

Amendment to Request for Application

Amendment number: 1

Reference Request for Application Number: RFA-CATALYZE-217772-ECCE SA-2024-0076

Amendment effective date: 10 October 2024

Description of Amendment:

1. This amendment serves to modify the Closing Date for Receipt of Concept Papers on Page 3 of the RFA from **09 October 2024**, at 5:00pm (EST) to **25 October 2024**, at 5:00pm (EST).
2. This amendment serves to modify the Anticipated Timeline for Co-Creation on Page 3 of the RFA from **21-28 October 2024** to **11-15 November 2024**.
3. This amendment serves to modify the Closing Date for Receipt of Full Applications on Page 3 of the RFA from **18 November 2024**, at 5:00pm (EST) to **06 December 2024**, at 5:00pm (EST).
4. This amendment serves to modify the:

“2. Phase 2: If selected to proceed to the next stage, prospective grantees will be asked to participate in a co-creation process to refine the scope and activities to be funded by grant in collaboration with CATALYZE Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa. This is anticipated to occur between **October 21-28, 2024**. Prospective grantees may be introduced to additional partners to scale the impact of the activity.”

on Page 4 of the RFA to:

“2. Phase 2: If selected to proceed to the next stage, prospective grantees will be asked to participate in a co-creation process to refine the scope and activities to be funded by grant in collaboration with CATALYZE Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa. This is anticipated to occur between **11-15 November 2024**. Prospective grantees may be introduced to additional partners to scale the impact of the activity.”

5. This amendment serves to modify the:

“Palladium requires that both concept papers and full applications be submitted both via Palladium’s online application portal at <https://palladium-cp.enquire.cloud/> or emailed to catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com by no later than the respective due dates shown above, following the instructions included in Section III of this RFA.”

on Page 4 of the RFA to:

“Palladium requires that both concept papers and full applications be emailed to catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com by no later than the respective due dates shown above, following the instructions included in Section III of this RFA.”

6. This amendment serves to modify the:

“The Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa anticipates awarding one Fixed Amount Award (FAA) grant from this solicitation by **December 2024**. The anticipated project duration is 9 months; with an expected Period of Performance from January 2025 – September 2025.”

on Page 8 of the RFA to:

“The Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa anticipates awarding one Fixed Amount Award (FAA) grant from this solicitation by **January 2024**. The anticipated project duration is 9 months; with an expected Period of Performance from January 2025 – September 2025.”

7. This amendment serves to modify the:

“Applicants meeting the eligibility criteria discussed in Section II of this RFA should submit a concept note via Palladium’s online application portal at <https://palladium-cp.enquire.cloud/> or to the CATALYZE.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com email using the template included as Attachment A to this RFA, and which reflects the following information:”

on Page 10 of the RFA to:

“Applicants meeting the eligibility criteria discussed in Section II of this RFA should submit a concept note to the CATALYZE.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com email using the template included as Attachment A to this RFA, and which reflects the following information:”

8. This amendment serves to modify the:

“The concept note must be signed by an authorized agent of the applicant and must be submitted in either English. Concept papers and all annexes must be submitted via Palladium’s online application portal at <https://palladium-cp.enquire.cloud/> or by email to (catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com) by no later than **9 October 2024** with the subject line Insert Organization Name: RFA-CATALYZE-217772-ECCE SA-2024-0076.”

on Page 11 of the RFA to:

“The concept note must be signed by an authorized agent of the applicant and must be submitted in English. Concept papers and all annexes must be submitted by email to (catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com) by no later than **25 October 2024** with the subject line Insert Organization Name: RFA-CATALYZE-217772-ECCE SA-2024-0076.”

9. This amendment serves to modify the:

“Full applications must be submitted electronically no later than **18 November 2024** via Palladium’s online application portal at <https://palladium-cp.enquire.cloud/> or via email to catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com.”

on Page 14 of the RFA to:

“Full applications must be signed by an authorized agent of the applicant and must be submitted in English. Full applications and all annexes must be submitted electronically no later than **06 December 2024** via email to catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com.”



