

ICSA-Tafa'aol Annual Program Statement

USAID/ IRAQ

Annual Program Statement Rapid Response Fund (RRF) Iraq Civil Society Activity (ICSA) -Tafa'aol

Announcement Type:	Annual Program Statement
Funding Opportunity Number:	ICSA-APS-2024-01
Issuance Date:	November 1, 2024
Questions for First Round of Evaluations Due By:	Questions are accepted on a rolling basis
Deadline for Submission of Concept Papers:	Per the APS addendums
Final Closing Date:	November 30, 2025
Submit Concept Papers to:	icsa.grants@counterpart.org

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List Of Acronyms

Annual Program Statement	APS
Automated Directives System	ADS
Civil Society Organizations	CSOs
Cluster Network	CN
Community Implementing Partners	CIPs
Community Informal Groups	CIGs
Department of Non-Government Organization	DNGO
Federal Government of Iraq	GOI
Fixed Amount Award	FAA
Government of Iraq	GOI
Iraqi Dinar	IQD
Iraq Civil Society Activity	ICSA
Kurdistan Region of Iraq	KRI
Kurdistan Regional Government	KRG
Local Partners	LPs
National Defense Authorization Act	NDAA
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning	MEL
Rapid Response Fund	RRF
Systems for Award Management	SAM
Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List	SDN
United Nations	UN
United Nations Security Designation List	UNSDL
United States	US
United States Agency for International Development	USAID
United States Government	USG
Unique Entity Identifier	UEI
Visual Compliance	VC

The purpose of this Annual Program Statement (APS) is to solicit applications for funding. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Iraq Civil Society Activity (ICSA)-Tafa'aol, implemented by Counterpart International, is seeking concept papers first and then full applications from prospective partners to implement activities that provide support for short-term programming designed to address urgent needs that arise within the project's target provinces or in response to crisis situations. These grants will support activities implemented through Iraqi Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Youth Groups. The geographic focus under consideration includes the following: Basrah, Wasit, Muthanna, Anbar, Ninewa, Najaf, and the Kurdistan Region's Erbil, Sulaymaniya, and Duhok. As the program adds more provinces, the Rapid Response Fund Annual Program Statement (RRF-APS) will be updated accordingly. Concept Notes and full applications proposing activities in provinces that are not listed above will be considered on a case-by-case basis in close coordination with USAID in Iraq.

This APS will be open for one year. Concept papers will be reviewed on a rolling basis. It is possible that all of the available funds for this APS may be allocated early on in the program, as concept papers will be evaluated on a rolling basis.

The length of the program may be for a period of between two months and one year. The total amount of funding currently available for this APS is approximately \$1,000,000 for a period of up to 12 months. Individual grant applications from local CSOs will be considered for any amount between USD \$15,000 and \$75,000. ICSA-Tafa'aol may choose to fully fund or incrementally fund the selected application(s). The number of awards and amount of available funding is subject to change and ICSA-Tafa'aol reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this APS.

This APS is seeking applicants to propose creative and effective approaches to provide support for short-term programming designed to address urgent needs that arise within the project's target provinces or in response to crisis situations. These grants will support activities implemented through Iraqi CSOs and Youth Groups. As outlined in the Overview section. Applicants may choose from a range of initiatives or scale up small projects that have demonstrated success. Awardees will be expected to share evaluation results and key lessons and disseminate periodic activities and outcomes with the broader community.

Applications outside the geographic focus will be considered on a case-by-case basis in close coordination with USAID in Iraq. Applicants must demonstrate success in managing cultural and political considerations in the proposed focus provinces as well as success in addressing ICSA-Tafa'aol development objectives.

