

Amendment to Request for Approval

Amendment number: 1

Reference Request for Application Number: RFA-CATALYZE-217772-ECCE INDIA-2024-0075

Amendment effective date: April 11, 2024

Description of Amendment:

1. This amendment serves to modify the Closing Date for Receipt of Full Applications on Page 1 of the RFA from April 26, 2024, at 5:00pm (EST) to **May 03, 2024, at 5:00pm (EST)**.
2. This amendment serves to modify the Virtual Q&A Conference for Potential Applicants to respond to written questions and allow for live Q&A discussion on Page 1 of the RFA from April 18, 2024, time TBD to April 18, 2024, at **8:00am (EST)**. [Virtual Q&A Conference Link](#).
3. This amendment serves to modify the:

“Subject to availability of funds, Palladium intends to make up to \$1,300,000 in total funding for activities to be implemented beginning in May 2024.”

on Page 2 of the RFA to:

“Subject to availability of funds, Palladium intends to make up to \$1,300,000 in total funding for activities to be implemented beginning in **June 2024**.”



Issuance Date: April 3, 2024

Due Date for Submission of Questions: April 15, 2024, at 12:00am midnight (EST)

Virtual Q&A Conference for Potential Applicants to respond to written questions and allow for live Q&A discussion: April 18, 2024, at 8:00am (EST). [Virtual Q&A Conference Link](#)

Closing Date for Receipt of Full Applications: May 03, 2024, at 5:00pm (EST)

Total funding available (all grants): USD 1,300,000

Anticipated Number of Grants: 1 or more

REF: Early Childhood Care and Education – India

Prime Contract Number: 7200AA19C00080

Subject: Palladium’s Request for Applications (RFA) Number CATALYZE-217772-ECCE INDIA-2024-0075

Dear Prospective Applicants,

Palladium is seeking applications from qualified applicants, as grantees, for this catalytic funding for activities from USAID India sponsored under the USAID CATALYZE EduFinance Early Childhood Care and Education Family of Investments (hereafter referred to as CATALYZE Early Childhood Care and Education) Activity Grants Program. Palladium is implementing the CATALYZE Early Childhood Care and Education Activity under USAID Prime Contract 7200AA19C00080.

The CATALYZE Early Childhood Care and Education Activity Grants Program seeks to expand access to and improve quality of early childhood education (ECE) for 3 – 6-year-old children in India through investing in innovative service models, leveraging private sector resources and capabilities to complement USAID’s investments, and aligning with state and district priorities, specifically Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Ministry of Education (MOE) development and investment plans. Applications should specifically target children ages 3 – 6 with a focus on improving children’s school readiness through Anganwadi centers. The overall target group is non-compulsory pre-school children from historically marginalized groups and focus will be on demonstration of how interventions will benefit these systematically marginalized learners (e.g., those living in extreme poverty, orphans; internally displaced people (IDPs) and returned migrants, children with disabilities, rural populations, and ethnic minorities (e.g., schedule caste and tribe groups)).

The RFA is comprised of the following main sections:

- I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION
- II. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
- III. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS
- IV. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION
- V. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Successful Applicants will describe their approach to achieve program objectives. Please refer to Section I of this RFA entitled Funding Opportunity Description for a complete statement of objectives, illustrative activities and expected results.

Subject to availability of funds, Palladium intends to make up to \$1,300,000 in total funding for activities to be implemented beginning in June 2024. Palladium reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

To be eligible for award, Applicants must provide all required information in their application, including the requirements found in any sections or attachments to this RFA. Applications that are submitted late, incomplete, or are non-responsive may not be considered. Awards will be made to applicant(s) whose application(s) best meet the requirements of this RFA and the evaluation criteria contained herein.

Palladium invites written questions which can be submitted through April 15, 2024. A virtual Q&A meeting will be held on April 18, 2024, at 8:00am EST. Written questions will be addressed, and time will also be allocated for a live Q&A discussion. Palladium requires the submission of a full application by May 3rd, 2024, which will be evaluated in accordance with Section IV of this RFA.

