***USAID Ecosystems/ Protibesh Activity***

**Request for Applications (RFA) No. *Small Grants: 009***

Issuance Date: March 25, 2024

Dear Applicant:

*USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity,* implemented by Chemonics International, is seeking grant applications for implementation of the Research Grant under full and open competition, and we are seeking a diverse pool of applications on the “Tourists Carrying Capacity and Management Assessment”. Promising individual (attached with organization), group of individuals, or organizations new to USAID funding are encouraged to apply. The grants will be awarded and implemented in accordance with USAID and US Government regulations governing grants under contracts and USAID Ecosystems/ Protibesh Activity’s internal grant management policies.

Protibesh will hold a pre-application workshop at its office in Gulshan 2 on *April 16, 2024 from 11:30 to 13:30.* This workshop will allow eligible and interested applicants the chance to ask questions about the RFA and receive guidance on how to complete the application form. Interested applicants that meet the eligibility requirements defined in Section III below and would like to attend this workshop must confirm their attendance by sending the participant’s details (name, designation, email account, mobile number etc.) and the organization’s name to [Protibesh-Grants@chemonics.com](mailto:Protibesh-Grants@chemonics.com) by 11.00 am of April 07, 2024. Only 2 (1 will be inperson & 1 will be virtual) people may attend from each organization. No reimbursement for costs of attendance will be met.

Project and Chemonics employees may not ask for, and applicants are prohibited from offering, any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, thing of value, or compensation to obtain or reward improper favorable treatment regarding this solicitation. Any improper request from a project employee should be reported to the chief of party [fgaschick@chemonics.com](mailto:fgaschick@chemonics.com) or [BusinessConduct@chemonics.com](mailto:BusinessConduct@chemonics.com).

Annexes included with this Request for Applications:

**Annex A** –Concept Paper Template (Separate form has been attached, Pages: no more than twelve (12) pages and the font size not smaller than 11, A4 size)

**Annex B** – Grant Application Budget Form (Separate form has been attached which includes cost contribution too)

**Annex C** – Implementation Plan Timeline (separate form has been attached)

**Annex D** – Mandatory and Required As Applicable Standard Provisions:

* Standard Provisions for U.S. and Non-U.S. Nongovernmental organizations receiving a fixed amount award can be accessed through the following URL:

<https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/303mat>

* Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental recipients receving all other types of grants can be accessed through the following URL:

<https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/303mab>

**SECTION I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

**IA. OBJECTIVE**

The USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity is awarding grants to under full and open competition, and we are seeking a diverse pool of applications on the “Tourists Carrying Capacity and Management Assessment”. Promising individual (attached with organization), group of individuals, or organizations new to USAID funding are encouraged to apply include:

The overall objective of the research is to understand the tourism carrying capacity of the mentioned KBAs to develop basic guidelines and management frameworks for integrated tourism development that can achieve tangible socioeconomic and environmental benefits for local communities, while minimizing adverse effects of tourism on biodiversity. In particular, the scope of work will cover the following two objectives:

**Objective 1:** Measure the tourism carrying capacity in KNP, RSBCA, and RKWS regarding socio-economic and environmental impacts, that will focus on.

* Measuring and disaggregating tourists’ trends and crowding in different time.
* Measuring the experience utilities of local, national, and international visitors.
* Determining the acceptable and tolerable state of tourism resources, support facilities, and levels of recreational attributes for visitors for conservation and protecting the environment
* Determining the acceptable trends of visitors’ crowding and recreational activities consistent with environmental aspects.
* Determining the socio-economic benefits for local communities from the acceptable trends of visitors and related revenues, e.g., from entrance fees.

**Objective 2:** Explore and signify the basic guidelines and management framework for integrated and climate resilient forest and tourism development that will improve forest ecosystem services, tangible socioeconomic and environmental benefits for the local communities.

The researcher shall share a draft report with USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh for feedback and comments and shall submit a final study report that considers the feedback and comments.

