**LOCAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING FOR RESPONSE (LCS4R) PROJECT**

**Application Process – Guidance Notes**

This is an opportunity for community-based organizations (CBOs), local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs) and national non-governmental organizations (NNGOs) to strengthen their institutional capacities to respond more effectively to emergencies within the humanitarian coordination systems. **The LCS4R project will work with CBOs, LNGOs and NGOs from Malawi and Ethiopia in the Africa region, and Bangladesh and Pakistan in the Asia region.**

*This project is supported by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and implemented by International Medical Corps in collaboration with Concern Worldwide.*

**LCS4R PROJECT CONTEXT**

Over the years, humanitarian emergencies have become increasingly complex. Each year, millions of people are left in desperate need of immediate lifesaving aid, protection and assistance. Local and national NGOs are at the forefront of humanitarian emergency response. They are the first to respond. Their knowledge of the local context and relationships with stakeholders enable them to mobilize communities and deliver emergency assistance that better addresses the needs of the impacted populations.

However, due to the complexities and requirements of humanitarian funding and program implementation, many national and local NGOs face barriers in establishing and sustaining the institutional capacities needed to participate in a large-scale response effectively. In addition, during large-scale emergencies, the opportunities for strengthening capacities are minimal and often are not utilized. The humanitarian sector recognizes the crucial role of local actors in providing humanitarian assistance and implementing disaster risk reduction activities, as well as the challenges these actors face. By systematically supporting local and national NGOs, the humanitarian sector can ensure that these organizations are best placed to link efforts across preparedness, relief, recovery and resilience programming at the national and local levels, and are able to support their communities.

**LCS4R OVERVIEW**

To support the efforts of strengthening the capacities of CBOs, LNGOs and NNGOs in emergency preparedness and response, and with the financial assistance from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), International Medical Corps and Concern Worldwide will implement the *Local Capacity Strengthening for Response* (LCS4R) project.

Organizations participating in the LCS4R project will participate in series of learning activities and tailored mentoring and coaching activities. LCS4R will also provide networking and collaboration opportunities for participating CBOs, LNGOs, NNGOs and the wider humanitarian community. The LCS4R project is structured around the following three components:

* **Component 1:** **Intensive Capacity Strengthening Training and Mentorship.** Component 1 will provide intensive capacity-strengthening activities to 10 CBOs, LNGO and NNGOs (five from each of the regions). The selected organizations will have the opportunity to engage in a participatory capacity-development needs assessment, prepare capacity development plans and participate in training programs, capacity sharing activities and a mentorship program.
* **Component 2:** **Capacity Strengthening Symposium.** To increase the scope and impact of LCS4R, the project team will organize two symposiums (one per region). These events will include approximately 100 participants and provide a range of learning options to CBOs, LNGOs and NNGOs to further enhance their capacity to respond to emergencies. There will be an emphasis on networking, collaboration and capacity sharing.
* **Component 3: Knowledge Management Platform.** To ensure that the resources offered through the project are not limited to the participating organizations, LCS4R will develop and implement a knowledge management platform that will consolidate and promote the resources, materials and best practices developed during the project.

The selected organizations will participate in the activities under Components 1 and 3 of the LCS4R project - Intensive Capacity Strengthening Training and Mentorship and Knowledge Management Platform.

**PROJECT TIMELINE**

The activities under Component 1 will start in October 2021 and end in December 2022.

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| **Activities** | **Timeline** |
| 1. Call for applications launched
 | October 29, 2021 |
| 1. Application submission deadline
 | November 29, 2021 |
| 1. Applicants informed of the selection process results
 | Early January 2022 |
| 1. Capacity development assessment and capacity strengthening plan
 | January–February 2022 |
| 1. Onsite capacity development support and mentorship and ongoing monitoring
 | February–November 2022 |
| 1. Training Workshop program
 | TBD |
| 1. Reports from NNGOs
 | February–November 2022 |

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

* **Organizations must be legal entities** with proof of **registration** as independent NGOs in their home country and with no political ties. The registration certificate must be valid for at least six months from the date of the application submission.
* **Participating organizations must be engaged in emergency response and/or Disaster Risk Reduction activities**. LCS4R will prioritize organizations with prior experience in emergency response activities and/or Disaster Risk Reduction activities. The project may consider organizations with development experience that are looking to strengthen their capacity to work in emergencies.
* **Organizations must have been operational for a minimum of three years.**
* **The language of instruction will be English**. The senior members of the organizations who will participate in the training activities must demonstrate conversational and comprehension abilities at a level that will enable them to benefit from and contribute to the learning processes of the training program.
* Organizations must be able to **commit time and human resources** for the duration of their participation in the project. Organizations must assign a senior-level staff member as **consistent point of contact for the project**. Senior staff members of the organization must be available to participate in training activities.
* Organizations must demonstrate that they have **dedicated staff (part or full-time) covering the core organizational areas** (HR, Finance, Procurement, MEAL, Administration, Operations) that the LCS4R project will target.
* NNGOs must demonstrate that they are **currently implementing programs** and have sufficient funding to continue humanitarian response programming for a minimum of one year after the LCS4R project concludes.
* Preference will be given to organizations that are **currently not participating in a similar capacity development project**.
* LCS4R strongly encourages applicants to **nominate at least two female senior staff members** to participate in the LCS4R training and mentorship activities. Please refer to the Gender Balance Statement of Commitment part of this application package.