SECTION I - FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Description of the Proposed Program

Background

The ICSA-Tafa'aol ("vibrant interaction" in Arabic), funded by the USAID and implemented by Counterpart is a five-year initiative (October 2023 - September 2028). ICSA-Tafa'aol aims to increase citizen engagement in the public sphere, especially among women and youth, while supporting CSOs to connect to and empower citizens and one another; thereby enhancing CSOs' resilience and increasing their credibility and effectiveness. The expected result is a more active and inclusive civil society sector that effectively fosters change and contributes to a more equitable and democratic Iraq.

At the heart of ICSA-Tafa'aol lies a collaborative spirit, co-creating solutions alongside Local Partners (LPs), Community Implementing Partners (CIPs), Community Informal Groups (CIGs), and Youth Groups, drawing upon their insights reflecting the communities' priorities and functional solutions.

Rapid Response Fund-Annual Program Statement Overview

The RRF-APS under the USAID-funded ICSA-Tafa'aol program is designed as a broad mechanism to enable targeted support to emerging priorities identified by ICSA-Tafa'aol, and USAID. These priorities will be within USAID's overall strategy for Iraq. The RRF grants funded through this APS will provide support for short-term programming designed to address urgent needs that arise within the project's target provinces or in response to crisis situations. These grants will support activities implemented through Iraqi CSOs and Youth Groups.

To ensure submissions focused on the issues and topics identified as priorities, ICSA-Tafa'aol will release regular addendums to this APS, to outline the specific issue(s) for which USAID and ICSA-Tafa'aol is interested in seeing responses. Additionally, ICSA-Tafa'aol will selectively consider applications, concept notes, or statements of work from provincial civil society organizations, the project's partners, and community-based groups that have already participated in the project's community engagement tools: Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue, Cluster Networks, and Design Sprint. These submissions may be submitted outside of the addenda.

The RRF-APS will:

- Describe the types of activities for which concept notes and applications will be considered.
- Describe the process and requirements for submitting concept notes and applications.
- Explain the criteria for evaluating both concept notes and applications.

Issuance of this RRF-APS does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of ICSA-Tafa'aol, nor does it commit ICSA-Tafa'aol to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a concept note or an application. ICSA-Tafa'aol reserves the right to award one, several, or no grants based on the applications submitted in response to this RRF-APS or in response to any of its addendum issued as part of this APS.

RRF-APS Grant Criteria

Individual grant applications from local CSOs will be considered for any amount between USD \$15,000 and \$75,000. Accepted local CSOs must be officially registered as legal entities with the Department of Non-Governmental Organizations (DNGO)-Iraq for CSOs operating in southern and western provinces. For CSOs operating in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), registration should be with the DNGO-KRI. Additionally, all CSOs must comply with the applicable local laws and statutes of their respective DNGOs and Iraq's legal framework. Youth volunteer groups that are registered at the Government of Iraq (GOI) Ministry of Sport and Youth are also considered legal entity, hence, eligible to apply for this RRF-APS. In addition to complying with Iraqi laws and regulations, if a CSO is applying for a grant with a threshold of \$25,000 or higher, the applicant must have a unique entity identification (UEI) number and undergo USAID vetting prior to being awarded. This is an eligibility criterion that CSOs failing to meet will not be eligible to receive the grant. The USAID vetting and UEI eligibility criteria also apply if a CSO receives an accumulated total of \$25,000 or higher during one year.

The final amount awarded may change and will be determined by ICSA-Tafa'aol during the evaluation process. The decision will be based on the quality and scope of the applications received, maintaining the following framework:

- Local CSOs will receive funding in local currency – Iraqi Dinar (IQD).
- The finalists and selected Applicants will engage in intensive cocreation, co-design, and collaboration process to develop the final technical approach and the activity related budget.
- RRF Grants will be awarded for a period of between two months and one year.
- The period of performance will be limited to a maximum of one year for each RRF grant.
- Most RRF grants will be issued only once, but in exceptional cases ICSA-Tafa'aol may choose to extend grants with additional funds.
- No-cost extensions will be considered and may be issued for well-performing grantees that have a balance of funds at the end of the one-year grant period.