Palladium requires that full applications be emailed to CATALYZE.Procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com no later than the respective due dates shown above, following the instructions included in Section III of this RFA. Full applications must be submitted in English.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of Palladium, nor does it commit Palladium to pay for any costs incurred in participation in co-creation nor the preparation and submission of an application. Further, Palladium reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. Applications are submitted at the risk of the Applicant, and all preparation and submission costs are at the Applicant's own expense.

Sincerely,

Palladium Grants Manager

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1. Background

CATALYZE is a global buy-in contract managed by Palladium for USAID out of Washington, D.C. CATALYZE supports USAID missions to design and implement blended finance solutions involving private sector actors to achieve expanded development outcomes in 39 countries across the globe. For purposes of this RFA, “private sector” is broadly defined to include corporations, enterprises, foundations, and faith-based organizations, among others.¹

USAID India has bought into a CATALYZE global activity called the CATALYZE Early Childhood Care and Education Family of Investments, which is an incubator of cross-sectoral early childhood care and education models designed to deliver impacts of expanded child development, women’s economic empowerment and job creation. The CATALYZE Early Childhood Care and Education Family of Investments seeks to deliver this impact through funding innovative programming in developing countries, contributing to the evidence base of how USAID can expand both quality and equitable access to high-quality early childhood care and education, to ultimately deliver improved learning and development outcomes in children, as well as improved livelihoods for women. The CATALYZE Early Childhood Care and Education Family of Investments is currently comprised of a set of activities in Honduras and Paraguay (LAC Early Childhood Care and Education); Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda, and South Africa (T4ECE), and South Africa (Lead-Safe Early Childhood Care and Education South Africa) and Early Childhood Education (ECE) India.

2. CATALYZE ECE India

The CATALYZE ECE India buy-in within the broader CATALYZE Early Childhood Care and Education Family of Investments is designed to improve child development and learning outcomes for 3 – 6-year-olds at Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) through funding innovative programming, designed and led by local partners, leading to strengthened pre-school education at AWCs and the state and non-state ecosystems that support them, thereby contributing to USAID’s localization agenda. In addition, this RFA is designed to incentivize offerors to leverage significant additional resources towards this grant, mobilize further private sector investment and expertise towards grant activities, and use this expanded pool of resources to achieve greater scale in impact, as well as a methodology to implement cost-effective approaches, designed from the start for sustainability in private sector engagement.

Palladium began the design of the CATALYZE Early Childhood Education (ECE) India buy-in with an assessment to define the most effective approaches to achieve triple bottom line impacts in India. The assessment confirmed that participation in high quality ECE services builds a foundation for Indian children’s learning trajectory throughout their time in primary school and beyond. Children with low levels of school readiness at age five remain behind their peers in subsequent years.² To facilitate access to ECE services, the Government of India (GoI) funds a network of 1.4 million AWCs throughout the country. AWCs provide integrated early childhood development services (health, nutrition, and ECE) to an estimated 80 million children, largely from marginalized and vulnerable communities. Yet, the quality of AWC ECE service provision focused on school readiness for 3 to 6-year-olds is often low. Barriers to the provision of high-quality pre-school inputs in AWC include supply-side issues, such as limited availability of teaching and learning materials, and low capacity and limited support for AWC workers/teachers. For example, one AWC

¹ Under CATALYZE Early Childhood Care and Education, the private sector is defined as market actors that are not managed or controlled by the government, nor solely funded by taxpayer contributions. It includes, but is not limited to, corporations, enterprises, foundations, and faith-based organizations.

² <https://asercentre.org/researches/india-early-childhood-education-impact-study/>

worker/teacher is tasked with providing care, health and nutrition services, and education services to all children aged 0–6 within their center. This reduces their ability to provide the high-quality, play-based learning opportunities necessary to prepare children for academic success in primary school and throughout their lives. In addition, on the demand-side, parents and caregivers are often expecting ECE services that rely on formal teaching and rote memorization of the 3R's, which are not developmentally appropriate teaching methods for young children. In addition, many of the lowest income or marginalized families are not accessing ECE services at all.

