynamics Integration (15 points)

Applicants will be evaluated on the extent to which gender, youth, and social dynamics are addressed and integrated into all areas of the proposed activity. Integration of a gender sensitive approach must be context-appropriate and reflected at every phase of the activity. Applicants should describe how Positive Youth Development principles and practices will be implemented in their management and technical approaches as referenced in Section IV. Applicants will also be evaluated on their plans for tracking gender changes, including unanticipated outcomes, over time. At least one gender indicator must be identified for each purpose at either the sub-purpose or immediate outcome level.

B) Adaptive Management and Staffing

Applicants will be evaluated on their adherence to the criteria listed under *Section IV, D (1-6). Application and Submission Information, d). Management and Staffing*. The management structure and staffing must ensure the efficient use of resources, as well as effective and adaptive management, strong technical implementation, and administrative support. All relevant information on consortium members and sub-awardees must be included and clear planning for refinement year activities and subsequent management and staffing adjustments must be addressed. The applicant should describe the role that any sub-awardees (particularly local organizations) will play during co-creation and R&I process. Applicants should describe how the management and staff approach integrates local organizations and builds local capacity to manage and continue activities. Applicants should demonstrate strong organizational management capacity and ability to implement and refine approach from initial co-creation process through refinement and implementation.

The resource management (See Annex 4) should be appropriate and sufficient for the resources requested. The applicant should have a clear understanding of country specific requirements (e.g., local, regional, national, international) for proposed use(s) of food assistance (e.g., in-kind, local/regional purchase, cash or vouchers), and awareness of restrictions that may hinder operations or implementation (e.g., biotechnology restrictions or concerns). Applicants should justify how staffing and structure will allow for the effective and accountable implementation of the proposed approach

(1) Adaptive Management and Staffing Approach (20 points)

Applicants will be evaluated on the feasibility of their plan to implement and manage activities in the conflict-affected areas in Mali targeted under this award. This includes appropriate plans for community engagement throughout the implementation and plans for quickly initiating quality program activities, maintaining, or adapting engagement based on expected changes to staff access and security due to the ongoing conflict. Adequate security and safety precautions should also be clear for participants and activity staff. Furthermore, applicants will be evaluated on their plans to incorporate refinement of the overall technical approach into the management and staffing approach. The Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Plan (Annex 6) allows for further detail to this section.

(2) Local partner inclusion and capacity strengthening (10 points)

Applicants should describe their approach for working with local organizations as direct partners or consortium members, as well as indirectly as key stakeholders. Applicants must indicate how they will strengthen local partner capacity to provide services, manage resources, and continue activities. Applicants are encouraged to include plans to progressively transfer management and resources to local partners.

Phase II - Oral Presentation

Oral Presentations should respond to the submission information described in Section IV Phase II Oral Presentations Parts A) Activity Design and B) Adaptive Management and Staffing, and C) Proposed Collaborative Design Approach. Applicants should be prepared to respond to programmatic and/or technical questions from USAID on their Initial Application. Applicants will be reviewed on the basis of whether they successfully elaborate on the information provided in the Phase I Initial Application according to the following scores. Based on submission information described in Section IV, Applicants are encouraged to manage presentation time of approximately two (2) hours to highlight important aspect of their Activity, engage in a question and answer period with USAID.

Merit Review Criteria	Maximum Possible Points
A) Activity Design	50
B) Adaptive Management & Staffing	30
C) Proposed Collaborative Design Approach	20
Total Possible Points	100

A) Activity Design

Applicant must present an explanation of their approach to achieving the Goals and Objectives set forth in the Program Description. In describing this activity design, the Applicant must:

- Clearly articulate why the Applicant's ToC and the proposed technical design are feasible conceptually and operationally to achieve the Goal and Objectives;
- Demonstrate how the Applicant will integrate youth and gender perspective discussed in the Design Approach;
- Clearly articulate approach to incorporating adaptation and learning, including the Refine & Implement Approach;
- Demonstrate how the "Do-No-Harm" and conflict-sensitivity will be applied and the Applicant's approach will maintain the sustainability of the approach;

B) Adaptive Management & Staffing

Applicants must present, within the context of the design approach, the proposed organizational management, staffing, and capacity to operate efficiently and effectively in the target geographic zone of Mali. The applicant must describe how they intend to carry out activities by explaining:

- How the Applicant's approach will ensure effective coordination and collaboration with various partners as applicable, including the GOM, other non-state organizations, and other USAID projects/activities;

- How the Applicant intends to engage with and build capacity of local partners (including consortium members) and include local communities throughout implementation;
- Defined roles and responsibilities of the Home Office and the field-based staff;
- How the Applicant intends to ensure access and flexibility in conflict-affected areas;
- How the Applicant's staffing plan and mix of staffing skills and knowledge will enable the Applicant to implement the proposed design approach effectively; and
- How the Applicant will remain adaptable and refine management and staffing based on refinement to the technical interventions.

C) Proposed Collaborative Design Approach

Applicants must present an approach to co-design that reflects the timeline and general process described in the RFA, including the Co-Creation Workshop and early start-up process. The Applicant should describe how they envision the collaborative application design process and early engagement with USAID post-award, specifically coordination and communication with USAID and the role of the Applicant's organization. The presentation must describe the organization's experience with and approach to Co-design processes.

Phase III - Final Application

Following the Co-creation Workshop, the Apparently Successful Applicant will submit a Final Application including additional Annexes described in Section IV. USAID will evaluate the Final Application as "Pass/Acceptable" or "Fail/Unacceptable". In the event negotiations fail to improve the Apparently Successful Applicants Technical Application/Program Description, USAID may determine the application as "Fail/Unacceptable".

2. Review of Cost Application

The cost application will be reviewed separately from the technical application. The review of the cost application will determine if the level of resources is appropriate for the number of participants and degree of change being proposed. Aspects to be considered under this criterion include the justification for activity costs: if they are reasonable, are allowed under the cost principles and according to FFPIBs, and allocable in the budget. For further information on costs considered reasonable, allowable, and allocable, please refer to 2 CFR 200, subpart E.

The cost application must include:

- The breakdown of all costs associated with the activity according to costs of headquarters, regional and/or country offices, as applicable;
- The breakdown of all costs according to each partner organization or sub-contractor/sub-awardee involved in the activity;
- The costs associated with external, expatriate technical assistance and those associated with local in-country technical assistance;
- The costs associated with robust monitoring and evaluation;
- The total activity costs including a breakdown of the financial and in-kind contributions of all organizations involved in implementing the proposed activity;

- Potential contributions of non-USAID or private commercial donors to this proposed activity;
- A procurement plan for equipment and other restricted items as defined by 2 CFR 200.34 and ADS 312 (may be incorporated into an existing or new annex in the cost application).

Revisions of budget and program plans will be in accordance with 2 CFR 200.308.

Areas to be listed/discussed in detailed budget and budget notes may include:

a) Personnel

Salaries and wages should reflect the market value for each position. Salaries and wages may not exceed the applicant's established written personnel policy and practice, including the applicant's established pay scale for equivalent classifications of employees, which must be certified by the applicant. Base pay, or base salary, is defined as the employee's basic compensation (salary) for services rendered. Taxes, which are a responsibility or liability of the employee, are inclusive of, and not additive to, the base pay or salary. The base pay excludes benefits and allowances, bonuses, profit sharing arrangements, commission, consultant fees, extra or overtime payments, overseas differential or quarters, cost of living or dependent education allowances, etc.

In accordance with ADS 303.3.12 USAID will review proposed costs, including salaries, for reasonableness. USAID uses the top salary on the Mission's Local Compensation Plan as one indicator of reasonableness for the base salaries of locally employed staff, and the Contractor Salary Threshold as one indicator of reasonableness for the base salaries of U.S. and third-country national staff.

Annual salary increase and/or promotional increase must be justified and supported by appropriate documentation and may be granted in accordance with the applicant's established written personnel policy and practice.

b) Fringe Benefits

Applicants must indicate the fringe benefit rate used and the base of application for each rate that has been approved by a U.S. federal agency. Applicants must submit the most recent NICRA as evidence of rate approval. If the fringe benefit rate has not been approved, the applicant must propose a rate and explain how the rate was determined. If the latter is used, the budget narrative must include a detailed explanation/breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits, such as unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, health and life insurance, retirement, FICA, etc. and the cost estimates of each expressed in dollars and as a percentage of salaries. The applicant must specify if paid leave is included in fringe benefits.

The applicant should indicate fringe benefits, for local employees as a separate item of cost, providing a detailed explanation/breakdown as described above. The applicant should specify which fringe benefits for local employees are required by local law and which are applied in accordance with the applicant's compensation policy.

c) Non-Employee Labor

Non-Employee Labor are short-term employee. Applicants should provide the following details for Non-Employee Labor: rate of pay (daily rate), hours worked in a day and length of employment.

d) Travel and Transport

The applicant must:

- Identify total domestic and international travel as separate items;
- Indicate the estimated number of trips, number of travelers, position of travelers, number of days per trip, point of origin, destination, and purpose of trip;
- Itemize the estimate of transportation and/or subsistence costs, including airfare and per diem for each trip. Per diem is based on the applicant's normal travel policies and practices. However, proposed lodging and per diem must not be in excess of that authorized by Department of State Standard Regulations; and
- Provide supporting documentation, such as the applicant's travel policy to justify these costs, as appropriate.

e) Overseas Allowances

The applicant must indicate any overseas allowances provided to staff and the corresponding rate or fixed amount per staff.

f) Equipment

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.33, in a brief description, "equipment" means tangible non-expendable personal property, including exempt property charged directly to the award having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

The applicant must:

- Itemize the type of equipment and briefly justify the need for the items to be purchased as they relate to the applicant's technical approach;
- Indicate the estimated unit cost and number of units for each item to be purchased; and
- Provide the basis for the cost estimates, e.g., pro forma invoice or published price lists.