**IB. BACKGROUND**

USAID Ecosystems/ Protibesh Activityis a five-year project financed by USAID and implemented by Chemonics International. The goal of the project is to improved ecosystem conservation in and around targeted key biodiversity areas of Bangladesh.

Chemonics International, and its partners has been implementing USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity that works with government, communities, and the private sectors with the goal to improve ecosystem conservation in and around the targeted Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) of Bangladesh (Tanguar Haor (TH), Hakaluki Haor (HLH), Hail Haor (HH), Khadimnagar National Park (KNP), Ratargul Special Biodiversity Conservation Area (RSBCA), Lawachara National Park (LNP), Satchari National Park (SNP), and Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary (RKWS) in Northeast Region and Sundarbans Southwest Region).

However, tourism, one of the major interactions between human and nature, has become a major sector of economic activity for earning revenue and local economic growth. In addition, tourists are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their preferences, which now include aspects such as natural life, contact with local communities, learning about special ecosystems, and their conservation, but it is creating the pressure on the conservation or negative impact on the natural environment and the threats to naturally enriched biodiversity of KNP, RSBCA, and RKWS.

Tourists try to explore tourist spots where they can find scenic beauty, they can heal themselves, have some quiet from the surrounding noise, and want to stay in a heavenly environment. They gather in such an environment in a spot. But care should be taken not to harm the environment while satisfying the hunger of the human mind. At the same time, while tourists are gathering at a particular spot it’s carrying capacity has to be considered.

Following the growth of nature-based tourism, forest parks have become important tourism destinations around the world. However, recreational activities with frequent interactions between visitors and nature trigger huge problems and challenges for the environment and human well-being. Tourism carrying capacity (TCC) is the key to releasing the strained relationship between tourism resource utilization and sustainable development.

Tourism Carrying Capacity" is defined by the World Tourism Organization as “The maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic, socio-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction. In addition to these the ecotourism environmental carrying capacity refers to the acceptable number of tourists that can be accepted in a certain area, which can not only meet the needs of tourists and benefit the tourism industry, but also protect the environment and reduce the impact.

**IC. DETAILED PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Chemonics International, and its partners has been implementing USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity that works with government, communities, and the private sectors with the goal to improve ecosystem conservation in and around the targeted Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) of Bangladesh (Tanguar Haor (TH), Hakaluki Haor (HLH), Hail Haor (HH), Khadimnagar National Park (KNP), Ratargul Special Biodiversity Conservation Area (RSBCA), Lawachara National Park (LNP), Satchari National Park (SNP), and Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary (RKWS) in Northeast Region and Sundarbans Southwest Region). Protibesh conducted conservation strategies and undertaken recommendations from BFD and CMOs that outlined the conservation objectives and targets for improving conservation, supporting local economic development, ecotourism, and addressing threats to biodiversity in the area of KNP, RSBCA, and RKWS, which are enriched with diversified biodiversity and very popular with both scientists and nature lovers and the number is increasing every day, and these become a growing concern of tourism industry development. However, the biodiversity of the country is under serious threat from anthropogenic pressures. In combination with the lack of biodiversity conservation, management issues, disturbed and fragmented habitats, it poses serious threats to forest ecosystems.

Within the overall mandate of the forestry sector, the Bangladesh Forestry Master Plan (FMP) 2017-2036 highlights the overarching goals of increasing forest and tree coverage and minimum canopy density, conservation of forests, wildlife and biodiversity, climate resilient plantations, improving the socioeconomic condition of the forest dependent communities, developing forest products industries and occupations, strengthen applied forestry research including on current and emerging issues like impacts of climate change and strengthening the forestry sector institutions. Along with its many approaches suggested for the conservation of natural forest ecosystems, high quality, low impact, ecotourism should be promoted in all natural forests, in partnership with professional operators and local communities that is also necessary both for generating awareness about the rarity and value of these ecosystems as well as for generating benefits for the local people in the form of jobs and businesses. It is one of its proposition and actions thatmaking ecotourism one of the principal foci of use of the remaining natural forests and the FMP prospects that for conservation and restoration of natural forests through community based, professionally run, ecotourism with many themes/projects in order to make progress towards achieving the objectives of the FMP.

