



USAID | AFGHANISTAN

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Date Issued: August 13, 2012
Question Deadline: October 4, 2012
Closing Date: October 4, 2012

SUBJECT: Pre-solicitation Notice
Women in Transition (WIT) Program

ATTENTION: Interested Parties

This letter serves as notification that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) intends to release a solicitation, Request for Proposal in the near future for its new Women in Transition (WIT) program in Afghanistan.

Attached is the concept paper that will form the parameter of Section C of the pending RFP. USAID requests all interested parties review and comment on the draft text. All questions and comments regarding this pre-solicitation notice and its attachment must be submitted electronically to KabulAidOAAmailbox@usaid.gov by no later than Thursday, October 4, 2012 at 5:00 PM Kabul time. Please include the title, "WIT Pre-solicitation" in the subject line of your email.

USAID anticipates the final requirement when publicized as a Request for Proposal (RFP) will be valued at more than US\$260 million over a 5-year period.

A pre-solicitation conference will be held on Monday, August 27, 2012 from 10:30 to 11:30a.m. at Federal Way Center (State Annex building #44) 301 C Street, SW, Washington, DC (8th floor). It is located 2 blocks east of the L'Enfant Plaza Metro stop. Individuals who wish to participate must pre-register for the conference by submitting their full legal name and providing the name of the firm(s) or organization(s) they represent, if any, to KabulAidOAAmailbox@usaid.gov no later than Wednesday, August 22, 2012 at 5:00 PM Kabul time.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Marcus A. Johnson, Jr.
Contracting Officer
Office of Acquisition and Assistance

PROGRAM CONCEPT PAPER

I. Problem and Analysis

The political and financial realities of transition threaten the preservation and expansion of women's rights in Afghanistan. Women and girls would be sorely affected, perhaps losing even the basic human rights they have gained over the last decade, and the country would be deprived of the productive contributions of half its population, greatly diminishing the nation's development prospects.

Investments in women over the last decade have produced significant results. Today, nearly 40 percent of school-aged girls—almost 3 million—are enrolled in school, including 164,000 girls in secondary school. An additional 40,000ⁱ young women attend public or private universities or technical and vocational training institutes, with more enrolling each year; life expectancy has increased to 64 for both women and men; 27 percent of seats in the Afghan National Assembly and 25 percent in the provincial councils are reserved for women; women's organizations are working to end violence and discrimination against women; and equal rights for women are enshrined in the Afghan Constitution and official Afghan policy.

Considering the desperate situation of girls and women just a decade ago, these are remarkable—yet tenuous—gains. They are newly won, not yet firmly grounded or accepted in Afghan society or psyche, they vary widely by geography and ethnicity, and nowhere are they effectively enforced. Many women fear that a Taliban resurgence would render women's rights as vulnerable to the vagaries of politicians as they have been historically;ⁱⁱ under the Taliban scenario, others predict an exodus of both men and women with the means to leave. Recent events, such as poison attacks on girls' schools, the execution of a woman just outside Kabul the day before the 2012 Tokyo Conference, the murder of the Director of Women's Affairs in Laghman and the officially endorsed "Code of Conduct,ⁱⁱⁱ" which condones wife beating under certain circumstances and aims to restrict women's mobility, are causing many Afghan women to fear that transition will herald a reversal of their decade-long struggle for safety and rights.

Beyond women's human rights and welfare, the stakes are also high for Afghanistan's development prospects. Research shows that women serve as the catalyst for many positive changes in society. Access to education, for example, improves women's long-term economic prospects and helps lift themselves and their families out of poverty. Healthy, educated women are also far more likely to have fewer, healthier and better educated children and to participate in political and civic life, adding their valuable perspectives to the shaping of the country's future. With 42 percent of the Afghan population under the age of 15, healthy, educated mothers will ensure that the next generation of Afghans – both male and female – will fare far better than the current one.^{iv}

Research demonstrates conclusively that gender equality in rights, responsibilities and opportunities is essential to maximize the economic and development potential of a country.^v However, "Just as investing in women and girls can create a positive development cycle, the opposite is also true: countries that fail to empower half their population will suffer from lower productivity, slower economic growth, and weaker development outcomes."^{vi}

Of particular relevance to Afghanistan is the World Economic Forum's conclusion that "countries that have made investments in women's education and health but have generally not removed barriers to women's participation in the workforce and in decision-making...are thus not seeing returns on their

investments in the development of one half of their human capital.”^{vii} “Research by the World Bank shows that such restrictions have imposed massive costs throughout the Middle East, where decades of substantial investment have dramatically reduced the gender gap in education, but the gender gap in economic opportunity remains the widest in the world.”^{viii}

With the stakes so high, the case for securing and sustaining a productive role for Afghan women is as compelling for Afghanistan as it is for women. Restrictions on Afghan women’s rights, education, employment, credit, and the ability to participate in public life come at an enormous cost to women and to Afghanistan’s ability to grow sustainably, govern effectively and reduce poverty.