If a short-term program requires follow-up funding to address subsequent needs, or if similar urgent needs arise in other communities and a replicated intervention is necessary, and if the local CSOs meet program and financial performance standards during the first year of the RRF-Grants, then these CSOs will be eligible to apply for a "follow-up" grant in the subsequent year.

. ICSA-Tafa'aol will begin to accept applications on November 1, 2024, continuing to accept concept notes or applications throughout the project lifetime, depending on funding availability and ICSA-Tafa'aol planning with USAID.

Topic-Specific Addendum

ICSA-Tafa'aol will release addendums to this APS throughout the year to request responses to a specific challenge, problem, or emerging issue that the program, USAID, or local organizations have identified as requiring an immediate response. These addendums will be short, one-to-two-page problem statements that highlight the priority issue, specific geography, and other key elements that define the need and place for a rapid response. APS addendums associated with urgent situations or those intended to fund programming around a specific time-bound event will include validity dates after which the concept notes will no longer be considered responsive to the addendum.

Illustrative Examples of Rapid Response Fund Activities

Table I outlines examples of types of programs, conditions, and needs that ICSA-Tafa'aol will consider for RRF interventions. The following points are merely examples and do not constitute binding activities.

Criterion	Examples of Incident-Need-Issue Types	Examples of Activity Stages
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An activity responds to community shocks	1) new law or government policy 2) Erupted community conflict that needs mitigation 3) Community peace initiative 4) Addressing Pandemic related Aids 5) Natural resource disaster	1) local partners conduct rapid assessment, or community-based group conduct a town hall or multi-Stakeholder Dialogue to identify immediate community priorities 2) Identify the urgent needs to procure services to address community needs through expedited process 3) Identify the urgent need to mobilize technical experts, of all genders, as needed 4) ICSA-Tafa'aol follows process stipulated in this APS 5) Upon USAID approval, ICSA-Tafa'aol issues grant and provides oversight
An activity to seize an immediate opening	1) Ideas emerge from project's local partners, community-based groups, cluster networks 2) Ideas emerge from USAID 3) Ideas emerge outside of regular activity workplan cycle 4) Activity is less than micro- threshold of (\$25,000)	1) ICSA-Tafa'aol identify opportunity and issue an addenda 2) ICSA-Tafa'aol follows process stipulated in this APS 3) Upon USAID approval, ICSA-Tafa'aol issues grant and provides oversight
An activity to scale, expand, or replicate successful interventions	1) proof of concept that intervention leads to results and scaleup is cost-effective 2) ICSA-Tafa'aol receives request from USAID	1) ICSA-Tafa'aol, partner, and/or USAID identify opportunity 2) ICSA-Tafa'aol follows process stipulated in this APS 3) Upon USAID approval, ICSA-Tafa'aol issues grant and provides oversight

Eligible Activities

While priority will be given to those submissions that align with the areas identified in released addendums, ICSA-Tafa'aol is open to supporting initiatives across a broad spectrum of civil society areas that address urgent needs. We also welcome applications from provincial civil society organizations, project partners, and community-based groups that have previously participated in the project's activities.

Ultimately, the project goal is to strengthen civil society, foster dialogue, and promote effective democratic governance, increasing citizen engagement, particularly among women and youth. ICSA-Tafa'aol seeks to provide responsive programming tailored to local communities and local needs aligned with the RRF modifier illustrated in Table-I. The concept notes and subsequent full applications should demonstrate an existing gap in programming or support to the proposed need and should work to avoid overlap or duplication with existing programming from other organizations. Where possible, activities that

complement or leverage United States Government (USG) and USAID support priorities are highly prioritized. Eligible technical approaches include:

- **Cocreation – Collaboration:** ICSA-Tafa'aol's RRF-APS approach is centered on co-creation and collaboration. Successful Applicants must demonstrate a collaborative approach in co-designing the proposed activities and their related aspects with ICSA-Tafa'aol. This core principle will be evident throughout the design, development, and implementation phases.
- **Targeted and Timely Interventions:** This RRF-APS target programming in communities with emerging needs that require rapid response aligned with the modifiers outlines above and USAID's objectives in Iraq. ICSA-Tafa'aol will consider short term (up to one year) interventions that address a changing need or respond to needs or mitigate a crisis. The RRF-APS intends to address needs that bridge a programming gap while longer term ICSA-Tafa'aol capacity and programming is implemented. These can be implemented preventatively or as a rapid response in a variety of Iraqi provincial contexts:
 - Stable, transitioning contexts where changing socio-political situations open new opportunities for high impact programming. For example, supporting citizens engagement in democratic processes such as elections, and preparedness for rapid response in fragile areas.
 - Rapid civil society response to address acute needs in emerging crises or continuing crises. For instance, supporting needs recently identified by USAID or requested from the GOI, and/or Kurdistan Region Government (KRG).
 - Civil Society activities where ICSA-Tafa'aol lacks sufficient presence to address immediate needs. For example, rapid response support programming (awareness, advocacy, or crisis related case management) in a women and youth-sensitive approach. This technical approach may also include particular needs of media and civil society to participate in and respond to crisis environments, such as through targeted training, provision of limited technical expertise, and/or facilitating dialogues and engagement with local or national authorities.
- **Inclusive Programming:** ICSA-Tafa'aol will promote the integration of diverse perspectives, including those of women, youth, Persons with Disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities (such as Turkmen, Shabak, Yazidis, Christians, Mandaeans, Kaka'i, and Baha'is), and other underrepresented groups (such as Afro-Iraqis, Bedouins, and Gypsies communities), through research and grants. To ensure that these groups are meaningfully involved in grants, Applicants must demonstrate such integration in the project's technical design, and implementation. Local CSOs with proven experience and capacity in inclusive programming, especially those with strong components or cross-cutting themes related to women, youth, and other underrepresented groups, will be prioritized for funding. In addition to the organization's capacity, ICSA-Tafa'aol will provide technical expertise to support the proposal development process and will be actively involved in project implementation. The project will ensure that Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) indicators include disaggregated data on inclusion, including intersectionality.
- **Knowledge Sharing and Innovation:** Learning, disseminating new knowledge, or piloting innovative ideas in new communities. Innovation, research, and the testing of new community solution ideas will be prioritized over routine and conventional programming. Any learning and research should be practical, with clear and explicit recommendations that enable ownership and operationalization.
- **Excluded Activities:** While the scope of this APS is deliberately broad, there are activities ICSA-Tafa'aol will not support. These activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Construction,
 - Large equipment purchases,

- Routine service delivery,
- Humanitarian emergency response programming and delivery of food or goods
- International travel and or exchanges
- Individual scholarships, school fees, or tuition
- Business start-ups, loans, activities specifically designed to generate a profit.

B. Administration of Award

Awards will be administered in accordance with USAID Standard Provisions for non-U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations.

Applicants may obtain copies of the referenced material at the following websites:

- 2 CFR 200:

http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl

- Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Recipients:

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-01/303mab_1.pdf

Covered Telecommunications:

- In General, Grantees must not utilize award funds, including directly, indirectly, cost-share or grantee contribution, or with program income, to purchase telecommunications equipment prohibited under Section 889(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) (Pub. L. 115-232). The legislation specifically covers certain telecommunications equipment and services produced or provided by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation, Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, or Dahua Technology Company (or any of their subsidiary or affiliate).

SECTION II- AWARD INFORMATION

A. Estimated Funding Level

The total amount of funding currently available for this APS is approximately \$1,000,000 for a period of up to twelve months. Individual grant applications from local CSOs will be considered for any amount between USD \$15,000 and \$75,000. ICSA-Tafa'aol may choose to fully fund or incrementally fund the selected application(s). ICSA-Tafa'aol expects to award 40 agreements. The number of awards and amount of available funding is subject to change.