Addressing these challenges requires mobilizing significant additional resources, much needed capital and locally-based expertise. The GoI currently allocates an estimated 0.1% of gross domestic product (GDP) to ECE provision. However, providing universal access to high-quality ECE in India will require between 1.5%-2.2% of GDP, suggesting that there is currently a USD \$47.6- 69.9 billion deficit.³ Further scaling access to high-quality ECE in India, therefore, will require mobilizing private capital from various stakeholders, including, but not limited to, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arms, philanthropic organizations, international NGOs, and corporations, as well as working closely with Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and the Ministry of Education (MOE) to ensure sustainability of results.

Despite the best efforts of the government, development partners, and implementing partners, preparing all children for success in Class 1 remains a major challenge. The potential benefits of pre-primary services are arguably greatest for children from historically marginalized groups such as those from scheduled caste and scheduled tribe families and children with disabilities. It is these most vulnerable children who CATALYZE ECE India will strive to serve by creating a model for co-investment and shared technical leadership to improve quality of and access to AWCs and the community, private sector, and government entities that support them.

CATALYZE ECE India strongly encourages offerors to leverage resources, tools, and approaches from within their existing activities, or from USAID and other development partner initiatives. This could include using and adapting ECE or PSE resources, strategically sequencing, layering, or integrating sub-activities with past and ongoing efforts; or building from best practices and lessons learned from the education and economic growth sectors, and beyond. Examples of relevant activities include the [Scaling up Early Reading Intervention \(SERI\)](#), [Positioning an Evidence-Based Early Childhood Stimulation Program for Scale](#), [INVEST India](#), and the [Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program \(STAR\)](#). Successful offerors will demonstrate an understanding of the ECE landscape beyond the projects mentioned here in order to avoid duplication or overburdening would-be beneficiaries.

The Government of India (GOI) provides strong leadership on ECE equity priorities including private sector engagement and attention to systemically marginalized children. This is a strategic moment to engage in locally led quality improvement efforts for the AWC system. CATALYZE ECE India will serve as a convener to bring investors and ECE implementers together to ignite improvements—technical and financial—in the Anganwadi system, at a larger scale than any one group.

3. Scope of the RFA

A. Beneficiary population

CATALYZE ECE India—with leadership and funding from USAID/India Mission—seeks to support AWCs to expand access to high-quality ECE, especially those from historically marginalized groups. This RFA places an emphasis on children ages 3 to 6 in non-compulsory pre-school.

B. Geographic target

³ Based on 2022 GDP (USD 3.2 trillion).

There is no geographic restriction within India for this RFA. Applicants may propose support to any state(s) where they can deliver significant, additional scale in ECE services, and impact in line with the outcomes sought, as described in section 3.B of this RFA. Applicants are expected to describe how their work is aligned with related state and district government priorities, with attention paid to ICDS and MOE development and investment plans.

C. Private sector engagement approach

The engagement approach of the CATALYZE ECE India Activity is to involve and motivate private sector actors to leverage their funding, innovation, and expertise to complement public sector investments to achieve improved school readiness at scale. This will contribute directly to the success of ICDS and MOE development and investment plans. Applicants are required to leverage external private sector funding from a variety of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arms of private companies, philanthropic organizations, international NGOs, and corporations. Leveraged private resources should be channeled to deliver ECE services at greater scale and improve ECE outcomes, and as a method to ensure sustainability of results. Illustrative examples of private sector engagement, include:

- Mobilizing private investment to improve ECE outcomes through match funding, blended finance, and other relevant modalities.
- Supporting private sector innovators or service providers to improve ECE outcomes through innovation grants, technical assistance, and other relevant modalities.
- Improving efficiency of private sector funding using outcomes-based financing

D. High Quality ECE

This RFA seeks innovative solutions for ECE service delivery for children aged 3 – 6 that deliver learning outcomes for systematically marginalized children at scale. Further, this RFA seeks to build on USAID's existing programming and government relationships within India to catalyze investment of additional resources and innovations to expand and deepen impact. It allows applicants the opportunity to offer a variety of activities and approaches, which may or may not include, proposed interventions, approaches and activities offered below as illustrative.