There are statutory constraints relating to the purchase of agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, and more with USAID program funds. Applicants may obtain specific information on these regulations [USAID's website](#), particularly ADS 312. Additional information for motor vehicles is found in Section VIII. 3. Motor Vehicle Procurement Table.

g) Supplies

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.94, “supplies” means all personal property excluding equipment, intangible property, debt instruments, and interventions. The applicant must specify the supply items and briefly justify the need for those items to be purchased as they relate to the applicant’s technical approach.

h) Staff Training

The applicant should indicate any training and workshops provided to staff and the cost break out for each training provided.

i) USAID Branding and Marking

In accordance with 2 CFR 700.1, “branding” means how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, as well as how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and cooperating country citizens and “marking” means the public communications, commodities, and program materials and other items that will visibly bear the USAID Identity. If applicable, applicants must specify any costs associated with these requirements showing the unit cost and units purchased

j) Sub-awards

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.92, “sub-award” means an award provided by a pass-through entity to a sub-recipient for the sub-recipient to carry out part of a federal award received by the pass-through entity. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of a federal program.

The applicant must:

- Identify any sub-awards (other than the purchase of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services) and provide this information in a chart that includes their total value.
- Provide sub-award budgets and accompanying budget notes in the same format as submitted by the prime applicant and with the same exchange rate for all members of the consortium.

k) Contracts (if any)

The applicant must:

- Identify any sub-awards/transfers/sub-contracts (other than the purchase of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services) and provide this information in a chart that includes their total value.
- Provide sub-award/sub-contract budgets and accompanying budget notes in the same format as submitted by the prime applicant and with the same exchange rate for all members of the consortium.

l) Audits

The applicant should indicate any costs associated with the required “Single audit,” as defined at 2 CFR 200.501(b), for a non-federal entity that expends \$750,000 or more during the non-federal entity’s fiscal year in federal awards.

m) Construction

Per the USAID-wide policy set out in USAID ADS 303.3.30, construction activities may only be carried out under cooperative agreements if they meet certain criteria, absent a case-by-case waiver. CDF-funded construction activities may also be subject to the requirements of Section 611(e) of the FAA. For these reasons, FFP requests applicants to provide an explicit description of construction activities within the body of the Application or as an Appendix. NOTE: For Mali partners proposing construction activities, applicants do not need to provide explicit implementation plans at the Phase 1 Initial Application stage. However, the Awardee will be required to submit the following implementation plans at the time of award and/or during the ‘refinement’ period:

- (1) a description of proposed construction activities specific to the contents of the application, including the type and scope, and/or a clear plan for a feasibility or alternatives analysis that will provide these details;
- (2) the estimated cost of construction activities at each site;
- (3) the total estimated cost of construction activities under the award;
- (4) geographic location of proposed construction site (either as GPS coordinates or at the village level);
- (5) a clear strategy to provide quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) of the proposed infrastructure, and to ensure worker and participant safety, including both technical staffing and planning; and
- (6) a plan for operations and maintenance (O&M) of the investment, focusing on linkages to local systems for sustainability.

During the life of the award, the Awardee may be requested by FFP to provide additional information regarding updated costs and plans for construction oversight, QA/QC, and O&M, subject to the requirements of ADS 201maw. For the purpose of this policy, the term “construction” includes “construction, alteration, rehabilitation, or repair (including dredging and excavation) of buildings, structures, or other real property,” including any infrastructure built or rehabilitated via conditional food assistance activities (e.g. cash-for-assets, food-for-assets). And a “single activity site” is “a single undertaking of construction within a contiguous geographic location,” examples in the Agency’s publicly available policy guidance include a road, a building, a water harvesting structure, a drinking water point or system, a power plant, a school, a clinic, and/or any continuous multiples of the same. For more information, see ADS 303MAW, USAID Implementation of Construction Activities: A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 303 ⁶³.

⁶³ USAID (2013). USAID Implementation of Construction Activities, 303MAW:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303maw.pdf>

n) Other Direct Costs

The applicant must:

- Identify other direct costs and briefly justify the need for each cost item as they relate to the applicant's technical approach;
- Indicate the estimated unit cost and number of units for each item proposed; and
- Provide the basis for the cost estimates.

o) Indirect Costs

The applicant must support the proposed indirect cost rate with a letter from a cognizant U.S. Government audit agency, a NICRA, or with sufficient information for USAID to determine the reasonableness of the rates. For example, a breakdown of labor bases and overhead pools, the method of determining the rate, etc. The applicant must:

- State the percentages and amounts used for the calculation of indirect costs.
- Provide a copy of the latest U.S. Government-approved NICRA from the cognizant U.S. Government audit agency showing the Overhead and/or General Administrative rates.
- State if indirect costs have not been approved by a federal agency and provide the basis for the proposed indirect cost rates, as appropriate. The applicant who does not currently have a NICRA from their cognizant agency must submit the following information:
 - Copies of the applicant's financial reports for the previous three-year period, which have been audited by a certified public accountant or other auditor satisfactory to USAID;
 - Projected budget, cash flow, and organizational chart; and
 - A copy of the organization's accounting manual.

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.414, eligible applicants may choose to apply a 10 percent *de minimis* indirect cost rate. Please note this is only for those applicants who have never received a NICRA.

p) Budgeting for Climate Risk and Environmental Safeguards

All budgeting for climate and environmental safeguards can follow the framework established through the [FSN consultation](#) for the [environmental budgeting toolkit](#).

Note: Applicants that have never received a cooperative agreement, grant, or contract from the U.S. Government are required to submit a copy of their accounting manual, or file a self-certificate of compliance with USAID standards. If a copy of the manual has already been submitted to an agency other than USAID, the applicant must list which federal agency or office and provide a point of contact with contact information. This certificate template is available from the USAID point of contact listed in this RFA upon request.

3. Review and Selection Process

Consistent with the requirements set forth in the Food for Peace Act, FFP shall determine whether to accept an application no later than 120 days after receipt of a complete application (subject to availability of funds). FFP is committed to meeting this mandate; however, its ability to do so depends upon the quality of applications and their responsiveness to the standards and requirements set forth in the RFA.

As described in Section IV, FFP will follow a three-phase merit review process. Phase I review and selection is based on a rank scoring of the Initial Application. Phase 2 consists of the Oral Presentation. Phase 3 consists of a Co-Creation Workshop and submission of a revised Final Application by the Apparently Successful Applicant to be evaluated as “acceptable/unacceptable” for award.

After review and selection based on criteria described above for Phase I Initial Application, selected applicants will be invited to participate in the next application round, or Phase 2 Oral Presentations. FFP will evaluate Phase 2 applicants based on evaluation criteria described above under Phase 2 - Oral Presentation.

The applicant selected after Phase 2 is considered the Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA) for Phase 3. Per 2 CFR 700.1, *Apparently Successful Applicant(s) means the applicant(s) for USAID funding recommended for an award after merit review, but who has not yet been awarded a grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance award by the Agreement Officer. Apparently Successful Applicant status confers no right and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award, which still must be executed by the Agreement Officer.* Phase 3 consists of a Co-Creation Workshop, leading to the Final Application to be submitted by the ASA, including revisions to Annexes and additional Annexes required at Phase 3 Final Application in Section IV. FFP will evaluate the Final Application as “Pass/Acceptable” or “Fail/Unacceptable.” In the event that the Co-Creation Process fails to improve the ASA’s Final Application, FFP may determine the application as “Fail/Unacceptable.” FFP field offices will collaborate closely with FFP in Washington in the review of applications.

SECTION VI – FEDERAL AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

USAID may (a) reject any or all applications, (b) accept applications for reasons other than cost, (c) accept more than one application, (d) accept alternate applications, (e) waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received, and/or (f) drop the oral presentation.

Successful applicants will find award administration information and reporting requirements in signed award documents.

The AO is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds.

SECTION VII – FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

Any questions concerning this RFA, its appendices, or Technical References must be submitted in writing by January 7, 2020 to FY20-DFSA-RFA-Mali@usaid.gov and “FY 2020 Mali RFA” in the subject line.

SECTION VIII – OTHER INFORMATION

1. Host Country Agreement

The Host Country Agreement (HCA) should be in place prior to finalization of the award. The HCA establishes the terms and conditions by which an applicant will be able to conduct a food security activity in a specific country in line with the requirements of USAID 22 CFR 211. As such, the applicant must enter into a written HCA with the government of the country in which it is proposing to implement a Title II activity. If the activity will be implemented in a number of countries within a region, an HCA must be negotiated with each government. Applicants submitting applications to work in countries for which they do not have an HCA must make arrangements well in advance to ensure that a signed HCA is prepared prior to the food security activity approval.

Although it is 22 CFR 211 (which legally applies only to Title II funding) that stipulates the need for an HCA, **FFP requests as a matter of policy an HCA for all food security activities**, given that the reasons for an HCA govern sound commodity and resource management and underscore an understanding of the host country government of the activity interventions.

Even though the HCA is expected and preferred prior to finalization of the award, the applicant may submit when asked during the review and approval process (if selected) either the HCA or the Mission Director's determination that the proposed food security activity can be effectively implemented in compliance with 22 CFR 211.

- Note that the Mission Director's determination is not a substitute for an HCA.
- There must first be a written decision by the Mission Director that it is "not appropriate or feasible" for the applicant to have an agreement with the government at this time.
- Following that determination, activities may only be implemented after the Mission Director's determination is made that the activity can be implemented without an agreement in place for the time being.
- **If an HCA is not in place prior to finalization of the award, FFP will include the awardee's explanation for the delay with the award language, along with a timetable for awardee's HCA negotiations and anticipated receipt of a signed HCA.**

2. Motor Vehicle Procurement Table

If the prime, members of a consortium, and/or sub-awardees plan to procure any motor vehicles during the award, the applicant (i.e., the prime) must include information on why procuring the vehicle(s) is less expensive than leasing the vehicle(s). In addition, the prime must submit a table with the following information for all vehicles to be procured as indicated in the budget(s):

- Type and number of motor vehicles (includes motorcycles);
- Manufacturer/make, model, and year of motor vehicles;
- Planned uses of motor vehicles, including who will retain title;
- Estimated cost of each motor vehicle;
- Funding source for each motor vehicle; and

- Fiscal year during which each procurement is planned.