Here, the scope of work is an initiative to assess the tourists’ carrying capacity in the aspect of socio-economic and conservation benefits and explore the basic guidelines and management framework for integrated and climate resilient forest and tourism development that will guide Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD) to improve forest ecosystem services, tangible socioeconomic and environmental benefits for the local communities.

**Contexts of scope of work:**

The scope of work focuses on tourism in KNP, RSBCA, and RKWS to inform management authorities, CMOs, and tourism operators on measures that balance tourism impact on biodiversity and ecosystems with socioeconomic benefits for local communities, and revenue potential that can help finance conservation measures. The following are the brief contexts of working areas for the scope of work that will be primarily considered and implemented but can be extended for other protected areas where it is needed.

**Brief about Khadim Nagar National Park (KNP):** The KNP, established in 2006, is situated near Sylhet town, northeastern part of Bangladesh and covers an area of approximately 678.80 hectares with semi-evergreen tropical forest that is also surrounded by six privately owned tea estates and is within the immediate impact or landscape area of these estates. The park is an abode for various species of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians. Notably, the Kalij Pheasant and the Capped Langur have exhibited thriving populations, indicating the park's robust ecological well-being. Due to the nature of biodiversity and natural scenic beauty, and it is located mainly on the Hills and is surrounded by Kalagool, Bhurjan and Goolni tea estates, it has become popular to the local, national, and international tourists as a tourism destination. In these contexts, the recommended conservation targets envision to maintain 678.80 hectares of semi-evergreen forest (no net-loss) of the park, a population of at least 04 families of Capped langur, a healthy population of Khalij Pheasants, halt further clearance of bushes of the park, reduce fuelwood collection by 100% and to increase the tourism by 25% at the end of 2027.

**Brief about Ratargul Special Biodiversity Conservation Area (RSBCA):** The RSBCA, established on May 31, 2015, serves as the sole freshwater swamp forest Protected Area (PA) in the country. Ratargul swamp forest is one of the 22 Fresh Water Swamp Forests around the world. It

is known as ‘Sundarbans’ to the local people. Some also call it as ‘The Amazon of Bangladesh’. Ratargul has become familiar to tourists since 2011 and from 2012 and 2013, it has become a famous tourist spot for its natural beauty caused by the forest is submerged under 20–30 ft (6.1–9.1 m) water in the rainy season and the side of enjoying natural beauty. It also makes income opportunity for the local people.[[1]](#endnote-2) The RSBCA boasts a wealth of biodiversity, making it a haven for a wide range of plant and animal species. It is the habitants of 106 floral species belonging to 98 different genera and 52 distinct families. Notably, there are 88 indigenous species and 18 exotic ones. Among these, herbs dominate at 50%, followed by trees at 24%, shrubs at 14%, and climbers at 12%. There is a remarkable revenue collection from tourists in RSBCA, that is increasing day by day. According to the threats to biodiversity, the recommended conservation targets particularly focus on 80% reduction in firewood collection, illegal fishing, cattle grazing, sand collection, and pollution within Ratargul SBCA induced by tourism and reduction of bird poaching by 100% by the conclusion of 2030.