The Women in Transition (WIT) program is designed to take decisive and long-term action to protect women’s current gains and maintain the momentum for future progress. There is unlikely to be a better confluence of financial resources and political will to influence the long-term preservation and advancement of Afghan women’s rights and opportunities than now. This is our best opportunity to demonstrate the promise to women that the USG has repeatedly underscored; it is the ideal moment in time to substantiate Secretary Clinton’s pledge to Afghan women that “we will not abandon you!”^{ix}

II. Problem Statement and Major Issues

Despite official GIRA mandates endorsing equal rights for women, they are seriously under-represented in all sectors of society, professionally marginalized, and lack opportunities to assume decision making and leadership roles in government, the private sector and civil society. This restricts women’s rights and deprives the country of women’s contributions to development. A “critical mass” of women leaders in all key sectors will help Afghanistan achieve an inclusive and sustainable transformation.

Investments in Afghan women over the last decade have produced a large number of educated young women between the ages of 17 and 30, estimated at 200,000 strong and growing, who represent a valuable source of talent, energy and expertise for Afghanistan. Unleashing the productive potential of this group of women could greatly improve Afghanistan’s development prospects during and after transition. Yet the benefits that could accrue to the country and to women will be largely lost if they are not allowed to join the ranks of decision makers and leaders in productive pursuits outside the home. If Afghanistan is to realize the potential for social, political and economic progress that women’s productivity promises, opportunities for them to enter and advance within these sectors must be available and accessible. Currently, they are not.

WIT will provide educated, young women with opportunities to develop strong, demand-driven technical skills, plus senior level management and leadership abilities and facilitate women’s entry and advancement into mid-high level positions in government, the private sector and civil society. WIT is based on the premise that this vigorous, long-term investment will produce a critical mass^x of women leaders in key, mainstream sectors in Afghanistan. This critical mass will change the decision making paradigm at the upper levels of government, civil society and the economy, enabling women’s perspectives and priorities to help shape the national agenda, significantly improving the lives of girls and women at all levels and resulting in more inclusive, effective and sustainable social, political and economic progress for the country.

Supporting this hypothesis are four theories of social change that work together to create a system of innovation diffusion on which WIT is based. The theories include *critical mass, the tipping point, the ink blot, and transformational leadership.*

Critical Mass

When applied to social change, “critical mass” is defined as the existence of a sufficient number of adopters of an innovation in a social system such that the innovation’s rate of adoption becomes self-sustaining. Analysts estimate that 30 percent^{xi} is the point at which a social innovation starts to become a new reality. Once critical mass is reached, the change spreads rapidly.

In Afghanistan, the innovation is the entry and advancement of qualified Afghan women into senior positions in major sectors of mainstream society. Achieving a critical mass of women in leadership roles in government, civil society and the economy will make the phenomenon of women seeking and acquiring such roles less unusual, less inappropriate and viewed as a more “new normal” pattern of behavior. When applied to women, the critical mass theory is quite specific about how the advantages of women’s leadership contributions accrue to and thus become apparent to and accepted by family, community, company, and country.

According to Afghanistan’s Minister of Women’s Affairs, the *primary challenge* Afghan women face is that “decision-making positions are disproportionately occupied by men.”^{xii} Her remark echoes those of academics, business leaders and development professionals, whose research shows that when women are equally represented at the top, the “bottom line” improves significantly. This is a business metaphor, but it applies more broadly to development. According to the “[Benchmarking Women’s Leadership](#)” report, published by The White House Project, achieving a critical mass of women in leadership positions is essential to building “a stronger economy, better institutions and a more representative democracy.”^{xiii} This theory is also supported by Harvard Business School Professor of Organizational Behavior Robin J. Ely, whose studies show that gender disparity will not decrease significantly if women remain only in entry- or even mid-level positions. ***The key is to reach critical mass at senior levels.***^{xiv}

It is likely that new women leaders will emerge from the current group of 200,000 educated, young women WIT will target, as well as from women already in business, government and civil society who seek to advance into leadership positions and from even greater numbers of youth who will join the ranks of educated women each year. For that reason, WIT has been designed with catalytic intentions to give women a chance to excel in their chosen fields by facilitating their employment and business development, supporting strong networks and regional alliances and, over a ten year period, enabling a sufficient number of women to move into leadership positions in their respective sectors so as to reach critical mass. According to available statistics from the private sector, government and civil society, this should enable competent and committed women to influence decision making about priority needs, resource allocation and policies on which the future of their country depends.

An important component of the critical mass theory is research that identifies five *adopter categories*^{xv} of the members of a social system, each of which represents a particular percentage of a population that is more or less likely to adopt an innovation over time.

- Innovators are the first 2.5 percent of the individuals in a system to adopt an innovation; they play an important role in the diffusion process by launching the new idea in the system.
- Early adopters are the next 13.5 percent of the individuals in a system to adopt an innovation. Because they are not too far ahead of the average individual in innovativeness, they serve as role models for many other members of a social system.