B. Anticipated Start Date of this Award and Performance Period

ICSA-Tafa'aol anticipates the start date upon award with a performance period of up to 12 months.

C. Award Type

ICSA-Tafa'aol, based on the project's grants manual and in consultation with USAID, will determine the type of award to be issued under this RRF-APS. It is expected that the grants to be awarded will include Fixed Amount Awards (FAAs), Simplified Grants, and Standard Grants. A combination of grant types may also be used (called a "hybrid" grant), if it is in the best interest of the project, and if determined as the

most suitable type of award. Awards that exceed the Simplified Acquisition Threshold are not anticipated. No grants will exceed the \$75,000 threshold.

SECTION III- ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Types of Entities that May Apply

The ICSA-Tafa'aol will not accept applications from individuals. To apply and to be eligible to receive grant funds under ICSA-Tafa'aol's RRF-APS, the Applicants must:

- Be a local civil society, educational, research, or other organization working in civil society related areas.
- Be officially registered as a legal entity in either DNGO-Iraq, DNGO-KRG, or for youth groups at the Ministry of Sport and Youth. The entity should be working in compliance with all applicable local laws and statutes in Iraq.
- Have prior experience with USAID-funded grants and demonstrated ability to manage grant funds, e.g., evidence of financial accounting systems and procedures, maintenance of accurate, detailed records of all expenses, and have designated financial management personnel.
- Be able to demonstrate (through current or recent projects) strong technical expertise in the sector(s) of the proposed activities.
- Hold a bank account in the name of the applicant organization.
- For grants at \$25,000 or higher, be able to acquire a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and not be a party barred from receiving USG funding. UEI numbers are required prior to award for grants over \$25,000. The applicant must undergo USAID vetting and pass the vetting process before being awarded the grant
- Neutrality, impartiality, and do-no-harm must be central to the proposed activity. The activities should serve the interests of vulnerable populations regardless of group/affiliation.
- Partnerships between organizations are allowed as long as all entities in the partnership fit the applicant eligibility criteria herein. There must be one organization leading the activities (Lead applicant). Lead Applicants must demonstrate they will retain management of the activities and are using partner organizations in a supporting and/or advisory role. ICSA-Tafa'aol will not issue a grant to an organization that is sharing the management of the award across several entities. Only the Lead Applicant will be awarded the grant in full.

ICSA-Tafa'aol will rely on the basic requirements listed above as well as any audit or performance reports or other information that helps verify an applicant's past performance on similar projects when applicable. Applicants unable to demonstrate good past performance will not be funded.

The following will NOT be considered for funding:

- Concept Notes or full application package from individuals.
- Concept Notes or full application package from the United Nations (UN) or International Organizations.
- Concept Notes or full application package from any entity affiliated with ICSA-Tafa'aol officers, directors, employees, or their family members.
- Concept Notes or full application packages proposing scaling existing interventions that don't address the purpose of the grants program.

- Concept Notes or full application package proposing politically aligned activities or activities in support of a specific political party.
- Concept Notes or full application packages proposing activities that directly or indirectly support armed groups, militia, or other non-state actors involved in conflict.
- Concept Notes or full application package with any infrastructure or construction activities.
- Concept Notes or full application packages from organizations currently involved in litigation or legal disputes that could affect the implementation of the proposed activities.

B. Potential New Partners

ICSA-Tafa'aol strongly encourages applications from potential new partners.

C. Cost Share

Cost share is not required.