Per [USAID's How-To Note on Developing High-Quality Pre-Primary Programs](#), all children between ages 3 – 6 should have at least one year of steady access to quality ECE (where availability is limited), but children should ideally be enrolled for 2 to 3 years. As detailed in this Note, USAID prioritizes investment in the following areas for high-quality pre-primary education systems⁴:

- **Political will, investment, and leadership** – Clear policies and adequate financial resources are the foundation of a strong pre-primary sub-sector. In contexts with diverse stakeholders, coordination can be the key to leveraging resources and maximizing impact.
- **Regulating, monitoring, and supporting programs** – A regulatory framework should guide the monitoring and support of pre-primary programs and can support cross-sector coordination. Pre-primary specific data should be collected and used to improve quality through targeted support to pre-primary programs.
- **Access** – Free and compulsory pre-primary education is the ideal toward which governments should work. Where resources are scarce, access should be prioritized for the most marginalized and vulnerable. Non-state providers can be an important resource in supporting wider access.
- **Program quality** – Quality standards should be in place and used to inform and monitor design and delivery of pre-primary programs. Pre-primary programs should use evidence-based, developmentally appropriate, and inclusive curriculum in a language children use and understand.
- **Teacher and AWC workers and mentors workforce** – Pre-service and in-service teacher training should emphasize developmentally appropriate practice and provide continuous professional development opportunities to the workforce.

⁴ Thomas, Kate. *Developing High-Quality Pre-Primary Programs: USAID Education How-To Note*. United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 2021.

- **Family and community engagement** – Parents’ active engagement and full partnership in their young children’s education should be encouraged and actively supported by teachers and schools through communication, recommendations, and resources.

4. **Objectives**

Grantees will contribute to attainment of the overarching goal of CATALYZE ECE India: Improved development and learning outcomes for 3 – 6-year-old children, especially those from historically marginalized communities, enabling them to thrive in primary school and beyond. Over the course of this grant period, it is anticipated that Grantee(s) will:

1. Expand equitable access to high-quality ECE
2. Improve children’s school readiness
3. Increase private sector engagement towards high-quality ECE service provision
4. Increase evidence about how multi-stakeholder partnerships can enhance access, quality and sustainability of ECE
5. Develop pathways for upscale and sustainability of approach

5. **Requirements**

Full Applications must conform to the structure in Attachment B, Technical Application Format, described in more detail in SECTION III - STEP 2 of this RFA.

6. **Anticipated Outcomes**

Anticipated outcomes can be defined by applicants and must all contribute to increased learning and development outcomes for young learners in AWCs. Possible outcomes could include:

- Enhanced proficiency of AWC teachers/workers in delivering high-quality pre-school education services.
- Anganwadi centers receiving USAID support consistently meeting established quality standards.
- Increased support for play-based learning in AWCs from parents and caregivers, and involvement of parents and caregivers in play-based learning activities with their children.
- Increased value of private capital mobilized (PCM⁵) with USG assistance to support ECE services.
- Improved ECE system monitoring tools and processes that support cross-sector coordination and quality improvement.
- Increased ECE resources and services prioritized for children from historically marginalized groups.

7. **Schedule**

Upon award, CATALYZE ECE will determine the award mechanism through a pre-award determination process based on the nature of the proposed activity and the selected organization’s financial and management capacity, the award size, the number of awards, and the amount of available funding is subject to change. The expected performance period for the grant(s) awarded under this solicitation is May 2024 to June 2026 with an anticipated performance duration of 25 months.

⁵ CATALYZE expects PCM in the form of 1) Debt and 2) Non-debt financing from a range of FIs, DFIs, and multilateral institutions, as well as private companies via strategic partnerships. It adapts guidance from EG 3.1.14 and EG 3.2-27 to define and report mobilized capital. The indicator measures the value of private capital mobilized due to USAID assistance, with "value" referring to the dollar amount of financing for targeted purposes. "Mobilized" means either a commitment for debt financing or the disbursement of non-debt financing. Financing must be directly mobilized due to USAID facilitation.

8. Estimated Funding Level

The grant selection committee will use its discretion based on the applications submitted, to make one, multiple, or no awards, and to fully fund or incrementally fund any selected application(s). CATALYZE ECE has set aside \$1,300,000 that may be awarded to achieve the objectives of this RFA. Final award values will be dependent upon final negotiation and may be lower or higher than that range.