Issuance Date: 20 September 2024
Due date for submission of questions: 27 September 2024
Closing Date for Receipt of Concept Papers (Step 1): 25 October 2024
Anticipated Timeline for Co-Creation (Step 1): 11-15 November 2024
Closing Date for Receipt of Full Applications (Step 2): 06 December 2024
Total funding available: \$200,000
Anticipated Number of Grants: 1

REF: USAID/CATALYZE Blended Capital Investment Platform
Prime Contract Number: 7200AA19C00080
Subject: Palladium's Request for Application (RFA) Number CATALYZE-217772-ECCE SA-2024-0076:

Dear Prospective Applicants,

Palladium is seeking applications from qualified applicants, as grantees, for the CATALYZE Lead-Safe Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) South Africa Grants Program under CATALYZE Blended Capital Investment Platform. Palladium is implementing CATALYZE Blended Capital Investment Platform under USAID Prime Contract # AID-7200AA19C00080

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 Applicant will be responsible for ensuring achievement of the program objectives. Please refer to Section I of this RFA entitled Funding Opportunity Description for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

Subject to availability of funds, Palladium intends to provide up to \$200,000 in total funding for activities to be implemented beginning in January 2025. 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 attachments to this RFA. Applications that are submitted late, incomplete, or are non-responsive will not be considered. An award will be made to the responsible applicant whose application best meets the requirements of this RFA and the evaluation criteria contained herein.

Palladium intends to use a three-phase application process to evaluate and select one grantee under this RFA.

1. Phase I: The initial step requires the submission of a Concept Paper, which will be evaluated in accordance with Section IV, Step 1 of this RFA.

2. Phase 2: If selected to proceed to the next stage, prospective grantees will be asked to participate in a co-creation process to refine the scope and activities to be funded by grant in collaboration with CATALYZE Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa. This is anticipated to occur between 11-15 November 2024. Prospective grantees may be introduced to additional partners to scale the impact of the activity.
3. Phase 3: Prospective grantees may be asked to submit a full application package, which will be evaluated in accordance with Section IV, Step 2 of this RFA.

Palladium requires that both concept papers and full applications be emailed to catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com by no later than the respective due dates shown above, following the instructions included in Section III of this RFA.

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 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

Attachments:

- A. Concept Note Template
- B. Full Technical Application Template
- C. Full Cost Application/Budget Template
- D. Required Representations and Certifications of Applicant
- E. Fixed Amount Award (FAA) Template
- F. Due Diligence Form

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

1. Program Description

The USAID CATALYZE EduFinance Activity develops private sector partnerships to facilitate innovations in financing and service delivery that increase access to low-cost, quality education. CATALYZE EduFinance Africa mobilizes a blended finance approach through the strategic use of USAID funds to improve and sustain learning outcomes for children and youth across sub-Saharan Africa, particularly those most vulnerable, and address the substantial global funding gap in education.

The Lead-Safe Early Childhood Care and Education South Africa Activity ('Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa Activity') is part of the USAID CATALYZE EduFinance Early Childhood Care and Education Family of Investments, which aims to enhance learning and development outcomes for children aged 0 to 6 and improve the livelihoods of women. This specific Activity concentrates on reducing lead exposure in Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers across South Africa. By aligning with the broader CATALYZE objectives, it seeks to enhance learning outcomes for vulnerable children by mitigating lead exposure, a known hazard to children's health and cognitive development.

Overall, the Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa Activity aims to offer scalable solutions for lead exposure mitigation in South African ECD centers. The approach involves partnering with South African organizations to design and implement strategies to raise awareness and build capacity of ECD service providers to reduce children's lead exposure at ECD centers. This Activity will also leverage private sector resources to improve the health and safety of ECD centers. The mobilization of private capital supports the financial sustainability of the project, reducing dependence on government subsidies. Lessons learned from this endeavor will inform USAID's broader lead mitigation efforts and shape future initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa.