The applicant must specify which organizations will use the vehicles; when and how purchases and transfers to consortium members and/or sub-awardees will occur; and a rationale for the purchase or long-term lease of all vehicles (U.S. and non-U.S.) in text accompanying the table.

The requirement to purchase or lease only U.S.-manufactured motor vehicles may be waived on a case-by-case basis when special circumstances exist and those special circumstances are supported by market research and adequate documentation. Special circumstances that merit waiving the requirement include, but are not limited to:

- The inability of U.S. manufacturers to provide a particular type of motor vehicle;
- The present or projected lack of adequate service facilities and supply of spare parts for U.S.-manufactured motor vehicles in the country or region within a country where the vehicle will be used; or
- An emergency requirement for motor vehicle(s) that can be met in time only by purchase of non-U.S.-manufactured motor vehicle(s) and for which no non-USAID funds are available.

The following is a step-by-step process (to be followed in this order) of the analysis and necessary documentation to be provided in requests to purchase a non-U.S. manufactured vehicle.

1. For all applications, describe the need and intended use for the vehicle. Identify the type of vehicle that will fulfill that need, why it is the best choice for the intended use, and if appropriate, include specifications.
2. For all applications, detail efforts made to determine if the type of vehicle is produced in the U.S.
3. If the type of vehicle is produced in the U.S., is it produced in an appropriate export model that the manufacturer will supply to the recipient country from the U.S.? If not, state this in the waiver request. If yes, state so and reference the second or third bullet above to justify the waiver request.
4. Is a U.S.-manufactured vehicle available on the local market in country or from another country in Geographic Code 935? If so, no waiver is required to purchase that vehicle. However, if you want to purchase a different vehicle, use any of the circumstances in the bullets above to justify the case for purchasing that vehicle.
5. Is the type of vehicle made in the U.S. and can be delivered from the U.S., is the availability of service and spare parts for that vehicle adequate in country? If not, then use b) above to justify the waiver.
6. Document the above information and efforts to support one of the special circumstances or waiver criteria in ADS 312. See circumstances outlined in the three bullets above.

For subsequent applications from previous or expiring FFP activities, applicants must provide in table format:

- The size and condition of the current motor vehicle fleet;
- Age of each motor vehicle;
- Funding source for each motor vehicle;
- Use of motor vehicles by intervention; and
- Plans for maintenance and replacement.

Supporting text regarding the history of the motor vehicle fleet and its procurement by the applicant in the country must be included.

3. Branding Strategy and Marking Plan

The Branding Strategy and Marking Plan (BS/MP) is required for successful applicants only. Note that because USAID's branding and marking requirements have cost implications, such costs must be included in the application budget even if the applicant does not submit its BS/MP with the application. These rules do not apply to intergovernmental organizations. Special markings may be required in Feed the Future target countries.

Under special circumstances USAID approved Marking Plans may be waived.

Agency branding and marking guidance can be found in ADS Chapter 320 and at the USAID branding site.

4. USAID Development Data Policy

The U.S. Government Open Data Policy (ADS 579) establishes the requirements governing USAID's development data lifecycle from collecting data to making it accessible. Accordingly, the Mali DFSA will catalog and spatially map interventions and any construction activities at a village- and/or community-level. The purpose of this requirement is to facilitate purposeful activity monitoring, as well as to improve the use of such data/mapping efforts for learning, planning, and adaptation of DFSAs.

As reflected in Annex 19 (M&E), applicants for the Mali DFSA are strongly encouraged to explore the suite of emerging tools that integrate geospatial data with data collection to better facilitate remote monitoring in insecure environments. Such tools would enable partners to highlight needs, progress, successes, and challenges along a spatial and linear path, and are a strong tool in communicating with USAID/FFP and other donors, who may not be able to monitor or perform site visits, due to security restrictions. Additionally, applicants should propose approaches to collect, manage and share this data in a manner that maintains the security of participants and staff.

The following data collection and mapping standards apply to the geographic data associated with the Mali DFSA, including the three types of geographic data that the DFSA will be expected to provide to USAID. Applicants should ensure that they have the necessary technical

resources and staffing to adhere to these standards, and to meaningfully incorporate geographic data into annual PREPs and M&E planning.

1. **Activity and Intervention Location Data:** This refers to data that records the DFSA intervention locations, and including village-level (formal or informal) GPS coordinates for individual sector based interventions. Personally identifiable information (PII, i.e. identify individuals in data submissions) should not be submitted. USAID/FFP will provide a data collection and reporting template to the Mali DFSA awardee.
2. **Thematic Data:** This applies to USAID awardees to create or acquire data sets on demographic and health indicators, land use land cover, hydrology, and transportation infrastructure using USAID funds.
3. **Activity Specific Geographic Data:** This refers to the outputs that are produced when the USAID partner conducts geospatial analysis while implementing an Activity (e.g., geographic analysis of school feeding status).

5. Code of Conduct

The mandatory standard provisions “Regulations Governing Employees” in **ADS 303maa, Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations** and “Recipient and Employee Conduct” in **ADS 303mab, Standard Provisions for Non- U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations**, require that recipients meet internal control requirements and have a code of conduct for their employees.. USAID implementing partners must ensure that their employees conduct themselves in a professional manner when carrying out awards, consistent with the standards for United Nations (U.N.) employees in Section 3 of the **U.N. Secretary General’s Bulletin - Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse**

In the event that an employee’s conduct is not consistent with these standards, our partners must consult with the relevant Mission Director. The U.S. Ambassador may direct the removal of any U.S. citizen from the country and require termination of any employee from an award. Implementing partners must consult with the relevant Mission Director and the Agreement or Contracting Officer when addressing SEA allegations involving their employees. USAID further encourages implementing partners to report credible allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse to the USAID Office of Inspector General.

Implementing partners are required to report credible allegations of trafficking, the procurement of commercial sex acts, or the use of forced labor to the relevant Agreement or Contracting Officer and the USAID Office of Inspector General.

USAID policy requires its employees to report suspected cases of sexual exploitation, whether by Agency personnel or implementing partners, to the USAID Office of Inspector General.

Complaints can be submitted anonymously with an online form through the **Office of Inspector General Hotline website**, by telephone at 1-800-230-6539 or 202-712-1023, by email at **ig.hotline@usaid.gov**, by fax at (202) 216-3801, or by mail to the following address: U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of Inspector General, P.O. Box 657, Washington, DC 20044-0657

USAID has zero tolerance for sexual misconduct, including harassment, exploitation or abuse of any kind among staff or implementing partners. USAID's policy against sexual harassment and abuse can be found here: <https://www.usaid.gov/PreventingSexualMisconduct/fact-sheets/usaid-policy-against-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse>.

APPENDIX I: Definitions and Program Areas and Elements

Definitions

Climate Risk: The potential for negative consequences due to changing climatic conditions. Climate risk consists of individual climate risks— potentially severe adverse consequences for development activities (or for humans and social-ecological systems) resulting from the interaction of climate-related hazards with the vulnerability of societies and systems exposed to climate change. For purposes of USAID’s climate risk management, risks are qualitatively categorized as high, moderate, or low.

Climate Risk Management: The process of assessing, addressing, and adaptively managing for climate risks that may impact the ability of awards to achieve development objectives.

Direct Participants: Those who come into direct contact with the set of interventions (goods or services) provided by the activity in each technical area. Individuals who receive training or benefit from activity-supported technical assistance or service provision are considered direct participants, as are those who receive a ration or another type of good.

Note that all recipients are participants, but not all participants are necessarily food ration recipients.

Services include training and technical assistance provided directly by activity staff, and training and technical assistance provided by people who have been trained by activity staff (e.g., agricultural extension agents, village health workers). If cooperatives or organizations receive training or technical assistance from the activity, that will directly benefit all members, then all members of the cooperative/organization are considered direct participants.

In a Food for Training (FFT) intervention, the direct participants are those trained under the activity. In a Food for Work (FFW) or Food for Assets (FFA) intervention that is implemented as a stand-alone intervention (e.g., not as part of a wider set of interventions), direct participants are those who directly participate in the intervention (i.e., receive a ration), not all of those who use or benefit from the infrastructure/asset created (e.g., a road).

Occasionally, a FFW or FFA intervention forms part of a set of interventions in a program area or element (e.g., FFW to build irrigation infrastructure, accompanied by technical assistance in new cultivation techniques and water management to a targeted group of farmers). If this happens, the direct participants include FFW participants and the farmers receiving the technical assistance and the two groups may overlap. In the case of food rations, direct participants include the individual recipient in the case of individual rations, and the recipient plus his/her family members in the case of family rations.

Direct participants do **not** include those who benefit indirectly from the goods and services provided to the direct participants. Examples of *indirect* participants include:

- Members of the household of a participant farmer who received technical assistance, seeds and tools, other inputs, credit, or livestock;

- Farmers from a neighboring community who might observe the effects of the training and demonstration plots in the target community and decide to adopt or model the new practices themselves;
- The population of all of the communities in a valley that uses a road improved by FFW; or
- All individuals who may have heard a radio message about prices, but who did not receive the other elements of an agricultural intervention necessary to increase incomes.

Direct Distribution Food Assistance Commodities: Food assistance commodities provided directly to participants as in-kind take home rations or for on-site feeding.

Environmental Safeguards: Components of an activity that are developed as part of the project design to deal with mitigating potentially foreseeable negative environmental impacts of activity interventions, maintaining ecological goods and services and promoting their sustainable management by community stakeholders. Environmental safeguards are incorporated into application design and implementation under the mandate of the USAID environmental compliance regulation, 22 CFR 216.