SECTION II: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The referenced grants program is designed for eligible entities as defined below. NGOs are organizations that act neither in governmental capacity nor as agents of the government. Both U.S. and non-U.S. NGOs are eligible to receive grant funding. An international NGO is eligible if the majority of its constituent members are NGOs. Grant applications from both not-for-profit and for-profit organizations will be accepted.

To be considered eligible for any grant award, prospective grantees must:

- Be legally registered as a not-for-profit or for-profit organization in accordance with the laws of India, such as the Special Law for Promotion of Non-Governmental Development Organizations and its Regulations (registration documents required) as applicable to this solicitation.
- Not be part of a government or any government structures (unless government structures are eligible under subsequent eligibility section).
- Not appear on any list of debarred or suspended entities (as found on www.sam.gov), or on any terrorist watch list or other published list of ineligible recipients.
- Certify that they are not affiliated with any political party nor engaged in any partisan activities.
- Comply with the application format guidelines and instructions mandated in the RFA, including submitting a budget within the identified funding limitations of the RFA.
- **Have or be able to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number for an award exceeding \$25,000 (or local equivalent)⁶**
- Organization to have been in operation for at least the past three years.
- Have previous experience implementing ECE programming in India
- Have previous experience raising or leveraging private capital for development programming

Palladium strongly encourages applications from potential new partners (NPIs). NPIs are organizations that have never received funding from USAID directly or indirectly.

⁶ **Note:** Applicants without a UEI are required to apply for a UEI via www.sam.gov as quickly as possible to ensure compliance with the UEI eligibility criteria. Applicants have experienced delays in obtaining UEI numbers. Applicants should apply for the UEI only option.

SECTION III: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Activity Name: CATALYZE Early Childhood Education – India

Palladium will award at least one grant resulting from this solicitation to the applicant which most demonstrates the capability to carry out activities conforming to the project objectives and within the funding and other parameters set by this RFA.

This solicitation does not commit Palladium to make an award. Palladium may at its sole discretion (a) accept or reject any or all applications, at any step-in part or in full without assigning a reason; and (b) waive informalities or irregularities in applications received.

The full application should consist of:

a. Instructions for Preparation of the Technical Application (maximum 10 pages total, excluding annexes)

The Technical Application must be submitted in English and attached with the following annexes, using the template included as Attachment B to this RFA:

- i. Cover Letter (1 page annex) signed by an individual authorized to commit the organization.
- ii. Project Description (use provided template):

Describes the proposed program activities and overarching program elements, such as the objective of the grant and the linkage to the project objectives, or how the proposed activities will contribute to these objectives; results and indicators for measuring results, intended beneficiaries, business case, and how the proposed elements will support progress toward sustainability of activities.

- iii. Project Implementation Plan (1 page, annex):

This section may be a Gantt chart or timeline of planned activities with a brief narrative. Palladium will work with the selected applicant to co-create a detailed workplan after the grant has been awarded.

- iv. Experience and Capacity (included in template):

The applicant lists previous and ongoing experience implementing similar activities. The applicant lists summary of relevant experience with ECE, private sector engagement (including fundraising), or other relevant skills for two key staff members. This is critical in assessing the grantee's capacity to implement the activity. The applicant also provides contact information of at least three references that can speak to the applicant's performance and capabilities.

- v. Monitoring & Evaluation (included in template):

Please describe the monitoring and evaluation methods to be implemented and the tools used to measure and evaluate the program activities, targets, and results.

b. Instructions for Preparation of the Cost Application

As part of the Cost Application and in addition to the Budget Template (Attachment C), the applicant shall include the following:

Transmittal Letter

The application must be signed by an individual authorized to commit the organization.

Organizational Information and Certifications

The applicant shall submit the following annexes to the cost application:

“ADS 303mav: Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient” found in Attachment D of this RFA.

Copy of the organization’s chart and bylaws and power of attorney of the authorized signer.

Copy of the organization’s legal registration under the laws of India.