Lead exposure is a complex issue in South Africa, with multiple sources of exposure present in communities. The Department of Health released the South African National Lead Exposure Prevention Strategy in 2020 in an effort to reduce the risks of lead exposure in the country. In addition, recent policy changes have reduced the acceptable concentration of lead in paint. However, many commercial and residential buildings still contain lead paint, so it remains a common source of exposure. In addition, many items specifically relevant to children such as playground equipment, toys (e.g., wooden building blocks), and school equipment (e.g., crayons) have been identified as containing paint with very elevated lead levels (up to 145,000 µg/g).^{1,2} Lead exposure also comes through environmental sources such as cottage industry activity (e.g., spray painting cars or furniture), subsistence fishing, battery recycling, mining, cookware, and other sources such as cosmetics and medicines. The specific sources of lead exposure differ by community, but research has clearly identified that poorer communities and those associated with apartheid segregation policies carry a heavier burden.³

Previous research has demonstrated that there are high concentrations of blood lead levels among children in the Gauteng area, but specifics about the prevalence of various sources of lead exposure for children attending ECD centers is unknown. The Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa Activity will partner with a

¹ Mathee, Singh, Mogotsi, et al. (2009). Lead-based paint on playground equipment in public children's parks in Johannesburg, Tshwane and Ekurhuleni. *South African Medical Journal*, 99(11): 819-821.

² Mathee, Röllin, Levin, Naik (2006). Lead in paint: Three decades later and still a hazard for African children? *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 115(3):321-322.

³ Mathee, Naicker & Schirnding (2019). The role of the South African Medical Research Council in reducing lead exposure and preventing lead poisoning in South Africa. *South African Medical Journal*, 109(S25-S29).

South African research institution to develop a thorough understanding of how children are being exposed to lead in their ECD environments. This scope of work will focus on leveraging this latest information to implement a program to improve health and hygiene practices relevant to lead exposure risks for young children. Using social and behavior change communication strategies, alongside private sector investment, the Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa Activity will develop effective, sustainable strategies for improving the environmental health and safety of ECD centers in Gauteng province.^{4,5}

The Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa Activity will leverage existing CATALYZE EduFinance activities implemented with Kaizenvest in Gauteng province, which are working to improve access to finance for ECD centers and deliver new innovations to improve teaching and learning in ECD centers. The Activity will connect the successful applicant with a pre-selected group of 30 ECD centers willing to participate in the Activity. In addition, the Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa Activity will connect successful applicant with the local research institution to develop training and guidance materials that leverage results of the planned ECD center lead risk assessment.

2. Scope

In line with the above-mentioned background, Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa Activity seeks to support South African organizations in their efforts to improve lead reduction practices and mitigation strategies in ECD centers in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The grantee will focus on raising awareness of ECD center staff about the negative effects lead exposure poses on child development, building staff capacity to identify potential sources of lead exposure, improve health and hygiene practices related to lead exposure, and facilitating the replacement of lead-exposed products within the centers. The grantee should also seek to increase awareness of lead exposure and mitigation among other community stakeholders, including parents and local government. Awareness and capacity building initiatives could include activities such as in-person or virtual training sessions, certification courses, hands-on workshops, information shared through digital platforms such as apps, radio or television campaigns, or other contextually appropriate solutions.

Interventions must have a component focused on private sector engagement, with the aim of mobilizing private capital, in-kind contributions, or other forms of leverage. Private sector engagement should focus on improving the health and safety of ECD centers, including but not limited to provision of funding or materials that will replace or repair items within ECD centers identified as unsafe due to high lead content or at risk of exposing children to lead, facilitation of financing for infrastructure improvements, trainings or resources for centers related to health and safety practices.