D. Risk Assessment

To ensure grant funds are not misused, ICSA-Tafa'aol conducts a multi-layered screening process on all Applicants, as follows:

1. **Debarment Check:** Applicants are verified against the USG's Excluded Parties List to prevent funding entities with a history of misconduct.
2. **Sanctions Check:** Applicants are screened against databases maintained by Counterpart (a partner organization) to identify potential ties to terrorism. This includes:
 - Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN)
 - United Nations Security Designation List (UNSDL)
 - Systems for Award Management (SAM)
3. **Public Information Review:** In addition to database checks, ICSA-Tafa'aol considers publicly available information, such as news reports, to assess an applicant's eligibility based on US Executive Order No. 13224 (link provided). This ensures awareness of potential risks even if not on official lists.
4. **Grantee Responsibility:** Grantees are also required to conduct their own checks for restricted and excluded parties and maintain records of these checks.
5. **SRM and Visual Compliance (VC):**

Subrecipient Monitoring is one of the tools to ensure that subrecipients comply with federal regulations and grant agreements while achieving grant objectives efficiently. It involves conducting risk assessments, establishing clear agreements, monitoring performance and finances through regular reviews, and maintaining open communication. Corrective actions are taken if compliance issues arise, ensuring proper use of funds and timely achievement of outcomes. At the end of the award period, a final review is conducted to ensure all objectives have been met and funds have been appropriately utilized.

VC is a due diligence tool to ensure compliance with US export control regulations and sanctions. It screens individuals, organizations, and transactions against government watchlists to prevent dealing with restricted or prohibited entities. VC helps identify potential risks by verifying that partners or recipients are not involved in illegal activities or associated with sanctioned entities. Regular use of VC supports compliance with legal requirements, reduces risk, and ensures that grant activities align with US law and international standards.

Please note: All organizations receiving more than the equivalent of \$25,000 in a calendar year must undergo USAID vetting prior to award.

SECTION IV- APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Application Process

ICSA-Tafa'aol will review proposals using a two-stage process. Applicants must first submit a concept paper of no more than five pages to ICSA-Tafa'aol before submitting a full proposal. Concept papers must meet the identified needs of this solicitation. Please note the following:

Do not submit a full proposal unless requested by ICSA-Tafa'aol. Only upon receipt of positive ICSA-Tafa'aol feedback on the concept paper is the applicant requested to develop a full proposal for consideration, using the criteria below.

The concept paper must be submitted in accordance with the instructions in SECTIONS IV B below.

B. Concept Paper

ICSA-Tafa'aol RRF-APS will use a two-stage review process. In the first stage, ICSA-Tafa'aol will receive concept notes with its corresponding summary budget information from Applicants. After reviewing these CNs, ICSA-Tafa'aol will select the best concept notes and conduct a second level solicitation inviting only selected Applicants. The second stage will use more specific merit review criteria. ICSA-Tafa'aol may conduct additional levels of solicitation and review only if the second level does not adequately identify suitable Applicants for the activities to be funded.

The instructions for developing the concept paper should take into account the instructions listed in the next section.

Concept Paper Instructions

The concept paper must be submitted in Arial 11 pt. font and must include page numbers. Each page must be marked with the APS title and number.

Prepare the application for the concept paper according to the structural format set forth below:

1-Cover Page (no more than one (1) page). The cover page must include:

- a. the APS number Name
- b. Address of organization
- c. Type of organization (e.g., for-profit, non-profit, university, etc.);
- d. Contact point (lead contact name; relevant telephone, fax, e-mail information);
- e. Names of other organizations (federal and non-federal as well as any other USAID offices) to whom you are submitting and/or have submitted the application and/or who are funding the proposed activity; and
- f. Signature of authorized representative of the applicant.

2-Technical approach (no more than 3 pages): This section should address the program summary and selected objectives from Section I of this document and should include:

- a. Concise title and objectives of proposed activity;

- b. Discussion of the objectives, the method of approach, the amount of effort to be employed, the anticipated results, and how the work will help accomplish ICSA-Tafa'aol's; and
- c. Type of support the applicant requests from ICSA-Tafa'aol (e.g., funds, facilities, equipment, materials, personnel resources, etc.).