Copies of the last annual financial report(s) completed by an authorized/certified accountant.

Budget Narrative and Detail

This section should include a summary of the information provided in the application budget forms and includes the total grant funding request. The applicant must provide a budget, a budget narrative, and adequate cost and historical or unit pricing data to establish a reasonable cost and the assurance that the recipient will not realize any profit above actual cost. Within the budget notes, an applicant shall also describe any other donor funding currently received and how it will allocate shared resources across multiple grants (if applicable).

The applicant shall include a budget narrative which breaks down proposed costs in sufficient detail corresponding to the attached budget template to permit cost analysis. The budget shall be denominated in local currency only.

Cost estimates must be submitted **in Excel format using the attached budget template**. The file must be unprotected and there should be no hidden columns/rows/cells. Each cost element must include a basis for estimate or rationale. Any budget submitted without the accompanying narrative or in a different template will not be accepted and the application will not be considered. **Please note that applications will be judged based on efficiency of costs vs. proposed performance targets.** Apart from co-financing (leverage) which shall be presented as a quantifiable column, the budget template contains the following budget categories as applicable:

a. Salaries (activity staff)

The applicant shall provide the individual’s name (if available), position title, the unit (days), the number of units (i.e., the level of effort), the unit salary and the total salary. Unit salaries shall be stated in daily rates. Benefits, fees, and indirect costs should not be included in the unit salary.

b. Consultants

The applicant shall provide the individual’s name (if available), position title, the unit (days), the number of units (i.e., the level of effort), the unit consultant fee and the total consultant fee. Unit fees shall be stated in daily rates.

c. Fringe Benefits

This could include social security, health insurance, and other mandatory withholdings for relevant grantee staff in accordance with the grantee’s organizational policies.

d. In-Country Travel and Transportation

Travel and Transportation includes vehicle rental, assurance costs (costs for quality improvement/assurance that could include supervisory visits, monitoring mechanisms), per diem and shall be broken down by traveler, hotel accommodations, transportation vehicle, number of trips and the corresponding number of days of per diem. Include a basis of estimate for each trip.

e. Other Direct Costs (ODCs)

As part of the detailed budget breakdown, the applicant shall submit details of all other direct costs (ODCs) required for undertaking the award grant. ODCs include costs of direct program implementation, communication, meetings, expendable supplies and materials, report preparation/reproduction and publications. Include a basis of estimate for each item.

As illustrative examples only, program implementation costs could include the following (or many others):

- Branding and Marking (i.e., Radio spots, signage, learning materials and promotional print materials such as posters or brochures.)
- Communication costs. Purchasing mobile phones with USAID funds is disallowable; however, budgeted costs for mobile phone data or minutes are allowable.
- Trainings or workshops
- Stationary
- Office Rent
- Venue rental (for trainings or other events)
- Fuel

f. Applicant Co-Financing (Leverage)

*Leverage costs shall be presented within the budget as a quantifiable column throughout all cost categories. Palladium intends to issue a Fixed Amount Award (FAA) grant to the selected applicant. Forgone profit does not qualify as cost sharing or leveraging. **Applicants must include private capital mobilization, ^(OBI) other costed contributions and resources of at least 25% in leverage^(OBI)**. Levels of leverage committed will be highly considered by Palladium competitively when evaluating applications. Illustrative examples of leveraged costs (totaling 100% or a percentage) to include in applicants' proposed budgets may include the following cost elements:*

- Office rent
- Office utilities
- Vehicles or motorcycles*
- Office generators*
- Office Internet
- Fuel
- Computers*
- Office or workshop supplies or materials
- Staff salary contributions

⁷ (Leverage: Resources that a non-traditional USAID partner brings to a public-private partnership, i.e., the portion not being borne by USAID. These non-traditional resource partners are typically NOT receiving USAID funds. It can be a variety of forms—anything of value that is measured, financial contributions, third party contributions, donated services or property, or intellectual property. It cannot be audited.