The selected grantee will work in conjunction with Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa Activity's research partner in South Africa, who will develop a lead exposure assessment protocol in 30 ECD centers across Gauteng province. The research partner will conduct a lead exposure assessment at ECD centers by the end of October 2024. These results will be shared with the grantee to support the development of their strategies and materials prior to the implementation phase.

CATALYZE ECCE encourages applicants to submit a concept note detailing how they would achieve the following:

- **Increasing equitable access to high-quality ECD centers.** Access to lead-safe learning and care environments with high environmental, health and safety (EHS) standards is crucial for

⁴ <https://www.usaid.gov/social-and-behavior-change#:~:text=Interventions%20that%20seek%20to%20change,medical%20male%20circumcision%3B%20provision%20of>

⁵ Feit, Mathee, Harpham, Barnes (2014). Using behavior change to reduce child lead exposure in resource-poor settings: a formative study. *Health Education Research*, 29(6), 933-940.

adequate child development. Programming should focus on increasing the number of lead-safe centers and the capacity of centers to deal with lead contamination and mitigation, while taking into consideration centers that serve marginalized and vulnerable children, or children from lower socio-economic classes who are more prone to the negative effects of lead poisoning.

- **Enhanced capacity and development of ECD providers.** Improving the knowledge of ECD practitioners regarding the risks of lead exposure and training them on lead mitigation practices, such as cleaning and the replacement of lead-exposed material, drives positive child development outcomes and better equips practitioners to carry out their role effectively. Programs should leverage strong social, and behavior change principles, addressing norms, attitudes, and knowledge present among ECD service providers in Gauteng province. Activities may focus on virtual or in-person training, development, and capacity building of staff members to assist them in creating a strong foundation of sustainable lead-safe policies and practices.
- **Increased awareness of lead exposure among ECD stakeholders outside of ECD centers.** Lead exposure may occur through multiple sources, such as paint that may be found in homes, spices, cosmetics, kitchenware, or through mining and battery recycling plants that may contaminate the area or may be brought into the home by parents employed at those plants. Providing parents and government officials with information and knowledge about the sources and risks of lead exposure and mitigation strategies may drive further action towards decreasing exposure, and in turn increasing children's health and development outcomes.
- **Increased financing for high-quality ECD provision.** Private sector engagement should focus on provision of funding or materials that will replace or repair items within ECD centers identified as unsafe due to high lead content or at risk of exposing children to lead, facilitation of financing for infrastructure improvements, or other trainings or resources for centers related to health and safety practices. Partnerships may be between philanthropic and faith-based institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), universities and training centers, companies implementing corporate social responsibility initiatives, and private institutions.

Present at the final stage of the applications should be a proposed approach with pre-determined private sector partners aiming to decrease lead exposure and drive lead mitigation strategies in ECD centers. Preference will be given to private sector partnerships that produce sustainable solutions which are able to carry on after the grant's period of performance.

Coordination and Cooperation: The grantee must coordinate and align with the Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa Activity's partner undertaking research activities in the 30 ECD centers across Gauteng province. The grant activities must be implemented at minimum across these 30 pre-selected ECD centers where the lead exposure assessment is being carried out. Programming for additional ECD centers is acceptable as well.

This research will measure the short-term results of the lead exposure reduction activities by testing the lead levels prior to and after the Grantee's programming. In addition, grants funded by Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa should also seek to complement other activities funded by USAID and other development partners in South Africa, such as the USAID CATALYZE EduFinance Activity, and the USAID CATALYZE Together for Early Childhood Evidence Activity. The Lead-Safe ECCE South Activity could actively collaborate and leverage resources with these and other USAID initiatives by strategically sequencing, layering, or integrating with past and ongoing efforts.

Illustrative Examples of Multi-Stakeholder Investments and Innovative Partnerships

The following are indicative partnerships, although not exhaustive:

- Identify and coordinate with private partners to access and distribute lead-safe cleaning kits and replacement materials.
- Matched contributions from private partners (e.g., foundations, CSR) to provide lead-safe materials (e.g., cleaning kits, cookware, toys, water filters, etc.) either via matched funding commitments or in-kind contributions (e.g., in-kind staff time to provide training on lead-safe procedures).