Fiscal Year (FY): The U.S. Government's fiscal year begins October 1 and ends the following September 30.

Gender Analysis: An analytic, social science tool that is used to identify, understand, and explain gaps between males and females that exist in households, communities, and countries, and the relevance of gender norms and power relations in a specific context. Such analysis typically involves examining:

- Differences in the status of women and men and their differential access to assets, resources, opportunities and services;
- The influence of gender roles and norms on the division of time between paid employment, unpaid work (including subsistence production and care for family members), and volunteer activities;
- The influence of gender roles and norms on leadership roles and decision-making; constraints, opportunities, and entry points for narrowing gender gaps and empowering females; and
- Potential differential impacts of development policies and activities on males and females, including unintended or negative consequences.

More information can be found in ADS 205, *Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle*.

Indirect Beneficiaries: Indirect beneficiaries are those who benefit indirectly from the goods and services provided to the direct participants (as defined above). Examples of indirect participants include:

- Members of the household of a participant farmer who received technical assistance, seeds and tools, other inputs, credit, or livestock;

- Farmers from a neighboring community who might observe the effects of the training and demonstration plots in the target community and decide to adopt or model the new practices themselves;
- The population of all of the communities in a valley that uses a road improved by FFW; or
- All individuals who may have heard a radio message about prices, but who did not receive the other elements of an agricultural intervention necessary to increase incomes.

Metric ton(s) (MT): The standard unit of measurement for commodity procurement. One metric ton equals 1,000 kilograms.

Recipient: A recipient is a direct receiver of a food assistance ration. Each programmed recipient should be counted once, regardless of the number of months they will receive food aid. In other words, a recipient who will receive a food assistance ration for 12 months is counted once, as is a recipient who will receive a food assistance ration for three months.

Program Areas and Elements

Program Area and Element: The general category and sub-category, or focus of interventions, with FFP resources. The program areas and elements are defined below, and the updated [Standardized Program Structure and Definitions](#) are on the Department of State website.

Civil Society: Support civil society as an effective arena that empowers citizens to advance democratic values of citizen participation and governmental accountability. This includes supporting an enabling legal environment that protects and promotes civil society and civic action; providing capacity development assistance to civil society organizations; supporting civic participation; bolstering government oversight and accountability activities; strengthening a democratic political culture that values civic engagement, tolerance, and respect for human rights; and strengthening independent and democratic trade/labor unions. Civil society organizations include, but are not limited to, human rights organizations, youth movements, informal groups, religious organizations, labor and trade unions, professional associations, indigenous organizations, women organizations, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex (LGBTI) organizations, and think tanks.

HIV/AIDS: Reduce the transmission and impact of HIV/AIDS through support for prevention, care, and treatment programs.

Maternal and Child Health (MCH): Increase the availability and use of proven life-saving interventions that address the major killers of mothers and children and improve their health status, including effective maternity care and management of obstetric complications; prevention services including newborn care, routine immunization, polio eradication, safe water and hygiene; and treatment of life-threatening childhood illnesses. **Note** that Household-Level Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) interventions fall within the MCH program area. Increase household-level actions to prevent disease regardless of the state of public service infrastructure, including safe water storage, handling, and household treatment, sanitation marketing and

promotion, promotion of handwashing with soap, reduction of exposure to indoor smoke from cooking and to local sources of environmental toxins such as lead.

Family Planning and Reproductive Health: Expand access to high-quality voluntary family planning services and information and reproductive health care. This element contributes to reducing unintended pregnancy and promoting healthy reproductive behaviors of men and women, reducing abortion, and reducing maternal and child mortality and morbidity.

Water Supply and Sanitation: Ensure broadly accessible, reliable, and economically sustainable water and sanitation services for health, security, and prosperity. Example activities include: source water protection; repair, rehabilitation, and/or construction of water sources and water supply infrastructure; and implementation of community-based approaches to the design, construction, and operations & maintenance of facilities. **Note** that household-level interventions related to WASH fall within the MCH program area.

Environment: Objectives, as they relate to FFP participants, include **community-level** interventions to reduce health risks associated with environmental pollution (e.g. due to agriculture or other human activity). Example activities include improving management of solid waste; debris cleanup; drainage; livestock waste management; and environmental control activities for vector-borne disease. **Note** that household-level interventions related to environmental hygiene are reported on as part of the MCH program element.

Climate Change – Adaptation: Adaptation programs enhance resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change of people, places, and livelihoods. They may undertake activities in the following areas: improving access to science and analysis for decision-making in climate-sensitive areas or sectors; establishing effective governance systems to address climate-related risks; and identifying and disseminating actions that increase resilience to climate change by decreasing exposure or sensitivity or by increasing adaptive capacity.

Climate Change – Clean Energy: Clean Energy programs reduce greenhouse gas and other climate-warming emissions while improving livelihoods. Clean energy practices include: development of low emission development plans; renewable energy; end use efficiency; greenhouse gas accounting and inventory systems; enabling environment and energy sector reforms necessary to support sustainable investments and energy systems; enhanced transmission, distribution, and operating systems; flared gas reduction; and renewable energy generation grid integration. Linkages may be made to Area [EG.7 Modern Energy Services](#) but the same funding should not be counted in both parts of the SPSD.

Nutrition: Increase availability and use of proven nutrition interventions to reduce mortality, morbidity, and food insecurity, including nutrition education to improve maternal diets, nutrition during pregnancy, exclusive breastfeeding, and infant and young child feeding practices; fortified or biofortified staple foods, and specialized food products to improve consumption of quality food; and delivery of nutrition services including micronutrient supplementation and community management of acute malnutrition. Strengthen host country capacity by advancing supportive nutrition and food security policies and improving nutrition information systems.

Basic Education: Improve early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education, delivered in formal or non-formal settings. It includes literacy, numeracy, and other basic skills programs for youth and adults.

Social Assistance: Cash or in-kind transfers to the poor or to those suffering from temporary shocks. Health services provided in-kind should be captured under the respective health area(s).

Agriculture: Support the science and practice of food, feed, and fiber production (including forestry, wildlife, fisheries, aquaculture and floriculture) and its relationships to natural resources, processing, marketing, distribution, utilization (including nutrition), and trade.

Private Sector Productivity: Improve policies, laws, regulations, and administrative practices affecting the private sector's ability to compete nationally and internationally. All the elements include not only the adoption and implementation of policies, but also their oversight by elected officials, NGOs, and the private sector. Improve the capacity of private sector entities to respond and link to markets. This area includes work to link the poor to markets through effective and economically sustainable systems and relationships.

Financial Sector: Support the establishment of a sound private, well-functioning, equitable financial sector that fulfills critical roles in a market economy, most importantly financial intermediation – the efficient generation and allocation of savings to their most productive use.

Protection, Assistance and Solutions: The provision of effective protection, assistance, and durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless persons, and other victims of conflict and disasters. Activities included herein should be linked to relevant human rights areas.

Disaster Readiness: Improvement of the capacity of the U.S. Government, host countries and the international community to reduce vulnerabilities to disasters and respond better to humanitarian emergencies.

APPENDIX II: Past Performance Reference Questionnaire

Only Apparently Successful Applicants must upload the completed section A of this questionnaire to the [FFP Partner Portal](#). A successful applicant's history of performance is part of the pre-award risk assessment. The remaining sections will be completed by USAID.

A. CONTRACT/GRANT/COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT INFORMATION:

Name of Company/Organization Being Evaluated:

Address:

Contract/Award Number:

Contract/Award Value:

Contract/Award Type:

Period of Performance:

B. DESCRIPTION OF CONTRACT/AWARD:

During the contract/award being evaluated, this firm was the

Prime Contractor/Awardee

Significant sub-contractor/sub-awardee

Team Member

Other (Describe):

Does anything other than a customer/supplier relationship exist between the firm being evaluated and your organization?

No

Yes

If yes, please describe the nature of this relationship:

C. EVALUATOR:

Name:

Title:

Organization:

Address

Telephone No:
Email Address:

D. PERFORMANCE

Please describe and explain the below of the applicant, in regard to performance and/or management abilities:

- How well the Applicant performed.
- The relevancy of the work performed under the previous award to food assistance programming.
- Instances of good performance.
- Instances of poor performance.
- Significant achievements.
- Significant problems.
- Any indications of excellent or exceptional performance in the most critical areas.

APPENDIX III: FY 2020 Pre-Award Co-Creation / Refine and Implement (R&I)

This appendix expands on the co-creation and R&I guidance provided in Sections I, II, IV, and V of this RFA. FFP will use both pre-award co-creation and post-award R&I for the Mali DFSA. The purpose of this approach is to work with an Applicant to have the greatest chance of success in Mali to achieve the activity objectives. This approach aims to ensure the activity is highly focused, tailored to the context, and adaptively managed. This approach differs from the Refine & Implement co-creation model FFP has employed recently for DFSAs in two key ways: (1) applicants are requested to submit Initial Applications, which will include a limited page technical application and cost application, and (2) applicants will be requested to act in a partnership role with USAID in co-development of an activity design pre-award, **and** under substantial involvement in the R&I process post-award.

During pre-award co-creation, the ASA from Phase 2 will be expected to co-develop with USAID/FFP a full program description, which will be incorporated into the resulting Cooperative Agreement. Please refer to Sections IV Application and Submission Information and V Application Review Information (Phase 3 Final Application) for a detailed description of anticipated outcome of the workshop and final application.