- Early majority adopters, the next 34 percent of individuals in a system, adopt new ideas just before the average member of a system. Their unique position between the very early and the relatively late to adopt makes them an important link in the diffusion process.
- Late majority adopters make up the next 34 percent of the individuals to adopt an innovation. They adopt new ideas just after the average member of a system.
- Laggards are the last 16 percent, whose decisions are often made in terms of what has been done in the past. They are the last to adopt a new innovation.

These categories provide useful guidance for WIT’s implementation, particularly population targeting and program sequencing—and especially when combined with the “tipping point” theory of change.

Tipping Point

In sociology, a “tipping point” is the event of a phenomenon becoming rapidly and dramatically more common; it can be defined as the culmination of a build-up of small changes that produces a big change. The tipping point, or “turning point,” is the critical point in an evolving situation that leads to a new and often irreversible development. Frequently, a tipping point is a simple addition or increment that by itself might not seem extraordinary but that represents, often unexpectedly, just the amount of additional change that will lead to a big effect. In layman’s terms, it is “the last straw.”^{xvi}

A new study from the Social Cognitive Networks Academic Research Center suggests that to change the beliefs of an entire community, targeting the right group at the right time will make reaching critical mass easier and faster. Rather than trying to convince everyone, it makes the most sense to selectively target specific groups in a population and let them do the rest. In most cases, *when 16 percent of the members of a system (the “innovators” and “early adopters”) adopt an innovation, the “tipping point” will have been reached, and the diffusion process will move much more rapidly toward critical mass.* For WIT, educated young women, with their families and supporters, represent the innovators and early adopters.

The Ink Blot Effect

The vast majority of educated women and their families reside in Kabul and provincial capitals.^{xvii} According to the “ink blot” theory of social change, initial success among innovators and early adopters provides the momentum for the innovation to spread from urban to rural areas over time^{xviii}, much like an ink blot spreads on a piece of paper. Social scientists have proven that small-group interventions can create large-scale social change through the impact that specific participants have on those within their personal and professional spheres of influence. Studies indicate that the individual and relational changes that occur among small groups will have ever-widening circles of impact as participants take their new learning back to their respective communities and organizations. In the case of Afghanistan, many urban dwellers have their roots in rural areas or villages, where their extended families live. The flow of information and innovation from the city to the village will thus occur naturally, though it can also be expedited through targeted interventions.

The ink blot theory posits that behavior or beliefs spread among people, much as an ink blot spreads, with the probability of an individual adopting it increasing with the proportion that has already done so. As more people come to believe in something, others also “hop on the bandwagon.” The tendency to follow the actions or beliefs of others occurs because individuals prefer to conform, thereby creating information cascades in which alter their personal information signals and follow the behavior of others.

The overwhelming number of illiterate women and men live in rural areas, which have been relatively untouched by recent gains for women in the cities. *What happened in Kabul used to stay in Kabul.* Today, however, communication between cities, villages and rural areas is more rapid, frequent and, we assume, more influential. Added to the spread of mass media, mobile technology, more widespread access to education and the growing pattern of rural to urban migration^{xix}, it will be possible to reach an increasing number of rural women and their families over ten years, thus enlarging WIT's scale to the villages and rural areas not initially targeted. Moreover, USAID's 3-year Providing Opportunities to Women through Empowerment and Resources (POWER) participant training project, which will focus on young, rural and peri-urban, literate women aged 15-20, without a secondary education, will provide entry points for continued education, training and capacity building that can be linked to the WIT program.

A key WIT hypothesis is that as educated women achieve critical mass in leadership positions in key sectors, they will increasingly ensure that the needs of women in villages, rural areas and at the grassroots level will be addressed, their access to information will be increased and their views and perspectives will be heard and conveyed to decision makers at local, district, provincial, regional and national levels. The theory of change supporting this assumption is known as “transformational leadership.”

Transformational Leadership

A plethora of research has established that when women comprise 30 percent of a company or organization's leadership, the company/organization is more successful as measured by productivity, profitability and sustainability indicators.^{xx} When a critical mass of women in senior management is attained, companies also score higher in key criteria of excellence, including work environment, values, vision, coordination and control, motivation, capability, accountability, corporate culture and innovation.^{xxi} An overwhelming majority of participants (72 percent) in a major study believe that gender diversity is directly linked to a company's financial success.^{xxii}

The documentation of increased success among entities led with a critical mass of women has prompted research into the nature of women's leadership styles. One analysis of 45 [leadership](#) studies found that women are more likely to employ a “transformational” leadership style that is characterized as less hierarchical, more cooperative and collaborative and more oriented to enhancing others' self-worth than the “transactional” management style associated with male management, which has been traditionally characterized by demotions for poor performance, rewards for good behavior, or a laissez-faire style of management.^{xxiii} These and many more studies suggest that a significant presence of female leaders in an organization measurably contributes to its health as well as its wealth.