- Building off the current CATALYZE Edufinance Activity's private capital mobilization efforts with investors and financial institutions to find ways to channel new financing to ECD centers for lead mitigation efforts, improve infrastructure or materials to reduce lead exposure, or other innovative arrangements to channel private sector resources or capacity building to support these efforts.
- Engage private companies (e.g. recycling, environmental services, etc.) to assist in building the capacity of community members, stakeholders, or ECCE centers in lead-safe recycling, cleaning, and mitigation practices.

3. Objectives

Over the course of this grant period, it is anticipated that Grantee will:

- Increase equitable access to ECD by improving environmental, health, and safety standards;
- Increase awareness of ECD stakeholders (including practitioners, parents, and local government) of lead exposure and lead mitigation practices;
- Increase private sector leverage for high-quality ECD service provision. Private sector leverage should total at least \$50,000.

4. Requirements

Concept Notes must conform to the structure in Attachment A, Concept Note Format, which includes the elements described in SECTION III - STEP 1 of this RFA.

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

5. Anticipated Outcomes

Anticipated outcomes of the grant agreement will reflect the scope of work and design of the activities. Illustrative outcomes may include the following:

- Increased number of children with improved access to high-quality ECD services
- Reduction in the number of learning environments that have lead exposure sources
- Increased number of ECD providers implementing lead-safe protocols and meeting environmental, health and safety quality standards
- Increased knowledge among ECD staff regarding the sources and negative effects of lead exposure, and improvement in their capacity to create a sustainable mitigation plan;
- Increased knowledge among ECD stakeholders regarding sources, effects, and mitigation of lead exposure;
- Increased private capital leveraged that expands access to high-quality ECD services.

6. Schedule

The Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa anticipates awarding one Fixed Amount Award (FAA) grant from this solicitation by January 2024. The anticipated project duration is 9 months; with an expected Period of Performance from January 2025 – September 2025.

7. Estimated Funding Level

Award amount may range between USD \$150,000 and USD \$200,000. However, the final amount will be dependent upon the proposed activities and final negotiation that will take place in Step 2. Preference will be given to South African organizations with previous experience implementing similar projects and showing tangible results and impact.

SECTION II: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The referenced grant program is designed for eligible entities as defined below. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are organizations that act neither in a 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. Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa Activity will accept grant applications from both not-for-profit and for-profit organizations.

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

- Be legally registered as a not-for-profit or for profit; organization in accordance with the laws of South Africa (registration documents required);
- Not be part of a government or any government structures;
- 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.
- Submit the concept paper and, if applicable, the full application, including all mandatory attachments in accordance with the terms and conditions of the RFA, by or before the time and date deadline(s) stipulated in the RFA.
- Comply with the application format guidelines mandated in the RFA, including submitting a budget within the identified funding limitations of the RFA.
- All prospective Grantees under consideration for an award exceeding \$25,000 (or local equivalent) must have or be able to obtain a Unique Entity Identification (UEI) Number⁶.
- Be in existence for at least one year and have experience working in South Africa.

⁶ Note: Applicants without a UEI are highly encouraged to begin UEI registration in www.sam.gov as quickly as possible to ensure compliance with the UEI eligibility criteria. Applicants have experienced delays in obtaining UEI numbers.

SECTION III: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Activity Name: Lead-Safe Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) South Africa Activity

Palladium will award one grant resulting from this solicitation to the responsible applicant that 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.

