

# Durable Communities and Economic Opportunities (DCEO/Tahfeez)

## Annual Program Statement (APS) No. TO3-01

Issuance Date: September 8, 2024

Dear Applicant:

Durable Communities and Economic Opportunities (DCEO/Tahfeez), implemented by Chemonics International, is seeking grant concept papers for implementation of activities designed to address key issues in five Iraqi communities in order to strengthen community cohesion. The grants will be awarded and implemented in accordance with USAID and US Government regulations governing grants under contracts and DCEO/Tahfeez internal grant management policies.

The project will hold a pre-application workshop on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024. This workshop will allow eligible and interested applicants the chance to ask questions about the APS and receive guidance on how to complete the concept paper template. Interested applicants that meet the eligibility requirements defined in Section III below and would like to attend this workshop must request the invitation by sending the participant's name and the organization's name to [dceograntssolicitation@iraqdceo.com](mailto:dceograntssolicitation@iraqdceo.com). Only one person may attend from each organization.

Project and Chemonics employees may not ask for, and applicants are prohibited from offering, any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, thing of value, or compensation to obtain or reward improper favorable treatment regarding this solicitation. Any improper request from a project employee should be reported to the chief of party or [BusinessConduct@chemonics.com](mailto:BusinessConduct@chemonics.com).

The following Annexes are included with this APS:

- **Annex A** – Grant Concept Paper Form

### SECTION I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

#### IA. OBJECTIVE

DCEO/Tahfeez plans to award grants to Iraqi NGOs to address key issues in five communities in order to strengthen community cohesion. The Durable Communities grant program aims to increase vulnerable communities' capacity to manage and recover from political, economic, and social instability, including the shocks and stressors it precipitates.

The program works through two objectives:

1. Community capacity to identify conflict drivers and solutions increased.
2. Diverse partners, community leadership, and resource mobilization enhanced.

DCEO/Tahfeez works directly with selected communities to identify community issues, using an inclusive community engagement approach developed specifically for Iraqi communities.

Beginning in early 2024, Durable Communities engaged five new Iraqi communities. Following community engagement, the project has identified key issues in each community which are negatively affecting community cohesion.

In addition to the activities implemented by DCEO/Tahfeez, this APS aims to solicit new and innovative approaches to addressing the identified issues which are described in detail in the program description section below.

## **IB. BACKGROUND**

Durable Communities and Economic Opportunities (DCEO) project, also known by its Arabic name, Tahfeez, is a five-year project financed by USAID and implemented by Chemonics International. The goal of the project is to increase the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities by identifying and mitigating drivers of conflict and enhancing community leadership of inclusive development.

## **IC. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

This APS aims to solicit innovative activity concepts to address community issues the communities supported by DCEO/Tahfeez. Organizations should include one community per concept paper. It is permitted to submit multiple concept papers from the same organization, but only one per community.

### **Shirqat**

After the Iraqi security forces regained control of a district in northern Salah al-Din Governorate in September 2016, following its capture by ISIS in 2014, the community faced significant challenges. The predominantly Sunni Arab community has been cautious about the return of families associated with ISIS. Despite efforts by tribal leaders and local authorities, there has been resistance to fully integrating these returnees. The community also continues to lack essential services, which has strained trust between residents and local authorities. The distribution of resources has contributed to political tensions, and the community feels their concerns, particularly regarding the return of ISIS-affiliated families, have not been adequately addressed, hindering reconciliation efforts.

#### *Key Issues*

1. The community in Shirqat remains resistant to the return of ISIS-affiliated families, which has strained reconciliation efforts and deepened local tensions.
2. A perceived unequal distribution of resources has weakened trust between the community and local authorities, exacerbating political tensions.

### **Al-Shora**

Al Shora, located about 45 kilometers south of Mosul, is home to around 60,000 people, including 15,000 in the town and 45,000 across 65 villages. The community is working to recover from the impact of ISIS, particularly in reintegrating returnee populations. However, internal tensions and negative perceptions have strained trust between the youth and government forces, contributing to a challenging security

environment. Women in the community, especially those connected to former ISIS members or victims, face significant barriers. Tensions persist between families of ISIS members and victims, as victims' families feel overlooked by the support given to ISIS families, deepening divisions, and resentment within the community.

#### *Key Issues*

1. Tensions persist in Al Shora between ISIS-affiliated families and victims' families, with feelings of marginalization and resentment deepening divisions within the community.
2. Women and youth in Al Shora face significant challenges, including limited access to essential services for women and a lack of engagement opportunities for youth, contributing to ongoing social tensions.

### **Abu Al-Khaseeb**

Abu Al-Khaseeb, a district in Basrah with a rich history, faces significant challenges due to the rise of unplanned settlements and overstretched public services. These issues have led to poor living conditions, social exclusion, and an increase in negative coping mechanisms. The community also struggles with limited job opportunities, educational restrictions for girls, underrepresentation of youth in local governance, and limited youth and volunteer activities. Tensions have escalated due to the unfair distribution of services and growing disparities between indigenous residents and newcomers in informal settlements.