- Portions of consultant or training facilitator costs
- Unrecovered NICRA costs (if previously negotiated with any U.S. Federal Agency)**
- Unrecovered de minimis indirect rate (only up to \$25,000)**

*Equipment or assets must not exceed the fair market value of the equipment or asset of the same age and condition at the time of donation. ** Unrecovered indirect costs mean the difference between the amount charged to the Federal award and the amount which could have been charged to the Federal award. **Any leveraged costs budgeted which are covered by U.S. Federal Agency funding through other programming are disallowable.**

f. Indirect Costs

*A de minimis indirect rate of MTDC (modified total direct cost) may be approved for Fixed Amount Award grants in lieu of any indirect costs but **only up to \$25,000**. A de minimis rate is only available to nonprofit grantees, which have not previously had a negotiated indirect cost rate with any U.S. Federal Agency.*

Submission of the full Application:

Full applications should be emailed to Palladium at CATALYZE.Procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com no later than **April 26, 2024**. Information about the evaluation of full applications is included in Section IV of this RFA.

SECTION IV: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The application must be fully completed in all aspects. An application may not be considered if it is received after the submission deadline. Costs associated with the application preparation shall be at the applicant's expense.

Palladium intends to issue a grant to the organization considered to provide the best strategic fit, technical approach, past performance/organizational capacity, and gender considerations for the overall project. The criteria below will serve as the basis upon which the application will be evaluated. Selection will also be based on the capabilities of the organizations as detailed in the application.

Evaluation Criteria

The technical applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria, which are listed in order of importance, with the most important listed first. Additional details are included below.

Criteria	Explanation	Scoring (Exceptional, Very Good, Satisfactory, Marginal, Unacceptable)
Overall Implementation Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relevance: The proposed approach should be technically sound and responsive to evidence-based programming gaps towards the goal of universal school readiness and in close alignment with the GOI priorities in this sector. ● Impact: Clear articulation of the objectives and results of the implementation approach, including a theory of change, indicators and proposed targets. ● Innovation: The proposal should be innovative and creative in terms of new solutions or programming approaches to address the challenges faced by AWC workers and children. ● Justification of Geographic Location : A sufficient programmatic justification for the proposed implementation geographies and the applicant's ability and experience (including relevant partnerships with Government and private sector) to implement activities in those regions. ● Collaboration: The proposed approach should be inclusive of a wide range of stakeholders, including central and local governments, the private sector, community bodies such as PRIs, local organizations 	

	<p>with expertise in ECE, technology partners and other relevant stakeholders to align priorities and achieve common objectives to improve impact and sustainability. If the proposed approach includes a consortium, please list roles and responsibilities of each.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diversity lens: Meaningful understanding and integration of gender and social inclusion into the technical approach of the Activity which is realistic and achievable within the given timeframe and available resources. ● Additionality of USAID funds: The proposed approach describes how USAID support will be leveraged to catalyze existing efforts of applicants in a way that would not be possible otherwise. 	
<p>Impact and Scalability of Proposed Innovation</p>	<p>Impact of the proposed approach on improving access and quality of learning and development in AWCs, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Potential number of children and teachers directly and indirectly served through proposed solution; ● Inclusion of marginalized children and families and how applicant intends to measure inclusion; ● Quality of ECE provision and how applicant intends to measure quality ● How the applicant intends to measure improved development and learning outcomes for marginalized children. ● Sustainability and scalability (in the same geography and other states) plan for continuation of the proposed innovation after the grant period <p>A minimum of 200 AWCs reached is required. Applications with proposed pathways for scaling impact beyond 200 AWCs, and those with plans for sustaining impact beyond the life of the grant are desirable.</p>	
<p>Private Sector Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrated experience with leveraging external private sector resources to achieve program objectives (cash and in-kind). ● Demonstrated experience with private sector innovation to improve ECE outcomes. ● Proposed value and feasibility of applicant and other private sector partners' in-kind or cash co-investments to ensure success, impact, and 	

	<p>sustainability of the proposed solution, partnership or initiation with a minimum of 25 percent leverage.</p> <p>Applications with proposed pathways for generating leverage beyond 25% will be preferred.</p>	
Applicant/ Partnership Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Past performance of the applicant and any proposed partners in selected context. Demonstrated track record of implementing similar solutions or initiatives in India and selected State(s), including details about existing MoUs with Government and other partners (if applicable). ● Institutional capacity and relevant technical and management experience, based on past performance, to successfully plan, implement, and monitor complex activities that require coordination with the central government, local governments, and various other stakeholders. ● Institutional ability to manage sub-awards and coordinate with sub-awardees to implement the proposed interventions adaptively and successfully. ● Preference for proposals from qualified Local Entities interested in providing technical assistance and services as described in the attached Request for Applications (RFA). 	