STEP I – CONCEPT NOTE

Applicants meeting the eligibility criteria discussed in Section II of this RFA should submit a concept note to the CATALYZE.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com email *using the template included as Attachment A to this RFA*, and which reflects the following information:

Palladium will review and finalize applications using a two-step process. All concept notes for Step 1 must include the following:

- Cover Sheet (no more than 1 page) that should include:
 - Opportunity number and name;
 - Address of organization;
 - Contact point (lead contact name, relevant telephone, fax, e-mail information); and
 - Signature of authorized representative of the applicant.
- Technical Approach (maximum of 4 pages, no penalty if shorter): This section should explain the organization's proposed technical approach to achieving Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa Activity's objectives of this document and include:
 - The purpose (mission) and objectives of the organization;
 - A description of problem/challenge your organization is facing and how Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa Activity can help your organization overcome this problem/challenge.
 - A description of the proposed approach, including how the applicant's proposed approach/activities meet Lead-Safe ECCE South Africa Activity's concept note evaluation criteria;
 - A description of recent experience implementing public health interventions in marginalized communities or capacity building for ECD centers, including leadership and number of staff or workers (where applicable);
 - A description of the proposed private partnership and how it would be strategic for increasing funding for improving the health and safety of ECD centers in South Africa; and
 - A description of how the activity will monitor and evaluate progress towards achieving goals and objectives.
- Financial Information
 - Estimated funding required;
 - Proposed co-funding or leveraging is welcome but not required in the concept note stage.
- Registration Information
 - Copy of the organization's legal registration under the laws of South Africa.
 - Copy of the organization's chart and bylaws and power of attorney of the authorized signer.

The concept note must be signed by an authorized agent of the applicant and must be submitted in English. Concept papers and all annexes must be submitted by email to (catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com) by no later than **25 October 2024** with the subject line *Insert Organization Name*: RFA-CATALYZE-217772-ECCE SA-2024-0076.

Submission of the Concept Note:

Concept Notes must be submitted no later than the date detailed on the cover page of this solicitation. Information about the evaluation of concept notes is included in Section IV of this RFA.

All correspondence must include the relevant announcement number and title. Applicants that are not selected will be notified.

Selected applicants will be notified and invited to participate in co-creation meetings with CATALYZE ECCE/Palladium staff, where the concept note will be discussed, refined, and additional partners may be identified. The result of the co-creation will be a full Scope of Work for the partnership. At that point, the applicant will be asked to submit a complete technical and financial application based on the information and outcome of the co-creation process. Palladium will provide instructions and templates at that time. The budget will be analyzed for cost reasonableness and is open to negotiation prior to any award.

Palladium reserves the right to award any or none of the applicants at any stage of the process. For example, proceeding to co-creation does not guarantee a final award, and Palladium will not cover any costs associated with participating in this process.

Do not submit a full application unless requested by Palladium. Only upon receipt of positive Palladium feedback on the concept paper, will the applicant be requested to participate in the co-creation workshop. The applicant may then be asked to put together a full application for Palladium consideration, based on the concept note and co-creation results.

STEP II – FULL APPLICATION

After submitting a successful concept note and completing co-creation, successful applicants will be contacted and required to submit a full application in Step 2. Please do not submit this prior. The full application should consist of:

a. Instructions for Preparation of the Technical Application (maximum 15 pages total, excluding annexes)

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

- i. Cover Letter (1 page annex) including a summary of the application and its total cost, signed by an individual authorized to commit the organization.
- ii. Project Description (expanded concept note, 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, and plans for disseminating activity deliverables. Outline how the proposed elements will support progress toward organizational sustainability.

- iii. Project Implementation Plan (1 page, annex):
This section may be a Gantt chart of planned activities and a timeline with a brief narrative
- iv. Experience and Capacity (included in template):
The applicant lists previous and ongoing experience implementing similar activities. This is a critical factor in assessing the capacity of the grantee 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 and Evaluation Plan (2 pages):
Describes the monitoring and evaluation methods implemented by the recipient and the tools used to measure and evaluate the program activities, targets, and results.
- vi. Project Milestone Schedule (included in template):
Milestones are for a verifiable product, task, deliverable, or goal of the recipient. The milestones will generally have three parts: (1) a description of the product, task, deliverable, or goal to be accomplished; (2) a description of how the recipient will document the completion of the product, task, deliverable, or goal; and (3) the amount that the prime contractor will pay the recipient for the deliverable. Some milestones may also have dates indicating when the milestone is expected or required to be completed. Milestones must be objectively verifiable regarding completion and quantity and within the recipient's span of management control to successfully complete as designed.