3-Supporting information (no more than (1) page):

Proposed total estimated cost; Brief cost breakdown (e.g., salaries, travel, etc.); proposed optional amount of the applicant's financial as well as in-kind participation if applicable; proposed amount of prospective or existing partner(s) financial as well as in-kind participation if applicable; proposed duration of the activity; and brief description of applicant's, as well as prospective or existing partner(s') previous work or experience.

ICSA-Tafa'aol will contact selected applicants to request a full proposal based on the information provided in the concept paper.

C. Application Process

If a concept paper is approved, ICSA-Tafa'aol will contact applicants and provide instructions and templates to complete an application.

Do not submit a full proposal unless requested by ICSA-Tafa'aol. Only upon receipt of positive feedback on the concept paper is the applicant requested to put together a full proposal for ICSA-Tafa'aol consideration, based on instructions provided by ICSA-Tafa'aol.

- **Invitation to Revise and Co-Design and Prepare a Full Application:** Only Applicants with concept notes that are selected as high promise/high potential will be sent a Request for a full Application. ICSA-Tafa'aol will send semi-finalists the full application template package. ICSA-Tafa'aol will work closely with Applicants invited to the full application stage to codesign and cocreate the intervention. ICSA-Tafa'aol will also answer any additional questions about the proposed activities. During this stage, Applicants will have the opportunity to work collaboratively with ICSA-Tafa'aol co-designing the intervention. The cocreation phase includes the following issues:
 - The technical approach.
 - The scope, research question, or target population.
 - The budget.
 - Contextual challenges.
 - Protection of subjects, gender integration and other protection issues.
 - Activity objective adjustments.
 - Monitoring and evaluation indicators and methodologies.
 - ICSA-Tafa'aol may request supplemental supporting documentation or may conduct additional due diligence as needed.
- **Submission of Full Applications:** Finalized -selected Local CSOs/Youth Groups will submit the full application, including all required accompanying documentation within 30 days of invitation. This timeline may vary depending on the amount of revision needed, urgency of need, and guidance from USAID. In rapid response contexts, ability to design quickly will be considered a strong plus. ICSA-Tafa'aol may conduct additional interviews, request supplementary materials, contact references or partners, engage external experts, and gather any other information necessary to fully evaluate the

application. The due diligence process may take up to three weeks, depending on a variety of factors, such as the proposal's technical complexity.

- **Evaluation of Full Applications:** ICSA-Tafa'aol will evaluate and conduct a final review of the full application according to the procedures and steps stipulated in the project grants manual approved by USAID on March 12, 2024.
- **Pre-Award Stage:** ICSA-Tafa'aol will proceed with the selected Applicants to the pre-award stage. To complete this stage, the project will follow the procedures and steps stipulated in the project grants manual approved by USAID on March 12, 2024. In some circumstances, the proposal may be shortlisted but temporarily put on hold due to contextual factors such as local elections, conflict or war, or natural disasters.
- **Award Phase:** An award will be made only after ICSA-Tafa'aol makes a positive determination that the applicant possesses, or has the ability to obtain, the necessary management competence to carry out the grant activity and will practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for the grant's funds. ICSA-Tafa'aol must be fully satisfied that the applicant has the capacity to adequately perform in accordance with the principles established in this RRF-APS and the project's grants manual.
- **Startup and Implementation Phase:** The applicant will begin the project implementation, including monitoring and evaluation. ICSA-Tafa'aol will monitor and supervise deliverables, grants execution and grant close-out based on the procedures and steps stipulated at the project's grants manual approved by USAID on March 12, 2024.
- **Milestones and Deliverables:** Deliverable will be developed based on the grant type. The deliverable milestones will be designed in collaboration between ICSA-Tafa'aol and the selected Applicants to secure ownership and understanding of the required deliverables technically and chronologically.

SECTION V – CONCEPT PAPER REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Criteria for Concept Paper

Concept papers will be reviewed in terms of responsiveness to the APS, appropriateness of subject matter, and creativeness. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed work will contribute to support for short-term programming designed to address urgent needs that arise within the project's target provinces or in response to crisis situations.