**SELECTION PROCESS**

1. **Review of the Application Package.** Aselection panel with representatives from International Medical Corps and Concern Worldwide HQ and country offices will review the application packages, and confirm that the applicants meet the specified criteria for participating in the project and have submitted all the required documentation.
2. **Shortlisting applicants.** The LCS4R team will assess the applications and shortlist organizations based on the selection criteria. When needed, the LCS4R team may request clarification or additional information from an applicant.
3. **Conducting interviews**. The LCS4R team will hold interviews with shortlisted NNGOs to discuss their applications. An invitation for an interview does not infer that LCS4R has selected the organization for participation in the project.
4. **Notification of results**. The LCS4R team will notify all applicants about the results. Note that organizations not selected for participation in Component 1 activities may be included in Component 2 activities Capacity Strengthening Symposium Series*.* Information on Component 2 will be shared at a later date.
5. **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).** Selected NNGOs will be required to sign an MOU with International Medical Corps and Concern Worldwide that articulates the roles and responsibilities of all parties during this project. Selected organizations will also be required to agree to uphold the principles and conduct of International Medical Corps and Concern Worldwide regarding combatting trafficking in persons, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, and fraud, bribery and corruption.

*Applicants should note that the LCS4R team will conduct background checks, reference checks and other relevant verifications during the selection process for shortlisted organizations.*

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND DEADLINE**

All applications packages must be submitted electronically to the following address: *LCS4Rproject@internationalmedicalcorps.org*

Please indicate “*Application – Call for Applications (LCS4R): COUNTRY name”* in the subject line of the e-mail. The deadline for applications is **midnight EST** (eastern standard time, USA) on **Monday, November 29 2021**. LCS4R will not consider applications submitted after this deadline.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Interested organizations with questions about this application process may contact the LCS4R team at LCS4Rproject@internationalmedicalcorps.org. Please include your name, the name of your organization and contact information. LCS4R will not respond to anonymous inquiries.

This application is a voluntary process, and the applicants will not be reimbursed or compensated for preparing the application or any other claims. Please note that, due to the anticipated high volume of applications, LCS4R team is not in a position to provide feedback to organizations that are not selected to participate in the project.

The LCS4R project will cover expenses related to NNGO staff participation in an in-person workshop and to providing experts for facilitating webinars and the deployment of SMEs to the organization. Applicants should be aware that the LCS4R project will not provide any funds to participating organizations to implement activities, procure assets, etc.

The LCS4R team will monitor the developments of COVID-19 and may adjust project implementation activities to ensure the safety of the project staff and of client CBOs, LNGOs and NNGOs. These adjustments may result in limiting travel under the project, delivering in-person activities virtually, etc.

**IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATIONS**

**International Medical Corps** is a global humanitarian organization dedicated to saving lives and relieving suffering. Since its founding in 1984, International Medical Corps has operated in more than 80 countries, providing more than $3.6 billion in emergency relief and training to communities worldwide. In addition to responding to humanitarian emergencies, it works to improve communities’ quality of life by providing them with the skills needed to recover from adversity, chart their own path to self-reliance and become effective first responders themselves. International Medical Corps currently is active in about 30 countries, and is leading numerous global projects and research initiatives. The nonprofit, partisan organization is a leader in managing projects aimed at building the capacity of local and international responders, as well as providing technical guidance and assistance to strengthen humanitarian assistance.

**Concern Worldwide** is a non-governmental humanitarian organization dedicated to the elimination of extreme poverty. Concern Worldwide works in 23 of the world’s poorest and most vulnerable countries, pursuing both long-term development goals and responding to sudden onset and protracted humanitarian crises. Concern Worldwide has extensive experience working in the fields of nutrition, livelihood security, Disaster Risk Reduction, health, and education, focusing on integrated programs for the extreme poor. Concern Worldwide has varied and extensive experience of training and capacity-strengthening work and works in partnership with a range of different organizations in the countries where it operates.

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