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:

i. Transmittal Letter

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

ii. 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.
- Copies of the last annual financial report(s) completed by an authorized/certified accountant.
- Supporting Documentation
 - Due Diligence form; and
 - Signed Certifications

iii. 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. A de minimis indirect rate of 15 percent of MTDC (modified total direct cost) may be approved in the pricing of standard or renewal FAA grants in lieu of any indirect costs. 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. Within the budget notes, an applicant also describes 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 USD 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.**

The budget template contains the following budget categories:

a. Salaries (activity staff)

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

b. Fringe Benefits

This could include social security, health insurance, and other mandatory withholdings for relevant grantee staff.

c. In-Country Travel and Transportation

Travel and Transportation includes per diem and shall be broken down by traveler, transportation vehicle, number of trips and the corresponding number of days of per diem. Include a basis of estimate for each trip.

d. 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):

- *Marketing costs: The applicant should provide details of marketing costs that would promote its services. Illustratively, marketing costs could include events, signage, and promotional print materials.*
- *Assurance costs: The applicant should provide details of costs for quality improvement/assurance that could include supervisory visits, monitoring mechanisms.*

e. Applicant Co-Financing (Leverage)

*In some cases, a leveraged mobilization of private sector expertise, contributions, and resources on at least a 1:1 basis may be required.⁷ Forgone profit does not qualify as cost sharing or leveraging. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.306, cost sharing cannot be used as a separate factor during the merit review of applications. However, cost sharing may be considered in the merit review only if the funding announcement specifically addresses how it will be considered, e.g., assigning a certain number of additional points to applicants who offer cost sharing or using cost sharing to break ties among applications with equivalent scores after evaluation against all other factors. Note that excessive reliance on cost sharing during the merit review may unfairly favor larger, better-funded organizations. Identified leverage shall not be from any United States Government funding through another program. **No cost share requirements may be used in the award of standard or renewable FAA; however, leverage may be considered.***

NOTE: USAID Policy Prohibits the Payment of Fee/Profit to recipients under assistance instruments.

Submission of the full Application:

Full applications must be signed by an authorized agent of the applicant and must be submitted in English. Full applications and all annexes must be submitted electronically no later than **06 December 2024** via email to catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com.

Information about the evaluation of full application is included in Section IV of this RFA.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Technical and financial applications should be submitted in the same email.

SECTION IV: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The application must be fully completed in all aspects in each Step. An application may not be considered if it is received after the submission deadline. Costs associated with preparation of the concept note and the full application shall be at the expense of the applicant.

This RFA includes a three-phase review and selection process, which includes the following elements:

- i. Phase 1: Initial evaluation of concept notes (Section III, Step 1) received as a result of Step 1
- ii. Notification to applicants of inclusion in or exclusion from (Co-Creation)
- iii. Phase 2: Co-creation and refinement of the scope of work through a co-creation process
- iv. Phase 3: Submission of technical and financial application (Section III, Step 2) upon request after completion of (Co-Creation)
- v. Initial evaluation of full applications received as a result of Step 2
- vi. Notification to applicant of final award decision based on the evaluation of the application submitted in Step 2

STEP 1 – EVALUATION OF CONCEPT NOTES

All concept notes will be reviewed by an officially convened Grants Evaluation Committee and evaluated and scored objectively using established criteria presented below. Applicants are encouraged to meet one

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.

or more of the criteria below. Palladium may select multiple applicants to proceed to the co-creation stage, to ensure most or all technical criteria are met.

Only concept notes from applicants that meet the eligibility requirements included in Section II of this RFA will be formally evaluated using the following criteria.