During post-award refinement, the anticipated Awardee will be expected to act in partnership with FFP under the terms of substantial involvement to further refine and adapt the activity design, technical approaches, and conceptual framework for the purpose of improved impact and sustainability of results. For the Mali DFSA, FFP expects implementation of activities to begin soon after award to address immediate needs and to develop promising approaches through "learning-by-doing." Early implementation of interventions must have clear evidence base or meet urgent needs. Applicants should also use the initial implementation to learn and make revisions to the approach as part of the initial refinement process resulting in the "R&I Workshop," wherein FFP and awardee agree on changes. FFP expects the initial 6-12 months of the award to include more intense plans for refinement, but that the awardee will continue employing principles of adaptive management and 'refinement' approaches through the life of award (e.g. closing knowledge gaps, refining planning, testing and piloting innovative approaches, updating the conceptual framework, and continuing stakeholder engagement and coordination with other relevant actors). The anticipated stages and outcomes of the post-award Refinement period include:

- During initial refinement, new awardees carry out a number of activities including: implementation of evidence based interventions, pre-implementation formative research that addresses evidence and knowledge gaps and strengthens understanding of local context; community consultation to enhance visioning and local engagement; preparation for implementation through hiring, training, and procurement of goods and services; small scale implementation research and piloting of new approaches and implementation strategies; participatory stakeholder engagement for strengthened local partnerships, capacity development and coordination; and refining the activity theory of change (TOC) and implementation plans.
- After the end of the initial refinement period, in consultation with FFP, the IP will have a revised theory of change, updated implementation planning, fully trained

staff on the processes and conceptual framework, and a well developed and tested social and behavior change strategy. During the refinement period, IPs may start to implement activities that are based on well-grounded and supported evidence.

- After an external, final evaluation in year four, R&I may allow highly successful activities to be extended and continue for up to five years past the traditional five-year development food security activity time frame.⁶⁴

Pre-award Co-creation and Refinement – Illustrative Key Collaboration Events may include:

Pre-Award Co-Creation Workshop (required)

- Format: Approximately one week workshop in Bamako
- Attendees: Representation from the Apparently Successful Applicant (One key personnel should expect to attend); consortium partners or sub-awardees as applicable; USAID Mission and FFP HQ staff; other stakeholders as applicable and determined by USAID.
- Purpose: co-develop final program description for final award, discuss threshold and non-threshold issues
- Location: Bamako, Mali
- Timing: Pre-submission of final application;

USAID will not be responsible for costs associated with travel or presentation costs for the Co-Creation Workshop.

Kickoff Meeting (required)

- Format: three-day in person and/or remote meeting
- Attendees: field and HQ representation from the anticipated awardee; USAID Mission and FFP HQ staff
- Purpose: Discuss non-threshold issues, if any remain following co-creation; overview of US grants and federal regulations as applicable to the award
- Location: Bamako, Mali
- Timing: Within weeks of award after discussion and agreement with IPs;

Gender, Youth, and Social Dynamics Consultation (required)

- Format: three day in-person meeting
- Attendees: IP field and HQ staff from each awardee (would be good to be more specific); USAID Mission and FFP HQ staff
- Purpose: Ensure gender youth, and social dynamics considerations are adequately incorporated into the design
- Location: Bamako, Mali
- Timing: Approximately ten weeks after award;

M&E / R&I Inception Workshop 1 (required)

⁶⁴ Any extension beyond the initial five-year award is subject to the Justification of Restricted Eligibility (JRE) approval process in USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) 303.

- Format: five day, in person workshop with IP field and HQ staff from each awardee, USAID Mission and FFP HQ staff
- Purpose: Pending outcomes of the Pre-award co-creation workshop, may address the theory of change, knowledge gaps, technical approaches, targeting, and refinement year planning.
- Location: Bamako, Mali
- Timing: Approximately 14 weeks after award.

Baseline Workshop (required)

- Format: two days with IP field and HQ staff from each awardee, USAID Mission and FFP HQ staff
- Location: Bamako, Mali
- Timing: Approximately 16 weeks after award.

R&I Workshop 2 (required)

- Format: multi day workshop with IP field and HQ staff from each awardee, USAID Mission and FFP HQ staff
- Purpose: FFP and awardee agree on adjustment to design, management, targeting, and staffing approaches based on learning and initial refinement of activities
- Location: In country
- Timing: Approximately 12-14 months after award.

Chief of Party Presentations (optional)

- Format: Half-day presentation and discussion / one presentation per awardee
- Location: In country
- Timing: Approximately 13-15 months after award

APPENDIX IV: Key Sectoral and Contextual Background Sources of Relevance

The resources within this Annex are intended to guide applicants to key technical and programmatic resources relevant to the design and objectives of this RFA.

- NORC, University of Chicago and Université des Sciences, des Techniques, et des Technologies de Bamako. December 2019. Mali Food Security Desk Review, Mali Food Security: Political Economy Analysis, Mali Food Security Stakeholder Mapping. Link to reports: <https://www.rtachessn.org/blog/mali-food-security-analysis/>

These reports (in French and English), commissioned by FFP through the [Research Technical Assistance Center](#) (RTAC) and completed by the Université des Sciences, des Techniques, et des Technologies de Bamako, provide useful background on the target geographic zone for the FFP RFA. Applicants may find useful information based on secondary literature and some limited field research on the food security situation and some key political and economic considerations, as well as a general overview of important actors in the geographic zone for consideration.

- Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)

<https://www.acleddata.com/about-acled/>

ACLED is a disaggregated conflict collection, analysis and crisis mapping project. ACLED collects the dates, actors, types of violence, locations, and fatalities of all reported political violence and protest events. ACLED's aim is to capture the forms, actors, dates and locations of political violence and protest as it occurs across states. The ACLED team conducts analysis to describe, explore and test conflict scenarios, and makes both data and analysis open to freely use by the public.

- Garred, M. (2015). Making Sense of Turbulent Contexts: Local Perspectives on Large-Scale Conflict.
<https://books.google.com/books?id=DTM6CgAAQBAJ&printsec=copyright#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Designed to bring together local actors and participatory methodology into country-level conflict analysis, with the aim of advocating participation as a standard pillar of conflict analysis. for emergency response staff of international NGOs. It is also useful for staff involved in planning and design of development or advocacy programs in countries experiencing instability.

- Hidrobo, Roy, et al; IFPRI (2018). Filets Sociaux (Jigiséméjiri) Program Midline Report
<http://ebrary.ifpri.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15738coll2/id/133081>

This report presents findings from the impact evaluation of the Jigiséméjiri program at midline. It first provides background on the evaluation, including details on the program and interventions. It then relates first-order, second-order, and third-order outcomes of interest in a conceptual framework, which guides our analysis and structures the report. The report next describes the evaluation design, sampling, and data collection process. It

then presents statistics on beneficiaries' experience with the program. Last, it uses the baseline and midline data, exploiting the randomized design, to estimate the impacts of the program on its beneficiary population at midline, distinguishing between household-level outcomes and child-level outcomes. Given that the baseline report showed that the randomization process was successful at creating similar groups for comparison for the impact evaluation with similar pre-program characteristics, the impacts at midline can be interpreted as truly caused by the program rather than simply correlated with its receipt.

- Institut National de Statistiques Mali (INSTAT/Mali). Enquête Démographique et de Santé pour Mali (Demographic and Health Survey, DHS, Mali)

https://dhsprogram.com/Where-We-Work/Country-Main.cfm?ctry_id=0&ctry_c=ML

The most recent national Demographic and Health Survey was conducted in 2018. The public report and data available provides recent updates on the general health status of the Malian population, including indicators critical to FFP, including malnutrition.

- Institut National de Statistiques Mali (INSTAT/Mali) (2018). Enquête Nationale Nutritionnelle et de Mortalité Rétrospective suivant la méthodologie, SMART (Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions) (National Nutrition and Mortality Survey using the SMART Methodology) for Mali.⁶⁵

An eighth edition report on nutritional and mortality surveillance for the period of July-August 2018 using the SMART methodology. An annual, nationwide survey carried out by the Government of Mali's Ministries of Health and Public Hygiene, and Planning and Population (with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Program (WFP), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The SMART method and this report represent efforts to harmonize nutritional monitoring in Mali and to create a national nutrition database. The report provides region-level data on acute and chronic malnutrition, underweight, and mortality in children under five, and reports on region-level food insecurity using Cadre Harmonise data.

- International NGO Safety Information (INSO)

<https://www.ngosafety.org/country/mali>

The International NGO Safety Organization (INSO) is an international charity that supports the safety of aid workers in high risk contexts. INSO provides registered NGOs with a range of free services including real-time incident tracking, analytical reports, safety related data and mapping, crisis management support, staff orientations and training. INSO services help NGOs with their day-to-day risk management responsibilities and improve their overall situational awareness to support evidence-based humanitarian access decisions.

- International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), and Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) (2019): Regional Policies and Response to Manage Pastoral Movements within the ECOWAS Region. <https://publications.iom.int/books/regional-policies-and-response-manage-pastoral-movements-within-ecowas-region>

⁶⁵ https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/rapport_final_smart_septembre_2018_mali.pdf

- Levine & Mosel (2014). Supporting Resilience in Difficult Places: A critical look at applying the ‘resilience’ concept in countries where crises are the norm. A report from the Humanitarian Policy Group.

<https://www.odi.org/publications/8326-supporting-resilience-difficult-places>

- TANGO (2018). USAID/*Mali Resilience Research Report*.
<https://www.fsnnetwork.org/mali-resilience-research-report>

Synthesis of factors to strengthen household and community resilience in Mali that was prepared for implementing partners, USAID/FFP, the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) Project, and USAID’s Center for Resilience (C4R). This report complements the 2016 Baseline Study for the USAID/FFP DFSA. The research examines factors, in the context of resilience and mitigation of the negative effects of shocks and stresses on well-being, which can serve as the foundation for an evidence base for improving resilience programming in the DFSA targeted geographic zone.