Other studies show that companies with more women leaders are not only more committed to corporate social responsibility (CSR), they may also be better at it, with a payoff that extends from company to community to the broader society. In short, “when business leadership includes women, society wins.”^{xxiv}

India provides a sterling example of how women's leadership benefits society. Two million rural women now sit at local government decision-making tables. Because women are traditionally responsible for meeting their families' basic needs, these elected women—now role models to the

other women in their communities—are altering the development agenda to address issues critical to village life. Women from Orissa and Assam to Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are ensuring that roads are repaired, electricity is brought to their villages, schools are built, latrines are installed, medical services are available, water sources are made safe and local savings groups are formed, to name a few of the changes. To have even a greater impact, especially when dealing with bureaucratic obstacles, these women form federations with other elected women representatives, who provide mutual support and rally thousands of elected women to demand policy change on a larger scale. When at least one-third of all representatives are female, gender relations begin to transform, old prejudices dissolve and new partnerships between women and men develop.^{xxv} Both research and experience support the theory that a critical mass of women leaders leads to a proactive and priority endeavor to improve conditions for other women and for the poor in general.^{xxvi}

III. Program Description

WIT will invest in opportunities that enable educated women to enter and advance into decision making positions in Afghanistan's public, private and civil society sectors. For young women with at least a high school education, WIT will provide access to advanced professional development opportunities through four specific CLINs under the WIT umbrella:

- *CLIN 1: Women in the Economy (WE)*
- *CLIN 2: Women's Rights Groups and Coalitions*
- *CLIN 3: Women in Government*
- *CLIN 4: Women's Leadership Development*

CLIN 1: Women in the Economy (WE) (over \$150 million for WIT 1)

The purpose of this CLIN is to enable Afghan women to increase their participation in the mainstream, formal economy by securing management level employment **or** establishing/expanding viable small- to medium- to large-sized businesses. For this to occur, women must develop both technical and business knowledge and skills. Existing technical, vocational and business schools are often too expensive for women, employ primarily male instructors and offer training by men that is geared to occupations for men. An even worse situation confronts women seeking to establish agribusinesses with little or no access to credit, land, extension services or new technologies. WE will establish a new Business/Employment Incubator model offering professional business development services and market-driven technical and vocational training that will enable women to (a) acquire a sufficiently high level of expertise in all relevant areas to launch/expand, manage and sustain small, medium and large businesses with a viable market **or** (b) acquire skills and knowledge specific to a particular job, trade or vocation that enhances their ability to do that job such that they are hired into positions with advancement potential. To achieve these outcomes, WE will effectively address the obstacles preventing women from entering into mainstream markets as business owners, managers or employees on an advancement career track, assess the viability of the wide variety of business initiatives women are proposing, and provide professional training in established fields of interest to women. Illustrative topics to be included in the business training include: business plan development; marketing; networking; branding and marketing; accounting/financial management; presentation skills; advisory boards and mentors; management team identification and functions; business etiquette and workplace decorum; critical thinking and analysis; supervision and management; regulatory compliance/standards; and access to bank loans, loan funds and guarantee programs.

Security permitting, the WE Incubators will operate in the six regional hubs—Kabul, Mazar, Herat, Jalalabad, Lashkar Gah and Kandahar—and other provincial urban areas nationwide. WIT will focus in particular on the economic corridor zones where large enterprises—to be followed by ancillary, supportive businesses—are expected to grow. Successful graduates of the program^{xxvii} will be eligible for SME financing, credit or guarantees, while those seeking employment will be provided with a placement service that includes internships with six months of salary coverage to enhance their chances of successfully securing employment.

CLIN 2: Women’s Rights Groups and Coalitions (WRGC) (over \$40 million for WIT 1)

The purpose of this CLIN is to strengthen women’s rights organizations by building their technical gender knowledge, applying their technical gender skills, and combining forces to influence public policies and social practices to benefit Afghan women. Women’s organizations are working to end violence and discrimination against women, yet gender inequality is still endemic, and four out of five Afghan women report that they do not know where to turn for support. The target of this Component is groups whose explicit goal is women’s equality and empowerment—groups for whom that goal is fundamental to their mission and activities. Of the 930 women’s non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or Social Organizations (SOs) registered in Afghanistan,^{xxviii xxix} WIT will work with an estimated one or two in each province that most closely meet this definition, for a total of approximately 50 organizations during WIT 1. Some will already be established, others will be relatively new and still others will not yet have been formed. Over the last few years, a new breed of women’s rights groups has sprung up with activist agendas, and, already, they are playing a visible role in bringing critical issues to the forefront and advocating for change. Young Women for Change^{xxx} is a good example, but throughout the country, even in the most conservative areas, women are staging protests and demonstrations against injustice and marches and sit-ins for peace, demonstrating an increasingly strong desire to be heard.^{xxxi xxxii xxxiii xxxiv} WIT will support activist women’s groups by providing them with capacity building in the areas of strategic communications, multi-media messaging, outreach and public awareness/education, coalition building, gender studies and research, organizational development, managerial and financial management and fundraising so as to contribute to their success. WIT will also provide a small number of grants for activities supporting these goals, such as:

- *Outreach:* Creating or strengthening mechanisms enabling access of information, networking, establishing coalitions with counterpart groups in the region and alliances with women’s groups internationally, and spreading new ideas throughout the country using a variety of strategic communications methods;
- *Activism:* Identifying ways to compensate for past discrimination and historical disadvantage, eliminate harmful traditional practices, advance women’s empowerment and equality, and lobby against discriminatory policies, processes and practices at all levels; and
- *Research:* Conducting and disseminating social scientific research on gender issues, contributing to the body of knowledge on best practices for improving women’s rights, increasing women’s development roles as decision makers, implementers, change agents and beneficiaries, combating discrimination and violence against women, and exploring historical and contemporary studies of Afghan women, perhaps leading to a women’s studies program at receptive universities.

WIT will support the growth of the nascent, indigenous women’s rights movement that will take action to address the violations of women’s human rights, instill within women a sense of pride and self-confidence, and facilitate the full participation of Afghan women in mainstream society, exercising privileges and responsibilities in equal partnership with men.

CLIN 3: Women in Government (WIG) (over \$50 million for WIT 1)

The purpose of this CLIN is to increase the number of women in professional and leadership positions in government. WIG will be modeled on the successful Women in Government Internship Program, an ongoing pilot activity that is part of USAID's Economic Growth and Governance Initiative (EGGI). The internship program provides qualified university graduates with the opportunity to gain functional knowledge, skills and experience working with government institutions, ultimately leading to long-term employment.^{xxxv} WIG will scale up the EGGI pilot, providing an estimated 3,700 women who desire a career in the civil service with six-month internships at government institutions nationwide. Provided with training prior to and during the internship, as well as a stipend to cover costs, young women will work with carefully selected supervisors on substantive tasks while familiarizing themselves with the government system. Supporting women at the national, provincial and district levels, WIG will also work with human resource offices and Gender Directorates where they exist *to create career paths* for the highly skilled and talented young interns. Throughout their internships, WIG will include team building and promote "women in government" networks as part of the training so that, as interns move into permanent positions within government, they will be better able to work together to create an enabling environment for women and ensure that policies are favorable to women's political, economic and social empowerment. WIG will also work with women already in government service to support their promotion into leadership roles. Currently, only 3.46 percent of women hold decision-making positions.

CLIN 4: Women's Leadership Development (WLD) (over \$20 million for WIT 1)

The purpose of this CLIN is to enable women to apply advanced management and leadership skills in public, private and civil service sectors. The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) has identified women's leadership skills as a critical goal and has called for the establishment of capacity building mechanisms for improving women's effectiveness as leaders in all spheres of national life. WLD will provide that mechanism. Supporting the other 3 WIT CLINs, WLD will provide 3-6 month courses focusing such topics as: critical thinking; problem solving; strategic planning; strategic communications such as public speaking, briefing and presentation skills; business writing; group facilitation; negotiation; conflict management; team building; customer service; decision making; supervision; performance monitoring; managing change; etc. WLD will enable women to develop urgently needed leadership competencies that will create a prominent group of female role models and change agents in all sectors who will serve as models for girls and younger women. Offered through partnerships with universities, government ministries and institutions and other prominent programs throughout the country, the WLD course will be open to all women participating in WIT components as well as to women already employed who desire to advance within their places of employment. Ideally, WLD courses will include a diverse group of women from all sectors of society so they can gain experience working with women in other sectors and knowledge about ways in which their fields are similar and different and how they can work together. This CLIN will also include examining leadership methods, including traditional transactional and innovative transformational approaches.

IV. Expected Results

WIT is designed to achieve the following goal:

A new generation of educated Afghan women assumes leadership roles in mainstream social, political and economic sectors to improve the status of women and accelerate inclusive, sustainable development in Afghanistan.

Outcomes related to each WIT CLIN include the following:

CLIN 1: Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)

Afghan women increase participation in the formal economy by securing management level employment or establishing/expanding viable small, medium and large businesses.

CLIN 2: Women's Rights Groups and Coalitions (WRGC)

Women rights groups apply gender knowledge and skills and establish strategic coalitions and international alliances that influence public policy and social practices to benefit Afghan women.

CLIN 3: Women in Government (WIG)

Afghan women gain full time professional and leadership employment in government.

CLIN 4: Women's Leadership Development (WLD)

Afghan women acquire and apply advanced management and leadership skills in public, private and civil society sectors.

V. Performance Indicators

WIT's performance indicators will capture both the quantitative and qualitative results achieved. The following illustrate results for WIT 1:

CLIN 1: Women's Economic Empowerment:

- 5,000 women throughout the country secure mid-level employment with advancement potential or advance into decision making roles in the formal economy;
- 3,520 women throughout the country establish or expand sustainable small, medium or large businesses; and
- 90% of women surveyed seeking access to credit are able to obtain it.