#### *Key Issues*

1. Challenges from unplanned settlements, leading to poor living conditions, social exclusion, and other negative influences on the community.
2. The community is struggling with limited opportunities and support for youth, alongside tensions arising from the unequal distribution of services.

### **Heet**

The city of Heet, located on the western bank of the Euphrates River in Anbar Governorate, is navigating complex social and political challenges in the wake of ISIS's occupation from 2014 to 2016. The community is divided among those who fled early, those who stayed, and those who left during the liberation, leading to mutual distrust and accusations of complicity with ISIS. Families associated with ISIS face significant social exclusion and discrimination.

#### *Key Issue*

1. Deep social divisions and mistrust stemming from the aftermath of ISIS occupation, exacerbated by discrimination against families associated with ISIS.

### **Shekhan**

Shekhan, located at the intersection of Ninewa and Duhok Governorates, is known for its diverse landscape and ethnic makeup, including a Yazidi majority alongside Muslim and Christian communities. While it has not been directly occupied by ISIS, the influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and

political instability since 2014 have shifted the area's social dynamics. These changes, along with the arrival of individuals unfamiliar with local customs, have heightened tensions and contributed to societal fragmentation. The resulting demographic shifts have affected Yazidi and Christian communities, leading to increased misunderstandings and a sense of marginalization, which has disrupted community cohesion and strained inter-religious and ethnic relationships.

#### *Key Issue*

1. Heightened tensions and societal fragmentation due to demographic shifts, impacting inter-religious and ethnic relations.

**Please note:** DCEO/Tahfeez recognizes that some grantees may need technical assistance to more effectively carry out the activity. Consequently, applicants are encouraged to specify their needs for technical assistance and/or training in their application.

## **ID. AUTHORITY/GOVERNING REGULATIONS**

DCEO/Tahfeez grant awards are made under the authority of the U.S. Foreign Affairs Act and USAID's Automated Directive System (ADS) 302.3.5.6, "Grants Under Contracts." Awards will adhere to guidance provided under [ADS Chapter 303](#), "Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations" and will be within the terms of the USAID Standard Provisions as linked in the annexes, as well as the DCEO/Tahfeez grants procedures.

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

- 2 CFR 200 [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, Subpart E](#) (U.S. applicants are subject to 2 CFR 200 in its entirety)

Full text of 2 CFR 200 can be found at [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200\\_main\\_02.tpl](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl) and 2 CFR 700 at <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=531ffcc47b660d86ca8bbc5a64eed128&mc=true&node=pt2.1.700&rgn=div5>. DCEO/Tahfeez is required to ensure that all organizations receiving USAID grant funds comply with the guidance found in these circulars, as applicable to the respective terms and conditions of their grant awards.

Under the DCEO/Tahfeez grant program, USAID retains the right at all times to terminate, in whole or in part, DCEO/Tahfeez grant-making authorities.

## **SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION**

DCEO/Tahfeez anticipates approximately five (5) grant awards. The maximum budget per grant award is IQD 25,000,000 but DCEO anticipates an average award of IQD 15,000,000 per activity. The duration of any grant award under this solicitation is expected to be no more than three months.

## **SECTION III. ELIGIBILITY**

### **IIIA. ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS**

- Applicants must be a registered Iraqi non-profit entity formally constituted, recognized by and in good standing with appropriate Iraqi authorities, and compliant with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations.
- Applicants may only submit one concept paper per prime organization under this APS.
- Applicants must have established experience in the proposed geographic area and provide details on all projects completed in the target community in the past performance section (section 4 in the concept paper form).
- Applicants must display sound management in the form of financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures and present a system of internal controls that safeguard assets; protect against fraud, waste, and abuse; and support the achievement of program goals and objectives. DCEO/Tahfeez will assess this capability prior to awarding a grant.
- The project will work with the successful grantee to draft a marking and branding plan which will be annexed to the grant agreement.
- Faith-based and community groups will receive equal opportunity for funding in accordance with the mandated guidelines laid out in ADS 303.3.28 except for faith-based organizations whose objectives are for discriminatory and religious purposes, and whose main objective of the grant is of a religious nature.

## **SECTION IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **IVA. INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS**

Applicants must propose strategies for the implementation of the program description described above, introducing innovations that are appropriate to their organizational strengths.

### **IVB. GRANT CONCEPT PAPER**

This is a two-stage application process. The first stage is for the applicant to submit a concept paper. Concept paper (Annex A) will be evaluated against the merit review criteria listed in Section V below. If the applicant successfully meets or exceeds the merit review criteria, they will be invited to submit a full application. Only those applicants who meet or exceed the merit review criteria at the concept paper stage will be invited to submit a full grant application. Concept Papers will be reviewed on a rolling basis with the first review occurring on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024, and the Second review occurring on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

Applicants shall present their concept paper in the format provided and shall follow the instructions and guidelines listed in the concept paper template (Annex A).