- Tronc, Grace, et al. (2019). Realities and Myths of the “Triple Nexus”: Local Perspectives on Peacebuilding, Development, and Humanitarian Action in Mali.
https://hhi.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/publications/haf_-_mali.pdf

This paper examines analyzes the viability of the “triple nexus” concept in Mali—to forge an operational and policy alignment between international peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian efforts. The paper is based on desk analysis, and stakeholder interviews and consultations, including with government and non-state armed group representatives, civil society members, activists, journalists, humanitarians, analysts, diplomats, entrepreneurs, beneficiaries, displaced people, and students (Dec 2018 - March 2019). The paper proceeds in four parts. Part I examines the key elements driving instability in this context. Part II focuses on international responses. Part III discusses the implications for the “triple nexus.” Part IV offers concluding remarks.

- US Agency for International Development (USAID) (2018). Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS): Mali Country Plan

<https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1867/global-food-security-strategy-gfss-mali-country-plan>

An inter-agency, U.S. Government plan intended to serve as an overarching framework for integrated food security, nutrition and resilience programming. The plan is intended to describe the key drivers of food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty. These key drivers stem from a complex set of underlying conditions that exist at the individual, household, community and system level.

- USAID (2014). AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCC CLIMATE CHANGE IN MALI SERIES <https://www.climatelinks.org/resources/introduction-arcc-climate-change-mali-series>

For this series, ARCC mapped the relative climate vulnerability across Mali and produced an overview of the potential impacts of climate change on Mali’s water resources. The series also includes a study of the promotion and adoption of field level adaptation practices and a report presenting the results of an exercise in which specific adaptive practices were modeled in the Mopti region. The final study introduced below

consists of an evaluation of two national institutions critical to the support of climate change adaptation in Mali.

- USAID. MAPPING MALI'S CLIMATE CHANGE VULNERABILITY:
<https://www.climatelinks.org/resources/mapping-malis-climate-change-vulnerability>

This brief gives the results of a climate change vulnerability mapping study in Mali. It highlights areas that are particularly vulnerable due to a combination of high climatic stress, high sensitivity and low adaptive capacity.

- USAID Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for Mali Wetlands
https://ecd.usaid.gov/document.php?doc_id=51713

The PEA examines the environmental impact of a number of USAID activities operating in two wetlands in central Mali which have been designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention - the Inner Niger Delta and the Sourou Floodplain. USAID presents a series of commitments which will contribute to the protection of these wetlands which are home to numerous threatened and endangered species, while safeguarding livelihoods of the Malian people who rely on these Ramsar wetlands for a range of goods and services.

- USAID Youth in Development Policy:

<https://www.usaid.gov/policy/youth>

This policy puts forward an overarching goal for youth development along with related objectives and outcomes to be achieved. It outlines a conceptual approach to youth in development and provides guiding principles and operational practices in support of USAID's efforts to mainstream youth in development, carry out more effective programs, and elevate youth participation. Importantly, this policy will position USAID and its partners to capitalize on favorable global population trends by investing in programs and policies by, with, and for youth that seize opportunity and lead to sustainable growth and human development, including through the realization of what is often referred to as a demographic dividend.

- USAID/Mali (2015). USAID Mali Country Development and Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for 2015-2020

<https://www.usaid.gov/mali/cdcs>

This five-year CDCS for Mali centers around the overarching goal of "Maliens secure a democratic, resilient and prosperous future." The CDCS seeks a whole-of-mission, cross-sectoral approach and integration of governance and resilience across traditional technical sectors of economic growth, education, democracy, rights and governance and health. USAID/Mali's projected investments for fiscal years (FY) 2016-2020 are \$600 million. The four objectives of the CDCS are:

- Stabilization of Conflict-Affected Areas Reinforced (transition)
- Public Trust in Government Improved (governance)
- Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable Communities and Households Improved (resilience)

- Socio-Economic Well-Being Advanced (prosperity)
- UNOCHA Mali Humanitarian information Products (<https://www.unocha.org/mali>), including UNOCHA (2018, 2019). *Mali Humanitarian Response Plan* (2018, 2019)
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/mali>

A UNOCHA document summarizing the annual, estimated humanitarian need for PIO and PVO partners in Mali. Summarizes need around the cluster/sectors of shelter, WASH, education, nutrition, protection, health, and food security.

- World Bank (2018). Living standards and Measurement Survey for Mali (LSMS Mali) 2018 and the Integrated Survey on Agriculture (ISA).

LSMS-ISA Mali page: <http://surveys.worldbank.org/lmsms/programs/integrated-surveys-agriculture-ISA/mali>

World Bank Microdata Library:

<http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/3409>

Nationally representative household survey, covering a range of topics including demography, education, savings, labor, food security, agriculture, livestock and shocks. Particular attention has been addressed to the measurement of agricultural income (a long-sought goal from the Ministry of Agriculture in Mali).

- World Bank (2018). The evidence is in: how should youth employment programs in low-income countries be designed?

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/837861530219586540/The-evidence-is-in-how-should-youth-employment-programs-in-low-income-countries-be-designed>

The document reviews several impact evaluations looking at different implementation strategies: vocational skills, life skills, policy change, etc. It also emphasizes that historically many youth-centered activities have resulted in youth simply displacing older, less qualified people from jobs instead of expanding the labor market.

- World Food Program Mali (WFP/Mali) (2018). Enquête Nationale sur la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle (ENSAN, National Food Security and Nutrition Survey).

<https://www.wfp.org/publications/mali-enquete-nationale-sur-la-securite-alimentaire-et-nutritionnelle-ensan-mali-septembre-20>

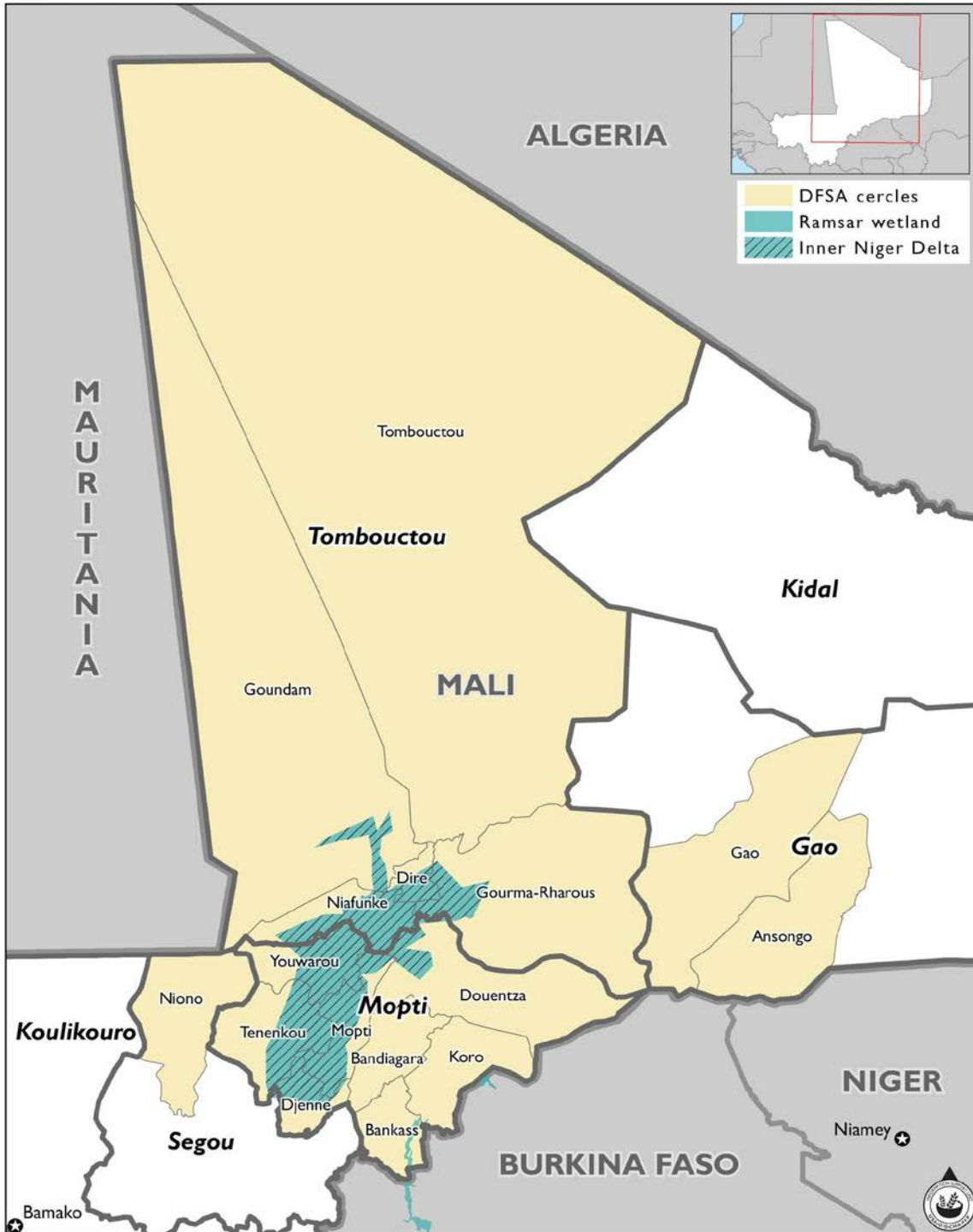
A joint report from WFP, FAO, FEWS NET and the Food Security Cluster of Mali that provides Early Warning reporting on acute food insecurity in Mali. The overall objective of this evaluation is to update the key indicators of food security in order to understand the current situation of household food and nutrition security, as well as its evolution over the next 6 months.