CLIN 2: Women's Rights Groups and Coalitions:

- 50 women's rights strengthen skills, form functioning provincial- and national-level coalitions, forge international alliances with counterpart organizations, and develop and implement action plans that produce measurable improvements in key issues facing women.

CLIN 3: Women in Government:

- 9,000 female university graduates complete 6-month government internships and transition to full-time employment with advancement potential at national or sub-national levels throughout the country, increasing the percentage of women in government from 19 to 30 percent.
- **Women in Government Leadership:** 358 women enter the top 4 leadership positions, equaling 15 percent, during WIT 1; during WIT 2, an additional 358 women enter top leadership positions, totaling 30 percent, or critical mass.
- **CLIN 4: Women's Leadership Development:** 25,000 women nationwide report being promoted to leadership positions and/or taking part in decision-making within their companies, agencies or organizations.

VI. Contribution to Stabilization and Development Strategy

WIT aligns with the Afghanistan and Pakistan Regional Stabilization Strategy objective of “Advancing the Rights of Afghan Women” to ensure the sustainability of current gains in women’s rights and expand the economic potential of Afghan women. WIT’s program goals are congruent with the “National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan” (NAPWA), the “Afghanistan National Development Strategy” (ANDS) and the “ANDS Gender Strategy.” WIT also supports the USG Gender Strategy for Afghanistan, especially the Economic Empowerment and Leadership Development pillars. Part of the impetus for the WIT program are the new USAID “Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Strategy” and its “Women, Peace and Security Policy,” with which WIT closely aligns. WIT will also support three of the four key pillars identified in the Civil-Military Strategic Framework—governance, the rule of law, and socio-economic development. Finally, empirical evidence is emerging that suggests a strong correlation between the status of women and a region’s stability.^{xxxvi xxxvii xxxviii} WIT will work with the Stabilization Unit to more fully explore that relationship.

VII. Contribution to Afghanistan/Capacity Building

USAID will require WIT’s Implementing Partners (IPs) to fully support the USG “Afghan First Policy” and will require that as many as possible sub-contractors and employees are Afghans. In addition, the IPs will be required to hire female Afghans, especially in management positions, and should provide training for women, if needed, to increase skill levels. The IPs will also be encouraged to provide female interns with opportunities to participate in implementing the WIT program. The IPs will record in its regular performance reports the number of Afghans employed directly and as subcontractors, ensuring sex equity, and the monetary value of direct payments to Afghan personnel, disaggregated by sex, ensuring equal pay for equal positions.

VIII. On-Budget/Off-Budget

WIT is an off-budget program (implemented through private sector firms/organizations) because MoWA is a policy advocacy ministry, not an implementing agency, and therefore lacks the mandate to implement the WIT program. In a sister project—the MoWA Organizational Restructuring and Empowerment (MORE) project—USAID will support targeted technical assistance and capacity building within the Ministry, which will increase its capacity for additional activities under their mandate. WIT will work closely with MoWA, whose overall mission corresponds to WIT’s goals, and WIT’s program activities will be responsive to the concerns and development priorities of MoWA and other relevant GIRoA ministries and institutions.

IX. Transition

The five-year WIT 1 program is the first phase of a 10-year program. The timing alone makes intensive and sustained attention to Afghan women both urgent and essential to preserve and build on women’s gains over the last decade. The proposed intervention strategies aim to ensure that a “gender agenda” is not an issue on the fringes of national policy and programming but central to Afghanistan’s social, political and economic advancement. When WIT 1 ends, a process leading to a critical mass of educated Afghan women in decision making positions in social, political and economic sectors will have attained sufficient momentum to endure over the subsequent years of WIT 2 and WIT 3 implementation. Increasingly, the contribution of women’s technical and managerial capabilities will ensure more inclusive and effective national planning, international, national and local issue

resolution and resource allocation at all levels. With the increasing inclusion of women in formal economic activities, WIT is also expected to result in changes in attitudes among family members, who will allow women more freedom when they bring home a respectable salary, and among men with whom they are working. Women's influence on civil society is also expected to change social practices that currently violate women's rights. In short, the investments associated with this initiative will directly enhance the capability of next generation of Afghan women leaders to build upon hard won gains and provide compelling incentives for large-scale socio-economic changes to continue well into the Transformational period.

X. Partnering with GIROA

This program responds to a shared objective of the USG and GIROA to increase the participation of educated women in all sectors of life. WIT has been developed over several months through direct dialogue with the GIROA officials and women leaders and in July 2012, received the written endorsement of the Minister of Women's Affairs, Dr. Husn Banu Ghazanfar. The work contemplated under WIT will be accomplished in partnership with MoWA as well as the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) and other relevant ministries, such as MRRD, MoE and MoHE, MoLSMD, who will be consulted during the development and implementation of this program.

