

**DESCRIPTION/SPECIFICATIONS/STATEMENT OF WORK  
DCHA/OTI SUPPORT THAT AUGMENTS RAPID TRANSITION IQC**

**I. OBJECTIVE**

The Support That Augments Rapid Transition (START) Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC) provides the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) with the means to support U.S. foreign policy objectives via targeted, short-term assistance in priority countries in crisis. OTI's country program team, comprised of OTI and Contractor personnel, will work on the ground to provide fast, flexible programming and logistical support targeted at key political transition and stabilization needs. Through specific task orders (TOs), the Contractor will establish, staff, manage, operate, and support a flexible quick-response mechanism capable of program management, including administering and implementing operational and logistical support to OTI's Washington and field teams, when the engagement and deployment of longer term mechanisms are not appropriate. This program management IQC is expected to augment longer term mechanisms including the Support Which Implements Fast Transitions (SWIFT) mechanism.

**II. BACKGROUND**

The USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) was created in 1994 as a distinct operating unit within USAID to help local partners advance peace and democracy in priority conflict-prone countries. Seizing critical windows of opportunity, OTI works on the ground to provide fast, flexible, short-term assistance addressing key transition needs in countries with needs that cannot be fully addressed by traditional disaster relief (such as countries experiencing a significant political transition, in the midst of a disaster, or emerging from civil conflict). Located in USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, OTI has laid the foundation for long-term development in over 45 countries in transition. OTI uses innovative programming to promote reconciliation, jumpstart local economies, support nascent independent media, and foster peace and democracy. In countries undergoing a transition from authoritarianism to democracy, violent conflict to peace, or other pivotal political events, OTI's initiatives serve as catalysts for positive political change. OTI programs are short-term -- typically, two to three years in duration. OTI works closely with regional bureaus, missions, and other counterparts to identify programs that complement other assistance efforts. OTI's strategies and programs are developed and designed to meet the unique needs of each situation. Timely and effective assistance to promote and consolidate peaceful, democratic advances can make the difference between a successful and a failed transition. Effective deployment of personnel and staff resources in a timely, flexible, and effective manner can significantly and positively influence the outcome of immediate program objectives.

Existing implementing mechanisms that OTI utilizes to carry out country programming have not always provided sufficient capacity to operate in some of the more challenging and restrictive environments where OTI has deployed. For example, OTI programming efforts may be hampered when Embassy/USAID facilities do not have adequate resources to support additional USG personnel. Also, rapid deployment of personnel to an urgent country startup may be slowed by standard hiring processes and lack of immediately available qualified staff for deployment. The START IQC is intended to address these and related personnel and logistical support issues and enable OTI to more effectively respond to urgent and rapid programming needs in high-priority countries.

### III. STATEMENT OF WORK

The Contractor will provide institutional and operational logistical support and short-term technical assistance, in the field and Washington, as needed by current country programs and/or prior to and during new country program start-ups.

The fluid situation in countries where OTI operates requires tools and mechanisms to respond to unforeseen changes and contingencies that may arise over the course of programming. The Contractor should be prepared to expand, diminish, or change operations with as little notice as a few days. The Contractor must possess adequate capital investment and flexibility in order to rapidly expand or halt program support if needed. Task orders (TOs) under the START IQC will be incrementally funded. The Contractor should not assume that it will receive any funding beyond what is currently obligated to the TOs.

The support provided by the Contractor is a critical component of OTI's programmatic success. The Contractor is expected to have significant experience deploying and supporting field personnel as well as setting up and maintaining field offices and operations both within and outside country capitals. The Contractor should describe its experience in this area and provide documentation (such as a personnel manual and startup procedures) of existing systems and working experience for such items as: field accounting and staff; quickly learning, understanding, and applying pertinent regulations on residency and employment taxes; identifying and providing staff benefits and allowances; and managing payroll and related administrative tasks. Additionally, the Contractor may be requested to provide "surge" capacity in response to heavy workload demands both in the field and in Washington. For example, surge capacity staff may be needed to deploy with an OTI start-up or field team on very short notice, as quickly as one week. Surge capacity staff may also be required to provide country program support from Washington.

Operational and logistical support will vary according to the demands of each country program and programming area. TOs will indicate specific in-country requirements that the Contractor will need to plan and budget for, but these will generally consist of the responsibilities outlined below, as needed. For each program the exact operational and logistical support requested will be determined by the task order Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR) and OTI field staff in keeping with the task order scope and budget, programmatic focus, cost effectiveness and efficiency.