APPENDIX V: Maps of USAID Programming and Relevant Vulnerability Indicators

These maps in this Annex provide a national- and county-level analysis of vulnerability indicators, population, and relevant USAID programming and are intended to help applicants visualize the key criteria that drove the geographic selection process for this activity. (Note: See maps on following pages)



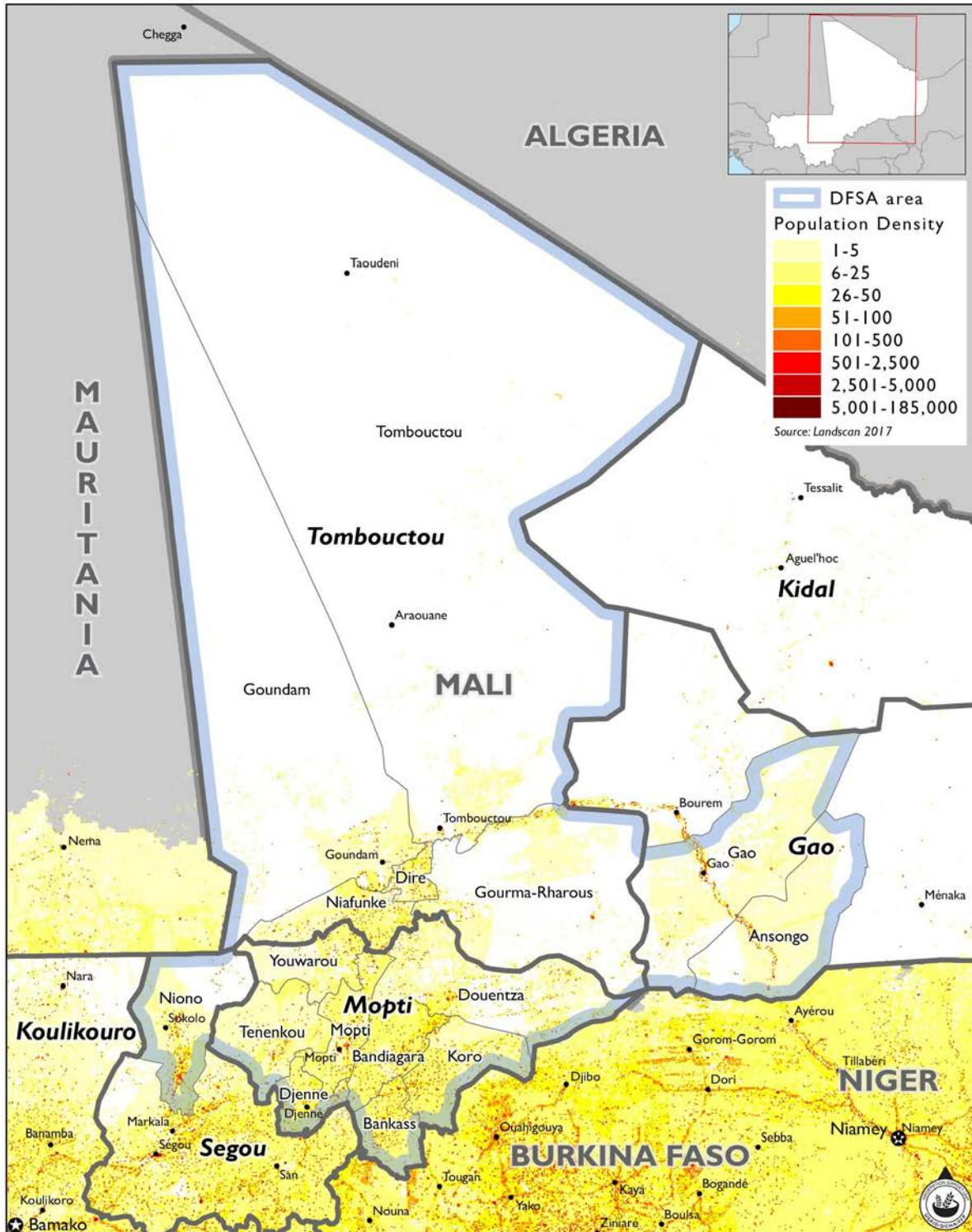
PROPOSED DFSA FOCUS GEOGRAPHY MALI



The boundaries and names used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the U.S. Government.



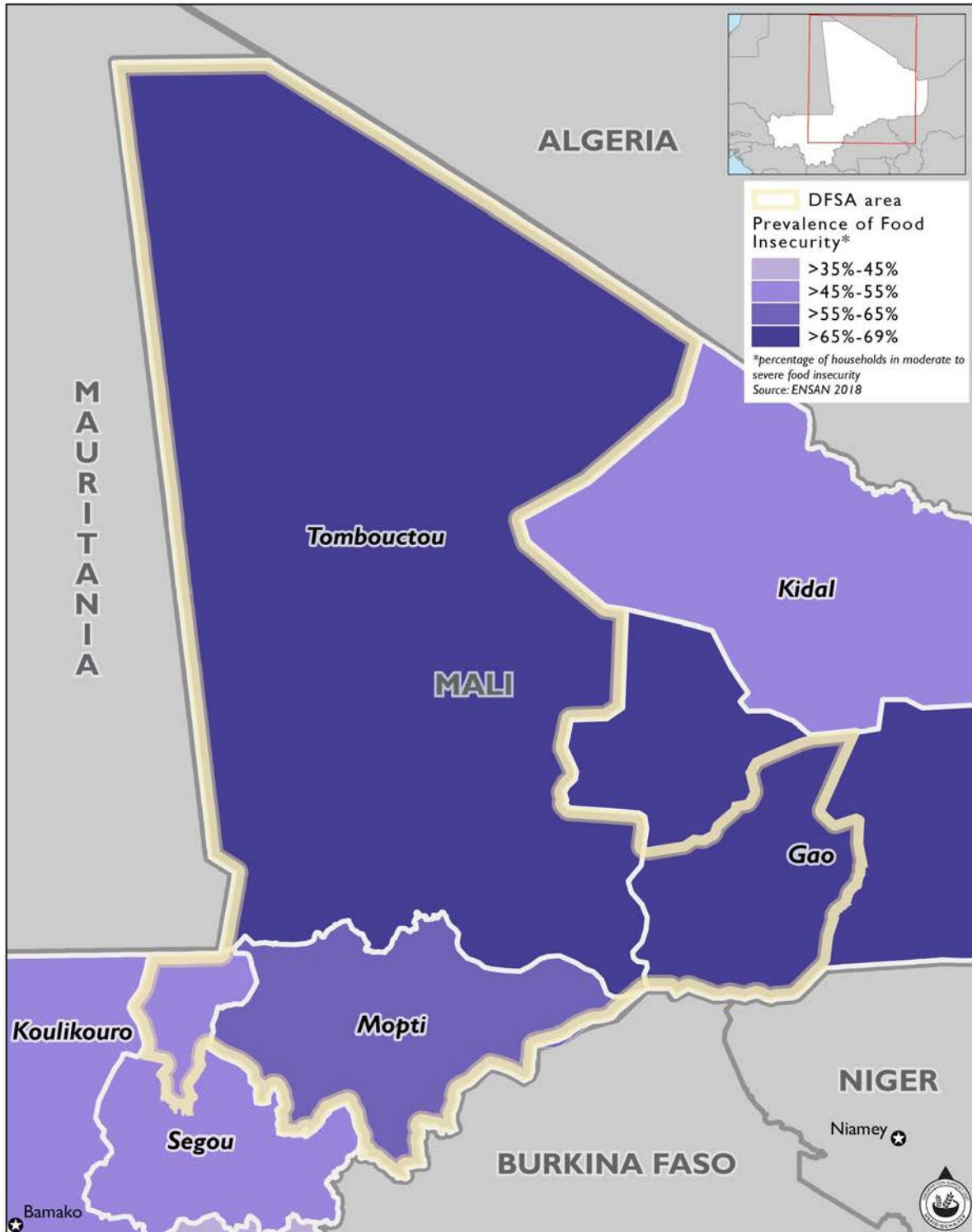
POPULATION DENSITY MALI



The boundaries and names used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the U.S. Government.