XI. Project Monitoring and Evaluation

WIT's Performance Management Plan (PMP) will reflect the theories of change underlying this program, and PMP indicators will measure the extent to which program inputs are producing outputs, outcomes and sustainable results. IPs report on their indicators that are included in the PMP on a quarterly basis, as well as on any other indicators agreed upon between the implementing partner(s) and USAID through AfghanInfo and other standard reports. One or more evaluations may be conducted on this project. USAID will establish baseline data for the project and clearly explain the methodology used to collect this data. During evaluations, the methodology used to collect data should be the same as that used for collecting baseline data.

XII. Internal USG Consultations, Coordination, and Leverage

The Mission's Gender Unit has identified many potential synergies with programs, projects and activities in other Mission technical offices. WIT will work closely with the OEG and OAG programs involving SME loans, job creation and business/agribusiness development, as well as ODG's civil society and governance programs and OSSD's higher education and TVET programs. The Mission is working closely with these projects will avoid duplication, enable leveraging, and provide valuable lessons and practices that will contribute to WIT's program design and successful implementation.

XIII. Sustainability

The achievement of a critical mass of women in the public, private and civil society sectors of Afghan society will ensure the sustainability of WIT's program goal and project objectives. As female leaders bring their perspectives to bear on public policies and social practices, and as women increasingly contribute to economic growth, Afghanistan will benefit from the productivity and points of view of the heretofore silent half of the population. Benefits of these changes will start to accrue to families, communities and the country as a whole, which will become essential to ongoing progress. Women

leaders will serve as inspirational role models for girls and young women who will be empowered to sustain the process for themselves, their children and for generations to come.

Additional Comment to Interested Parties

USAID anticipates a substantial ‘grants under contract’ activity.

USAID anticipates the resulting RFP to place a performance-based contract e.g. cost-plus award fee

ENDNOTES

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http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/07/06/keeping_faith_in_afghanistan

ⁱⁱ Timeline of Women’s Rights in Afghanistan, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/women-war-and-peace/uncategorized/timeline-of-womens-rights-in-afghanistan/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Afghan President Endorses Shocking ‘Code of Conduct’ for Women that Allows Wife-Beating, March 6, 2012, <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/afghan-president-endorses-shocking-code-of-conduct-for-women-that-allows-wife-beating/>

^{iv} Engendering development through gender equality in rights, resources, and voices, A World Bank policy research report, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/02/02/000094946_01012505311522/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf

^v The Global Gender Gap Report 2011, World Economic Forum Geneva, Switzerland, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2011.pdf

^{vi} 2012 World Bank Development Report: Gender Equality as Smart Economics, <http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2011/10/05/2012-world-bank-development-report-gender-equality-as-smart-economics/>

^{vii} The Global Gender Gap Report 2011, World Economic Forum Geneva, Switzerland, 2011 http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2011.pdf

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Status of Afghan women threatens Hillary Clinton's legacy, [April 08, 2012](http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/08/world/la-fg-hillary-clinton-afghanistan-20120409) By Paul Richter, Los Angeles Times, <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/08/world/la-fg-hillary-clinton-afghanistan-20120409>

^x Critical mass is estimated at 30 percent.

^{xi} Variables such as access to ICTs and use of social media can increase or decrease the critical mass percentage.

^{xii} ^{xiii} “Women Leaders are Key to Afghanistan’s Progress, UNDP, July 14, 2012,

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/articles/2011/07/14/women-leaders-are-key-to-afghanistan-s-progress-says-undp.html>

^{xiii} Reaching Critical Mass is Key, http://diversityinc.com/diversity-and-inclusion/reaching-critical-mass-is-key/Benchmarking_Women’s_Leadership, published by The White House Project, November 2009, benchmarks.thewhitehouseproject.org

^{xiv} Ibid.

^{xv} The Diffusion of Innovations Model and Outreach from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine to Native American Communities by Everett M. Rogers and Karyn L. Scott, Department of Communication and Journalism, <http://nnlm.gov/evaluation/pub/rogers/>

^{xvi} The “last straw” is an idiom that originates from an Arabic proverb that refers to the last item loaded upon a camel’s back that exceeds its capacity and renders it unable to move or stand. It is a reference to a seemingly inconsequential addition that produces a consequential occurrence. Existing in many languages in one form or another, the idiom is typically used to describe an unacceptable result, such as “the straw that broke the camel’s back.” In the context of WIT, it is used to refer to the point at which the denial of education, public participation, opportunity, human rights, access to resources or ability to move into leadership positions reaches an unacceptable saturation point such that it can no longer be tolerated.

^{xvii} The educated young women live primarily in urban areas in 17 provinces: Kabul, Herat, Balkh, Badakhshan, Ghazni, Nangarhar, Baghlan, Takhar, Parwan, Kunduz, Jawzjan, Kapisa, Faryab, Bamyan, Daikundi, Laghman and Farah.