Applications that meet the eligibility requirements will be evaluated on their technical and budget proposals separately. Proposed costs will be evaluated for reasonableness, completeness, and overall efficiency in meeting the proposed performance targets, and will play a larger determining factor in instances where applicants are reasonably close in technical evaluation.

SECTION V: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

a. Award Notices

Upon approval by USAID, a notice of award will be provided along with a draft grant document for review.

b. Award Administration Standards

Grants resulting from this solicitation will be administered in accordance with the approved Project Grants Manual, and the following regulations (as applicable):

- FAR Part 31 – Cost Principles for For-Profit organizations used to negotiate award amounts and terminations per 2 C.F.R. 200.201 (b)(1))
- Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter 303 Grants & Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations: 303.3.25 Fixed Amount Awards to Non-Governmental Organizations
- A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 303: 303_mak Fixed Amount Award Entity Eligibility Checklist – as adapted by Palladium
- A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 303: 303_mat Fixed Amount Awards to Non-Governmental Organizations - as adapted by Palladium
- ADS 302.3.4.13 Grants Under Contracts (GUCs)
- 2 C.F.R. 200.1 Definition Fixed Amount Awards
- 2 C.F.R. 200.201 Use of grant agreements (including fixed amount awards), cooperative agreements, and contracts (as referenced in ADS 303.3.25.a.)
- 2. C.F.R. 200 Subpart E – Cost Principles for non-profit and educational organizations – used to negotiate award amounts and terminations per 2 C.F.R. 200.201 (b)(1))

c. Reporting

The frequency and means of presentation of the financial and programmatic reports required by the Grant will be established in the Grant Agreement

The grantee must provide quarterly reports aligned with the USAID CATALYZE reporting schedule. The grantee must provide reporting on private capital mobilization (PCM) generated under the activity. PCM is defined as private sector-based capital contributions including commercial bank loans, equity, and capital from philanthropic organizations such as foundations and family offices. PCM is closely related to and is part of leverage, the main difference being that leverage can also be non-capital contributions such as donations of office space for the activity, and volunteer staff time. All PCM reporting and related data verification requirements will need to comply with CATALYZE and applicable US Government policies and regulations. Palladium CATALYZE will provide additional detailed guidance to the successful grantee on PCM reporting requirements as part of developing and issuing the grant.

d. Branding & Marking Requirements

Successful applicants will be required to submit a Branding Strategy and a Marking Plan that complies with approved Branding and Marking Plan for the project and must follow the mandatory standard provision entitled "MARKING AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS UNDER USAID-FUNDED ASSISTANCE (JULY 2015)" (for FAAs) in preparing the Branding and Marking Plan. The grantee will also be expected to actively participate

in developing communications products that align with the approved Branding and Marking Plan for the project, such as but not limited to social media posts, audio/visual content, written briefs, success stories. Etc.

e. Environmental Compliance

The grants program anticipates funding only activities that fall under the categorical exclusions of “USAID Environmental Guidelines.”⁸ Therefore, if all activities under a specific grant are identified as categorical exclusions, the project will not conduct any additional environmental assessment or will not require prior review by USAID’s environmental officer. However, in instances where the proposed activity may directly affect the environment outside the exclusions, the project will seek guidance from the COR, to ensure compliance with 22 CFR 216 and the “USAID Environmental Guidelines.”

Palladium will ensure all stipulated environmental measures and conditions in the award are implemented throughout the life of the award, and that timely amendments are undertaken, as needed, by obtaining the relevant USAID Environmental Officer’s prior approval in writing to ensure compliance with 22 CFR 216 and the applicable USAID Environmental Guidelines.

⁸ 22 CFR 216