Criteria	Qualification Factors	Yes/No
Technical Approach	Clearly explains how the applicant will address the key challenges of lead exposure in ECD centers. This includes improving staff capacity, raising awareness, implementing lead-safe practices, and replacing hazardous materials. The approach must be evidence-based and operationally feasible in the South African context.	Y/N
Impact on Target Groups	Demonstrates the potential of the proposed solution to have a significant impact on target groups, particularly children living in marginalized communities. This includes reducing lead exposure in ECD centers and contributing to improvements in child development outcomes. The approach should also show potential benefits for ECD workers and community members.	Y/N
Private Sector Engagement	Demonstrates a commitment to engaging the private sector for sustainable outcomes. This includes leveraging private sector resources to support lead-safe initiatives in ECD centers, ensuring ongoing funding or in-kind contributions for lead mitigation beyond the grant period.	Y/N
Cross-Cutting Considerations	Shows alignment with government policies, regulations, and donor strategies, such as national ECD plans, Department of Health regulations, or relevant USAID initiatives. Ensures that the proposed activities comply with national priorities and other donor-funded projects in the ECD space.	Y/N
Applicant/Partnership Capabilities	Highlights the applicant's and partners' track record in implementing similar projects, particularly in South Africa. Demonstrates their ability to engage multiple stakeholders, including the private sector and government, and successfully execute programs within the grant period.	Y/N

STEP 2 – EVALUATION OF FULL APPLICATIONS

Palladium intends to issue a grant to the organization(s) 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
Sound Technical Approach	Clear articulation of how the applicant will address the key challenges of lead exposure in ECD centers, as outlined in the objectives. This includes improving staff capacity, raising awareness, implementing lead-safe practices, and replacing hazardous materials. The technical approach must show a comprehensive, evidence-based plan to raise awareness, build capacity, and engage stakeholders (including parents and local government). Operational feasibility and appropriateness of the proposed solution in the South African context are key, as well as the roles and responsibilities of all partners involved.	30
Potential Impact	Demonstrates the potential of the proposed solution to have a significant impact on target groups, particularly children living in marginalized communities. This includes reducing lead exposure in ECD centers and contributing to improvements in child development outcomes. The approach should also show potential benefits for ECD workers, community members, and engagement with relevant government entities.	20
Potential Sustainability	The applicant must provide a clear plan for the long-term sustainability of lead-safe practices in ECD centers beyond the grant period. This includes a description of how successful approaches could be continued, replicated, and scaled with minimal dependency on grant funding in the future. Preference will be given to solutions that include strategies for maintaining lead-safe environments through ongoing training, partnerships with private sector actors for continuous support, and mobilization of resources for infrastructure improvements.	20
Applicant/ Partnership Capabilities	The applicant and its partners must demonstrate past success in implementing similar health, safety, and capacity-building programs, preferably in ECD, education, or related sectors in South Africa. The capacity to engage with multiple stakeholders, including the private sector and local government, is essential. The applicant should highlight the experience and buy-in of all partners involved, including their ability to mobilize resources and implement activities within the grant period.	15
Co-investment Commitment	The applicant must demonstrate a strong commitment to leveraging private sector resources. This includes financial or in-kind contributions from private partners (e.g., providing lead-safe cleaning kits, lead-safe ECD materials, or funding for infrastructure improvements). Applications will be scored higher if they can clearly show pre-determined private sector partnerships with confirmed commitments that total at least \$50,000, ensuring financial sustainability and further support for lead mitigation strategies. Identified leverage shall not be from any United States Government funding through another program.	15

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 Standard Provisions for 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 be established in the Grant Agreement.

d. Branding & Marking Requirements

Apparently successful applicant 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 (DECEMBER 2014)” (for standard cost type grants) or “MARKING AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS UNDER USAID-FUNDED ASSISTANCE (JULY 2015)” (for FAAs) in preparing the Branding and Marking Plan.

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.”

⁸ 22 CFR 216

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.