TOs may require the Contractor to provide services in the following areas:

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### **III(A). Provide OTI Field and Washington Logistical Support**

The Contractor may be requested to procure goods and services to carry out OTI program objectives as directed by the Task Order COTR. This may include the local procurement of commodities or local contracting for program related services. All procurements will be reviewed and approved by OTI. The Contractor may also support field teams by locating and contracting for housing, office space, vehicles, and other support as directed by the task order COTR.

#### **A1. Field Support**

##### *A1(A). Recruiting, Hiring, and Supporting Long-term Field Personnel*

To date, OTI primarily uses the Support Which Implements Fast Transitions (SWIFT) IQC for its program implementation. However, due to severe space limitations, operating environment security concerns, and other operational constraints, it has not always been possible for OTI to place a sufficient number of official USG employees within Embassy/USAID facilities to oversee and work closely with SWIFT personnel. In such a scenario, the Contractor may be asked to field and support long-term local hires and U.S. citizens, such as a Program Director (PD) and a Deputy Program Director (DPD), to fulfill the roles that would typically be served by the OTI Country Representative, Deputy Country Representative, or other OTI staff. Since Contractor personnel are not official USG employees, they often conduct in-country travel and monitoring not permissible for official USG employees subject to USG security and in-country travel restrictions. Furthermore, Contractor personnel will allow OTI to have oversight capacity when the USAID mission and/or US Embassy cannot support that presence.

The PD and/or DPD's responsibilities will be to provide in-country analysis, advice, monitoring, and reporting to help OTI/Washington ensure that programming meets the expectations of an OTI program. The PD and/or DPD will also develop and maintain collaborative relationships with identified key OTI staff in order to ensure close coordination at the field level, identify the widest range of potential partners and opportunities, and achieve maximum synergy with other programs. In addition, the individual(s) may also be called upon to represent OTI's mission and global programs to visitors, senior officials from other international organizations, bilateral donors, and local government officials. Final approval on all issues related to funding, grant issuance, and strategy will be determined by the OTI COTR or the Contracting Officer in Washington.

The PD and/or DPD will be responsible for the following tasks:

1. Provide independent analysis, advice, and reporting to the TO COTR on the following:
  - a. Current local and regional political developments and security concerns as well as other pertinent information required to achieve program objectives. The PD and/or DPD will brief identified Implementing Partners on this information to be factored into programming.
  - b. Potential areas of new programming, contingencies, and program and activity adjustments that may be needed to address the rapidly changing political situation or unforeseen events that may arise during the life of the program.
  - c. Day-to-day programmatic, operational, and strategic matters related to OTI's Implementing Partners (contractors and/or grantees) ensuring that activities contribute to OTI's program objectives and are achievable.
  - d. Advice on grant proposals that are proposed by a long term Implementing Partner

- under a mechanism separate from this IQC; this advice will include areas of proposed interventions (geographic and type), political relevance, opinions on grantees and grantee worthiness, and programmatic approach. This advice will facilitate USAID concurrence by the TO COTR on all Implementing Partner activities, including the TO COTR's final approval of grantees for grants under contract, in accordance with the Automated Directives System (ADS).
- e. If requested, the PD and/or DPD will review work plans and advise the TO COTR on their efficacy given the in-country political, logistical, and operating environment and OTI's program objectives.
  - f. Advice to the TO COTR on programming needs (necessary personnel, equipment, grant making capacity, and facilities).
  - g. If requested by the TO COTR, advice on the country program's achievement of OTI's country objectives, the partners' program budgets, and modifications thereto.
2. Monitor and report to the TO COTR on program activities including grants under contract (cash and in-kind), procurement, technical assistance, or sub-contracts that will span a wide variety of sectors.
    - a. Monitoring responsibilities include, but are not limited to, quality assurance, implementation, timeliness of activities, observation of program events and activities, stakeholder interviews, monitoring that public participation is considered in all grant activities, and review of marking and branding.
    - b. Evaluating the impact of program activities (note that the long-term Implementing Partner is responsible for monitoring and evaluation but the PD and/or DPD will collaborate with identified OTI staff and other implementing partners on determining the impact of activities).
    - c. Advising the TO COTR on how lessons learned from activities are fed into the design and implementation of ongoing and future activities.
  3. Use the OTI Activity Database for the following:
    - a. Develop reports and success stories.
    - b. Review the quality of information within the database.
    - c. Make recommendations to the TO COTR for improved data management, maintenance, and database use.
  4. Communications and Coordination:
    - a. Liaise with the USAID Mission, the U.S. Embassy, and other stakeholders in-country.
    - b. Communicate and coordinate between OTI Washington and its Implementing Partners, the USAID Mission, the U.S. Embassy, and other donor organizations.
  5. Work collaboratively with all implementing Partners to maintain program flexibility in order to respond to a possible need to close the program as a result of political events.
  6. Assist in the conceptualization and design of program strategies and objectives in close coordination with OTI staff, USAID personnel, U.S. Embassy and local civil society officials, and other identified staff. When necessary, assist in refining strategic objectives and advocating on behalf of new programmatic approaches in country, linked to neighboring country programs where appropriate.
  7. Participate in and provide input on In-country Strategic Planning/Team Building