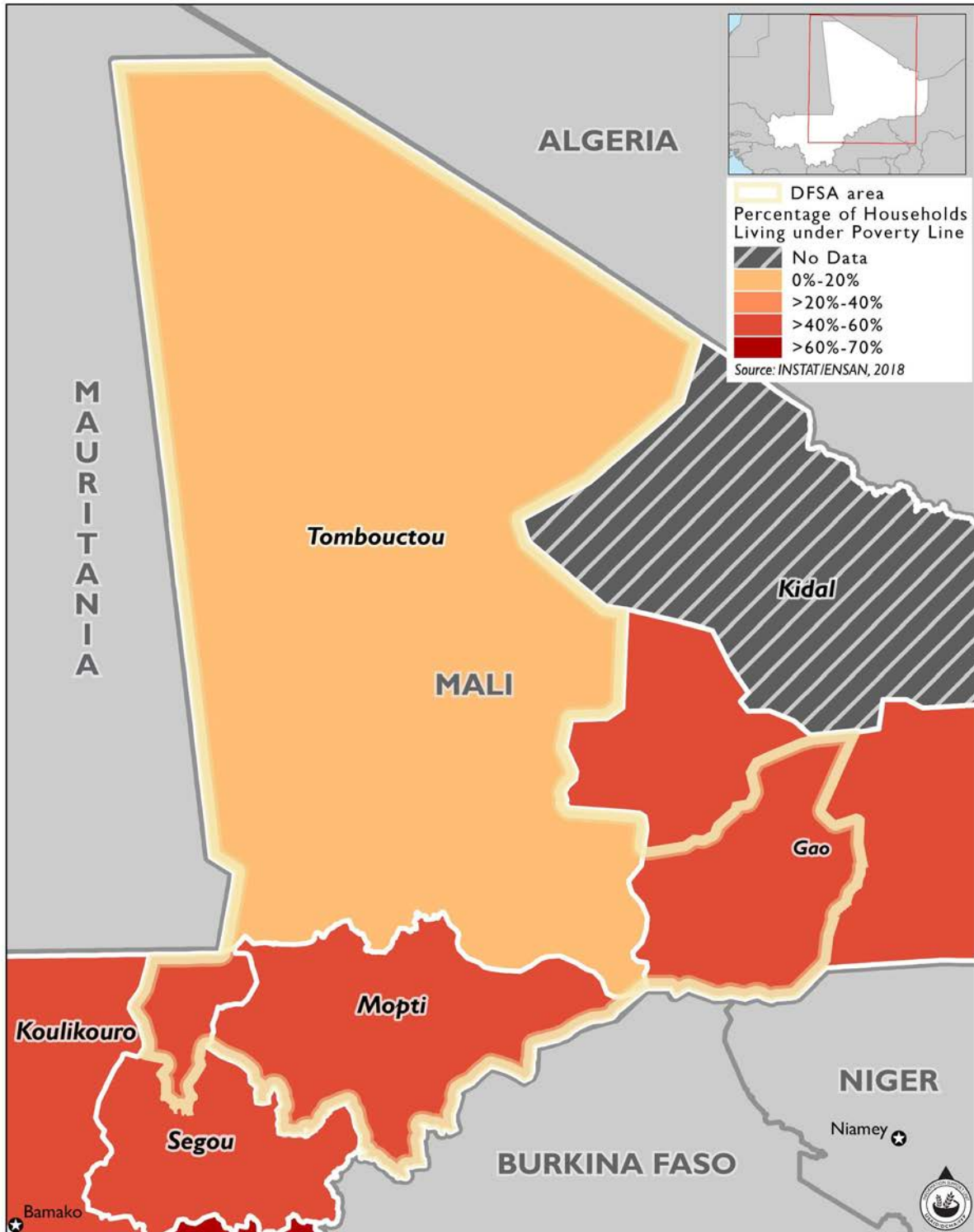
PREVALENCE OF FOOD INSECURITY MALI



The boundaries and names used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the U.S. Government.



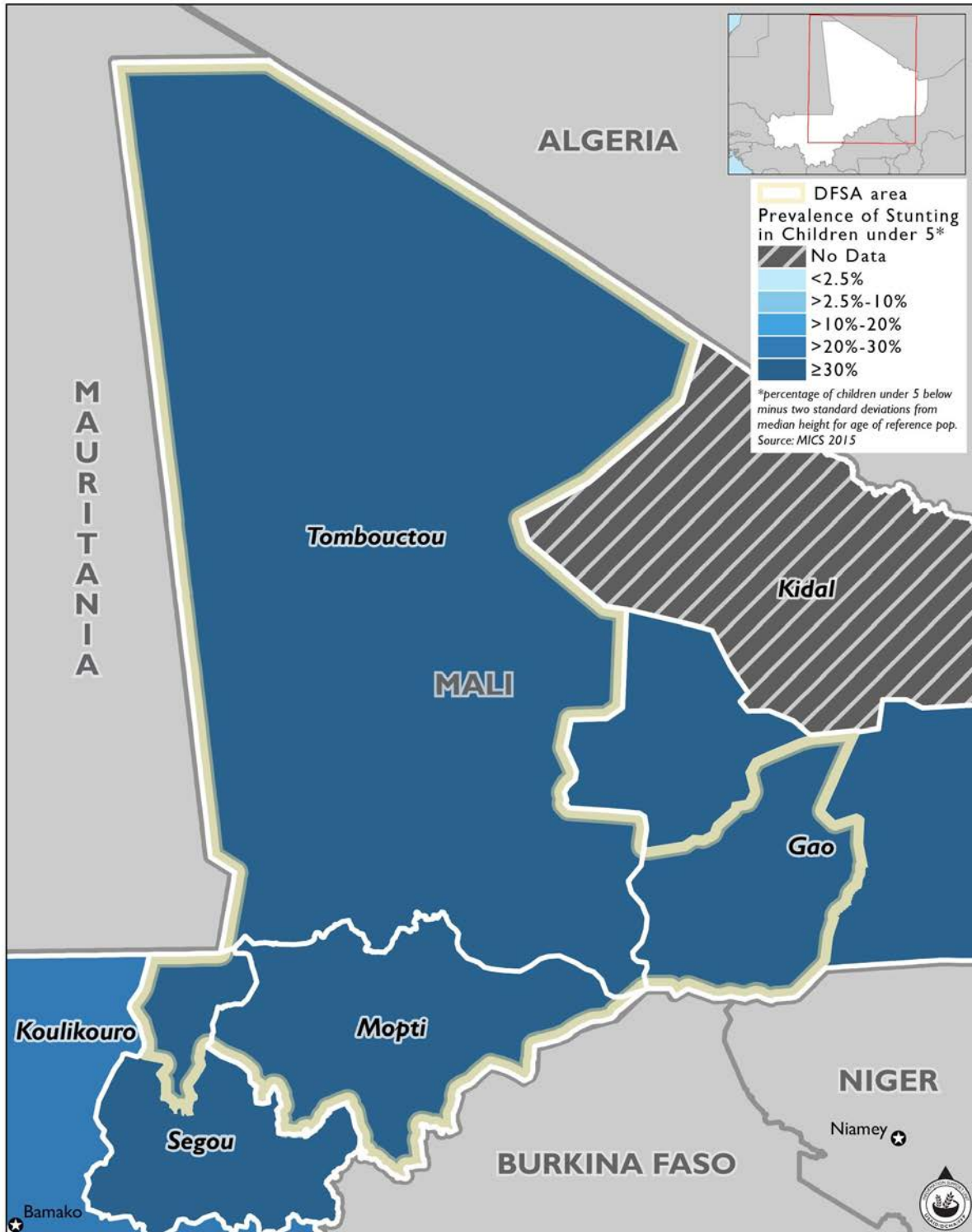
INCIDENCE OF POVERTY MALI



The boundaries and names used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the U.S. Government.



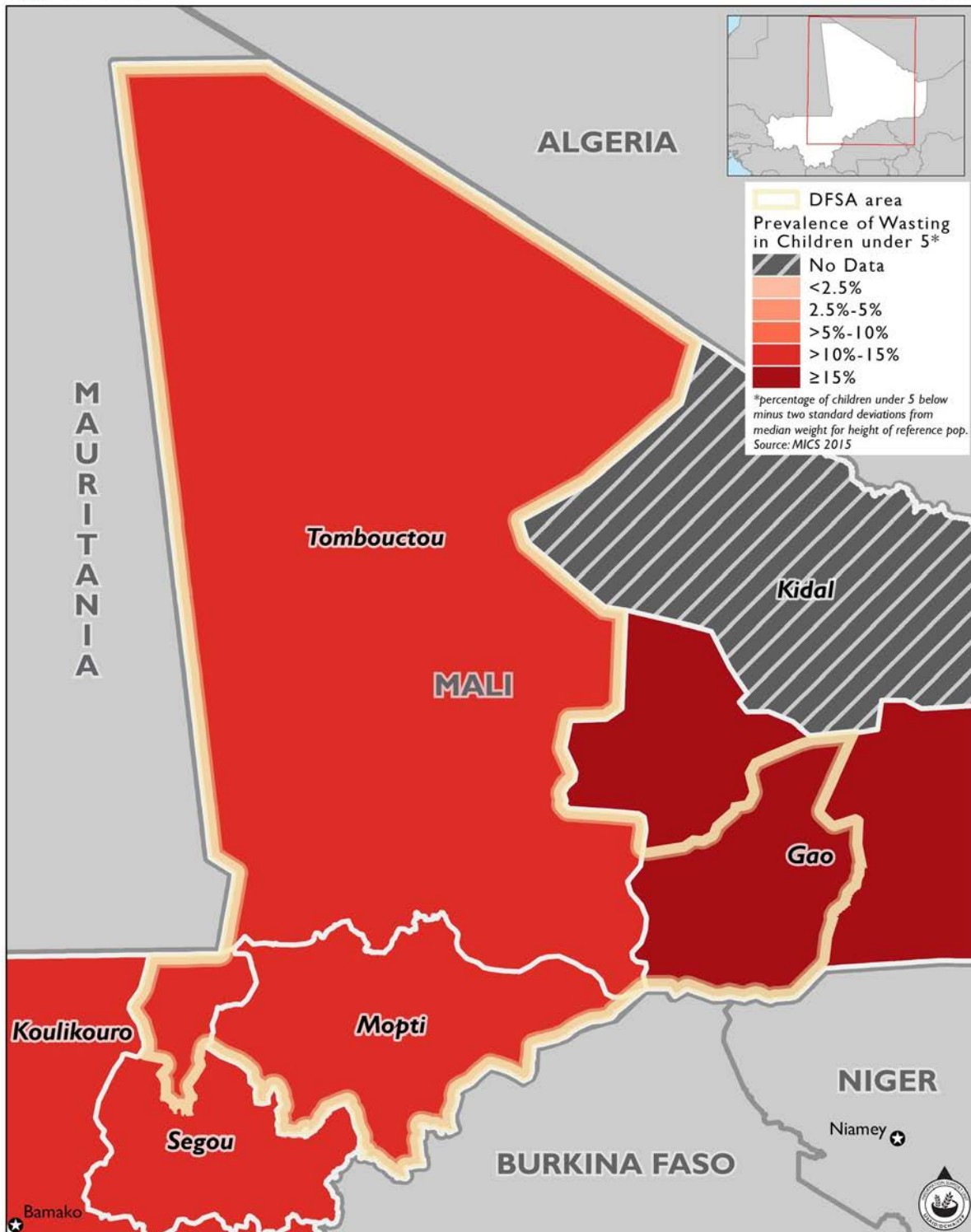
PREVALENCE OF STUNTING IN CHILDREN UNDER 5 MALI



The boundaries and names used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the U.S. Government.



PREVALENCE OF WASTING IN CHILDREN UNDER 5 MALI



The boundaries and names used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the U.S. Government.

APPENDIX VI: FEWS NET Enhanced Market Analysis Mali 2019

Please find [Full Report](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00W6KR.pdf) here: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00W6KR.pdf.