The concept paper must be signed by an authorized agent of the Applicant.

#### **IVC. PRE-AWARD RISK ASSESSMENT**

All organizations selected for award are subject to a pre-award risk assessment conducted by DCEO/Tahfeez to ascertain whether the organization has the minimum management capabilities required to handle US government funds.

#### **IVD. INELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

DCEO/Tahfeez grant funds may not be utilized for the following:

- Construction or infrastructure activities of any kind.
- Ceremonies, parties, celebrations, or “representation” expenses.
- Purchases of restricted goods, such as: restricted agricultural commodities, motor vehicles including motorcycles, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, contraceptive products, used equipment; without the previous approval of DCEO/Tahfeez, or prohibited goods, prohibited goods under USAID regulations, including but not limited to the following: abortion equipment and services, luxury goods, etc.
- Covered telecommunication and video surveillance equipment or services – per the standard provision entitled “Prohibition on Certain Telecommunication and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment”, grant funds including direct and indirect costs, cost share and program income may not be used to (1) procure or obtain; (2) extend or renew a contract to procure or obtain; or (3) enter into a contract (or extend or renew a contract) to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems that use covered telecommunications equipment or services (“CTES”) as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part of any system. This prohibition covers certain telecommunications equipment and services, including, but not limited to, phones, internet, video surveillance, and cloud servers, produced or provided by Huawei Technologies Company, ZTE Corporation, Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, or Dahua Technology Company (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) unless DCEO/Tahfeez has determined that there is no available alternate eligible source for the CTES. For fixed amount awards, this restriction is only applicable if any of the milestones are for telecommunication or video surveillance services or equipment.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Purchases of goods or services restricted or prohibited under the prevailing USAID source/nationality (Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Syria).
- Any purchase or activity, which has already been made.
- Purchases or activities unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by the DCEO/Tahfeez Project.
- Prior obligations of and/or, debts, fines, and penalties imposed on the Grantee.
- Creation of endowments.

#### **IVE. SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

Concept papers shall be submitted in English and may not be more than three (3) pages.

Concept papers should be submitted in electronic copy only, to [dceograntssolicitation@iraqdceo.com](mailto:dceograntssolicitation@iraqdceo.com), and should reference APS No. TO3-01. The first round of review will be conducted for concept papers by 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024, and the second review occurring on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

DCEO/Tahfeez will continue to accept concept papers through March 7, 2025, or until funds are no longer available. Late or unresponsive concept papers will not be considered.

Please submit questions via email to [dceograntssolicitation@iraqdceo.com](mailto:dceograntssolicitation@iraqdceo.com). DCEO/Tahfeez will aim to answer all questions within ten business days of receipt.

## SECTION V. APPLICATION MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated against the merit review criteria in the table below.

Merit Review Category	Rating (Points)
Strength of Technical Approach	40
Management & Programmatic Capacity	30
Cost Effectiveness	15
Inclusion	15
<b>Overall Rating (out of 100 points)</b>	<b>100</b>

These merit review criteria elements are described more fully below:

**A. Strength of Technical Approach:** The quality and feasibility of the application in terms of the viability of the proposed technical approach, (i.e., the proposed technical approach can reasonably be expected to produce the intended outcomes), appropriateness of the proposed methodology, innovativeness, and the work plan for achieving project objectives to offer significant impacts the key issue(s) identified in the target community. **40 points**

**B. Management and Programmatic Capacity:** Evidence of the capability to undertake and accomplish the proposed activities. The application should demonstrate the organization’s effectiveness in terms of internal structure and technical capacity. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability. The evaluation will be based principally on the background, qualifications, and the “track record,” reputation, and achievements (including development of self-sufficient, sustainable activities) of the organization. **30 points**

**C. Cost Effectiveness:** The extent to which the proposed budget is justified and demonstrates efficient use of resources. This includes how well the budget aligns with the proposed activities and expected outcomes. The evaluation will assess whether the proposed costs for each category are reasonable, realistic, and adequate to achieve the project's objectives while ensuring that the level of operational spending remains reasonable. **15 points**

**D. Inclusion:** The extent to which the proposed activity meaningfully engages underrepresented groups. This includes evaluating how the project plans to involve and benefit diverse populations, including marginalized or vulnerable groups. The application should demonstrate specific strategies for inclusive participation, especially methods for outreach and inclusion of female community members. **15 points**

*See ADS 303.3.6.2.c., Gender Issues, for additional information.*

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

## **SECTION VI. AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

All grants will be negotiated, denominated, and funded in Iraqi Dinar.

Issuance of this APS and assistance with application development do not constitute an award or commitment on the part of DCEO/Tahfeez, nor does it commit DCEO/Tahfeez to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, DCEO/Tahfeez reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received and reserves the right to ask further clarifications from the offerors. Applicants will be informed in writing of the decision made regarding their application.