Workshops, After Action Reviews, annual Program Performance Reviews, Final Evaluations, and an After Exit Review.

8. Support OTI Management Reviews, Program Performance Reviews, Program Evaluations, and other performance monitoring of the program.
9. Respond to reporting requests from the TO COTR.

While SWIFT is designed for program implementation, START will be used primarily for program management. To this end, Contractor personnel will assist OTI staff providing program support such as monitoring and oversight of program design and implementation of the programming mechanisms, often SWIFT or a cooperative agreement. Such program support should also include targeted capacity building for the effective use of program performance management tools and systems for relevant staff.

The actual number of Contractor staff engaged in addition to the PD will vary from country to country, and will be identified in the TO scopes of work. Each specific Request for Task Order Proposals (RFTOP) under this IQC will specify which positions OTI determines are important to the program and shall be considered key positions under the TO. These key positions can include: Program Director, Deputy Program Director, Operations Manager; Project Development Officers; Program Analyst; Information and Communications Officer; and Database Manager. In general (and as specified in the RFTOP statement of work) with the exception of the Program Director and other positions to be specified in the task order SOW, the Contractor is highly encouraged (when expertise is available) to propose Host Country National (HCN) candidates for each position. This will be particularly important in those not infrequent instances where U.S. security considerations limit or even proscribe US expatriate working presence in country. However, the statement of work for each TO may sometimes require non-HCN candidates. The Contractor may be asked to provide similar logistical and administrative services listed under Section A1(B) for short-term and long-term field staff. The statement of work for each TO will stipulate what logistical and administrative support services will be required.

The Contractor will bring to bear its best corporate capacities and strengths, through and in support of long-term local and US expat hires, to contribute to sound program direction and oversight within the OTI one-team approach. Unlike traditional USAID assistance, OTI is deeply involved with its Contractors in day to day operations and implementation. In other words, OTI is an “operational donor” that has a very interactive relationship with the Contractor.

The level and quality of this close interaction and one-team approach is critical to overall program success. As a result, the Contractor may be co-located with other OTI implementing partners. This integrated approach is important for dealing with the stress of rapidly implementing a complex and politically delicate program in an uncertain environment while maintaining programmatic flexibility. The periodic re-examination of programmatic goals and objectives, roles and responsibilities, lines of communication, policies and procedures at scheduled strategic planning/team building events throughout each year of operation provides a formal process for strengthening team skills and program focus.

*A1(B). Recruiting, Hiring, and Supporting Short-term Field Personnel*

The Contractor may be asked to provide short-term operational field support until a long-term TO or cooperative agreement can be awarded and activated. For example, for new country programs OTI envisions a start-up logistics phase taking place prior to OTI field staff setting up in-country,

during which the Contractor would set up necessary administrative, management, programmatic, and logistical procedures to enable OTI field staff or long-term partner personnel to begin work immediately upon arrival. In certain cases, the Contractor may be required to secure personnel with relevant language abilities beyond English. The Contractor's initial team will deploy in-country and overlap with OTI and long-term partner field staff to ensure a smooth transition between the Contractor's eventual departure and a long-term Contractor taking over under another mechanism separate from the START IQC.

Logistics and administration support for Contractor operation would require rapid action, and may include:

- communications capability, e.g., mobile phones and laptop computers;
- interpreters;
- housing for non-host country national staff (to include temporary quarters as needed) including utilities and internet access;
- vehicle lease with driver;
- in-country and international travel;
- personnel support systems;
- obtaining legal status including registration required by the host country;
- identification of host country operating requirements and obtaining approvals for expatriate staff residency and employment, and determination of tax liability, exemption, and reporting concerning Contractor staff and activities under this IQC;
- establishing the necessary contacts with accounting and law firms to comply with host country financial reporting and legal requirements;
- setting up a bank account and the ability to transfer funds;
- as needed creating, implementing, and overseeing security measures or plans to address both local and international staff safety needs; and
- meeting any other key requirements necessary to begin operations on the ground.