ICSA-Tafa'aol will review the concept notes, and additional reviews may occur at ICSA-Tafa'aol discretion. ICSA-Tafa'aol will screen potential grantee partners according to the project's grants manual procedures. This includes, but not limited to:

- .
- Completeness of application and accompanying documentation and certifications.
- Budget completeness and eligibility.
- Compliance and overall consistency with USAID policies in ADS 303 and the project's grants manual.
- Once compliant responses are determined, ICSA-Tafa'aol will review and assess each concept notes programmatically and technically.
- Concept notes which demonstrate the best fit against the evaluation criteria will be invited to submit a full application.

- Concept notes will be scored based on criteria outlined below (Table I). A scoring sheet will be used by ICSA-Tafa'aol to rate concept notes on a scale of 0 – 100 points.

Table (I): Evaluation Criteria

#	Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Sub-Weight	Total Weights
1	Technical Approach to achieving ICSA-Tafa'aol RRF-APS Objectives	Alignment with RRF-APS objectives.	10%	50%
		Local CSO-Youth Groups legal status.	10%	
		Concept notes Quality: comprehensive, aligned with community needs.	10%	
		ICSA-Tafa'aol MEL criteria compliance and clear outcomes.	10%	
			Sustainability and long-term impact	10%
2	Past Performance and Demonstrated Capacity to Implement Technical Approach	Local CSO-Youth Groups have proven track record of successful implementation.	10%	15%
		Local CSO-Youth Groups possess the essential staff, expertise, and resources to successfully execute the grant.	5%	
3	Projected Overall Budget	Detailed budget outlining activity costs	10%	20%
		Cost-effectiveness of the proposed activity	10%	
4	Community Involvement	Viable Community and Beneficiary Engagement and Support (considering opportunities and barriers for inclusive engagement).	10%	15%
		Proven capability to establish partnerships / collaborations with external stakeholders that strengthen the proposed activity.	05%	
	Total			100%

SECTION VI - PROJECT CONTACTS

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

Program Name: Iraq Civil Society Activity-Tafa'aol

Office location: Baghdad Al- Mansour

Email: icsa.grants@counterpart.org

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation or interpretation of this APS must request it in writing by the date listed on the cover letter to allow a reply to reach all prospective applicants before the submission of their applications. Oral explanations or instructions given before award of a grant will not be binding. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this APS will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment of this APS, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicants.

SECTION VII - OTHER INFORMATION

Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of ICSA-Tafa'aol, nor does it commit ICSA-Tafa'aol to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

ICSA-Tafa'aol reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Further, ICSA-Tafa'aol reserves the right to make no awards as a result of this APS.

A Unique Entity Identifier (UEI):

A Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is a number issued by the System for Award Management (SAM) to identify businesses and other entities that do business with the federal government. The UEI has replaced the DUNS number as the authorized identifier for the federal government. [2 CFR Part 25 – Universal Identifier and System for Award Management](#)

- The Organizations can obtain a UEI number directly from SAM.gov.

All entities may obtain a UEI without having to complete a full registration in SAM. Any entity that does business with the federal government or receives subawards from Counterpart requires a UEI.

How to get a UEI number?

If your entity is already registered in SAM.gov, it has already been assigned a UEI number. Simply log in at SAM.gov to access it.

If you need to obtain a UEI at SAM.gov, you have two options to do so. Entities intending to bid on contracts or grants from the federal government or pass through entities (Counterpart) should visit SAM.gov and choose “Register Entity” to receive a UEI. Those who would like a UEI for sub-award reporting should choose “Get Unique Entity ID.”

For more information and instructions on obtaining a UEI, please visit the following website.

<https://www.workwithusaid.org/blog/navigating-the-sam-gov-unique-entity-identifier-process>

Counterpart may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process.