^{xviii} Much like an ink blot or oil spill spreads over time.

^{xix} Kabul is projected to continue to grow at a rate of 5%, or 150,000 new people, per year, with 2% of that growth expected to come from migration (Kabul Urban Policy, 2005). This flow of migration is overwhelmingly unidirectional, from rural spaces to urban. In 2002, 22% of the Afghan population lived in urban areas as opposed to 35% in 2009. In addition to migration from rural areas, Kabul's population also has seen significant growth from the return of refugees from Iran or Pakistan and the migration of internally displaced people (Kabul Urban Policy, 2005), Kabul: A Global City, <https://sites.google.com/site/globalcitiesafghanistan/home/migration>

^{xx} Introducing The Woman Effect! Feb. 21, 2012, <http://www.inpowerwomen.com/what-is-the-woman-effect>: Studies included exhaustive analysis across sector, country and organization size. They documented improvements in organizations with women in leadership as measured by productivity, profitability, corporate culture and sustainability – in ten different categories of performance. Catalyst's 2011 numbers show that companies with a significant percentage of women on their boards performed better than those with no women on their boards by 84% return on sales, 60% return on invested capital, and 46% return on equity.

^{xxi} The nine criteria of excellence where companies with women leaders excelled are: work environment, values, vision, coordination and control, leadership, external orientation, motivation, capability, accountability, innovation. *Ibid.*

^{xxii} Research Says: Women in Senior Management Equals Overall Company Excellence, Women Matter: Gender Diversity, A Corporate Performance Driver, March 9, 2012

^{xxiii} Women make better leaders, Psychology Today, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200309/women-make-better-leaders>

^{xxiv} New Catalyst Study Links More Women Leaders to Greater Corporate Social Responsibility, Harvard Business School, November 16, 2011, <http://www.inpowerwomen.com/what-is-the-woman-effect/>

^{xxv} Women, Power and Politics: Two Million Women Leaders and Counting, The Hunger Project, <http://www.imow.org/wpp/story?storyId=100>

^{xxvi} Kanyoro, Musimbi. "Challenges to Women's Leadership," Speech in honor of YWCA of Salt Lake centennial celebration. 13 July 2006, <http://womensissues.about.com/od/intheworkplace/a/WomenLeaders.htm>

^{xxvii} 6 months of business training and 6 months of technical training.

^{xxviii} Social organizations (communities and associations) are defined as "the voluntary unions of natural or legal persons organized for ensuring social, cultural, educational, legal, artistic and vocational objectives. Both NGOs and SOs are able to pursue both public benefit and mutual benefit activities, although the range of permissible activities is narrower for SOs. Social organizations also face additional (though somewhat undefined) constraints in receiving foreign funding. Actual practice has shown, however, that the foreign funding prohibition is not being enforced. US International Grantmaking, Council on Foundations, <http://www.usig.org/countryinfo/afghanistan.asp> and <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/afghanistan.pdf>

^{xxix} Out of 1,707 NGOs, 460 (27 percent) are women's organizations, and out of 2,924 SOs, 470 (16 percent) are women-led. Afghanistan Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Economy, obtained in July 2012.

^{xxx} <http://www.asafeworldforwomen.org/partners-in-asia/fp-afghanistan/ywc.html>

^{xxxi} Afghan women protest over woman's public execution, AFP – Wed, Jul 11, 2012, <http://news.yahoo.com/afghans-protest-over-womans-public-execution-072456765.html>

^{xxxii} Afghan Women Protest Against Discriminatory Law, Golnaz Esfandiari, April 16, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Afghan_Women_Protest_Against_Discriminatory_Law_/1610209.html

^{xxxiii} On International Women's Day, more than 15,000 women across Afghanistan came together, united, in a call for peace with justice. Women in Kandahar, Bamyan, Kabul, Herat, Mazar, Daikundi and Jalalabad, wearing blue scarves, stood side by side regardless of language, ethnic and tribal differences to pray for peace and justice.

[International Women's Day 2009: Wearing Blue Scarves In Solidarity With Afghan Women On IWD, http://www.feministpeacenet.org/2009/03/07/international-womens-day-2009-afghanistan-observes-international-womens-day/](http://www.feministpeacenet.org/2009/03/07/international-womens-day-2009-afghanistan-observes-international-womens-day/)

^{xxxiv} One Million Afghan Women across all provinces March for Peace,
<http://iwd2008.wordpress.com/2008/02/28/one-million-afghan-women-across-all-provinces-will-march-for-peace/>

^{xxxv} Nearly 70 percent of EGGI interns have been offered full time position during or following their internships.

^{xxxvi} Masculinity, Femininity, and Stabilization: The Case for Gender Analysis in Transitional Environments,
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^{xxxvii} The Heart of the Matter: The Security of Women and the Security of States, Valerie M. Hudson, April
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^{xxxviii} Challenging Gendered Norms: Women and Political Violence, July 1, 2011, USAID, July 1, 2011.

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