In addition to the Contractor providing short-term field logistical support prior to a program mechanism being put in place, the Contractor could be asked to provide OTI field staff/personnel with facilities, goods, and services required to initiate and maintain operations and accommodations, including but not limited to: housing, food services, office facilities, operational capacity building, vehicles, and other items as directed by OTI during a country assessment phase or on a longer term basis ranging from a couple of weeks to possibly 3-4 years as needed.

## A2. Closeout

The Contractor will develop and then implement a cost-effective and efficient Close-Out Plan (administration, information, finance, procurement, management) within a timeframe approved by the Task Order COTR. The Contractor will provide OTI with the following required tasks and deliverables: Contractor Close-Out Plan; contract files as required for audit purposes and final billing to OTI; final reports and close-out procedures; property disposition plan (in accordance with USAID regulations applicable to property disposition) for the task order COTR and contracting officer to approve at least sixty days prior to the end of the Task Order; as well as any monitoring and evaluation activities as identified by OTI.

## B1. Washington Support

RFTOP may present IQC holder(s) a timeframe of three weeks or less to submit proposals, and notifications of award can be given within one week of the closing of the solicitation. Because OTI interventions are rapid, the situation may require the Contractor to deploy to a country sometimes as quickly as 72 hours after notice of award and to have operations set up to initiate activities within a few days as specified in the applicable TO. The TO will specify the number of days within which the Contractor shall participate in a Washington DC-based kick-off conference (generally within 2-7 days) and to deploy a startup team (generally within 3-15 days).

During the pre-deployment stage the Contractor may be called upon to provide initial short-term technical assistance, political analysis, and/or funding for and implementation of activities identified by OTI. The need to commence program activities rapidly is due to the changing needs of a transition environment where a delay of even one day can cause OTI to miss strategic opportunities. The Contractor's home or other regional office(s) must be able to support these initial activities as needed.

### *B1(A). Home Office Personnel*

The Contractor will assign sufficient home office staff and intermittent staff to meet the overall program goals. The responsibilities of the home office staff include supporting the field, country program, and OTI-Washington staff requirements in such areas as administration, logistics, finance (cash flow, budgeting, accounting, etc.), recruitment and hiring of staff/short term consultants, orientation or training on performance management tools and systems, reporting, and close-out. TO COTR concurrence must be secured on all home office trips and scopes of work.

## III(B). Short-Term Technical Assistance

### *A.1 Programmatic Short Term Technical Assistance (STTA)*

The Contractor may be required to identify and procure, depending upon the specific needs of the country program, one or more short-term consultants of specific expertise to address discrete issues for program development and implementation (e.g. campaign, polling, media, reintegration of ex-combatants, conflict resolution, engineering) on short notice, in as little as two weeks. STTA may include an interim (average 1 week to 8 months) PD, DPD, an interim Program Analyst, and other consultants to provide technical assistance for administration, management, operational capacity building, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, and political analysis. TO COTR concurrence must be secured on all STTA trips and scopes of work. In addition, training materials will be developed in close coordination with identified OTI staff.

TOs may require the Contractor to perform the following tasks:

- Provide technical experts for short-term assignments to support new or existing country programs. Technical program areas include, but are not limited to Peace Processes, Reconciliation, Conflict Resolution, Media, Governance, Small-Scale Infrastructure, Communications, Small Enterprise Stimulus, Civil Society Engagement, Protection, and/or Reintegration. Technical experts may be required in the field or in Washington, D.C.

- Provide logistical support to STTA activities, including but not limited to travel, program or management documentation, information technology support, telecommunications, facility rental, transportation, lodging, and meals for Contractor staff.
- Provide technical experts for short-term assignments to support OTI's reporting needs, including but not limited to providing quality assurance and editing on reports; developing reports for USAID, inter-agency, Congress, or the public; and assisting with office processes (including but not limited to budgeting, organization, strategy, and evaluation planning).
- Provide technical experts for information technology and database support, including trainings for the users of these tools.
- Provide technical experts for financial oversight, management, training and capacity building to benefit program staff, host country and/or grantee recipients.