**Brief about Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary (RKWS):** The RKWS is situated in the Habiganj and Moulvibazar districts, spanning an area of 1795 hectares, and was designated as such in 1982. The RKWS harbors a total of 377 plant species, among which 112 are tree species, 147 herbs, 35 shrubs, 49 climbers, 18 grasses, and 16 epiphytes. The landscape is a mosaic of both remaining natural forests and earlier-established plantations, formed by transforming ecologically valuable high-biodiversity forests with towering deciduous trees. It provides shelter to an impressive total of 229 species, encompassing 7 amphibians, 18 reptiles, 168 bird varieties, and 37 mammal types. Notably, the Giant Malayan Flying squirrel is another significant inhabitant and remarkable highlight is the presence of the White-rumped vulture, which finds a sanctuary within the Moyna bill area. Rema and Kalenga are two different forests, but they are closely connected. it is a dry evergreen forest on the border of Bangladesh-India, and has a lake inside it that is dressed in natural scenic beauty that attracts tourists. The Small Ethnic Communities named Tripura, Munda, Santal, Telegu, Kharia, Debbormon, Garo, and Oraon lives in the area. The hilly landscape in the forest is also very attractive to the tourists. However, considering the threats to its biodiversity the recommended conservation targets intends to reduction of tree cutting and fuelwood collection by 100%, increase the population of Phayre’s Leaf Monkey by 20% and Western Hoolock Gibbon by 25% RKWS, reduction of wild fruit collection by 80%, reduction of wildlife poaching by 100%, reduction of encroachment by 100% and reduction of Diclofenac/ Ketoprofen usage by 100% in and around RKWS by 2030.

**Methodological Focus:**

Tourism, one of the major interactions between humans and nature, has become a major sector of economic activity for earning revenue and local economic growth. In addition, tourists are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their preferences, which now include aspects such as natural life, contact with local communities, learning about special ecosystems, and their conservation, but it is creating the pressure on the conservation or negative impact on the natural environment and the threats to naturally enriched biodiversity of KNP, RSBCA, and RKWS. In these contexts, the overall goal of the research is to assess the tourists’ carrying capacity for the protected areas- KNP, RSBCA, and RKWS in the aspects of socio-economic and conservation benefits. Here it will focus on measuring and disaggregating tourists’ trends and crowding, the experience utilities of local, national, and international visitors, and the acceptable and tolerable state of tourism resources, support facilities, and levels of recreational attributes for visitors for conservation and protecting the environment in KBAs. It will focus on determining the increasing and acceptable trends of visitors’ crowding and recreational activities, which are consistent with ecological, vegetation coverage, and conservation aspects and the increasing trends of socio-economic benefits for BFD, CMOs and local communities from the acceptable trends of visitors crowding and conservation fees. Thereby this will come in a decision to signify the concrete recommendations that will help Bangladesh Forest Department to undertake the initiatives for controlling and reducing the tourisms related threats to the biodiversity and ultimate sustainable tourism development in the KBAs’ areas. Therefore, the research proponents shall be responsible for developing a scientifically valid, culturally sensitive, and inclusive methodology for the research. The methodology shall include the following:

**Sampling Design:** The research applicant shall be accountable for designing the sampling plan to ensure that the sample is representative and includes and inclusive and demographically representation of the population in and around ecosystems that are perceived to depend on them. The sampling plan should include the selection of the sample size, sampling units, and the method of sampling that will consist with the objectives described above.

**Set Indicators of Objectives:** The proponent shall be responsible for setting justifiable indicators, that will cover its objectives such as that will be Physical-ecological indicators, Socio-demographic indicators, and Political-economic indicators in the time frame.

**Data Collection Tools:** The proponent shall be responsible for developing the data collection tools that will focus on the objectives described above, which may include but not limited to direct observation, field data collection, questionnaires, focus group discussion guides, and interview guides, etc.

**Data Collection:** The proponent shall be responsible for training the data collectors (as needed) and conducting the data collection in the field if he wishes to engage them.

**Data Analysis:** The proponent shall be responsible for analyzing the data collected and presenting the findings in a report. The report should include narratives and adequate data representation models including maps, graphs, tables as adequate.

**Data Presentation and report writing:** The proponent shall present data in qualitative and quantitative manner consistent with significance and prepare chapter in report in line of the segregated objectives.

**Expected Deliverables**

The expected deliverables of this research include but not limited to:

* Inception report that will include the background, expected indicators descriptions, detailed methodology and framework of final report preparation by the proposed timeline.
* Draft study report before final report, that will be edited by the feedback findings and must include.
* Cover page, contents, executive summary, and the finding bodies in chapter.
* A background section describing the goals and objectives of the research.
* Selection of indicators consistent with the described goals and objectives of the research
* A narrative describing the methodology used, and the respondents selected for the study, supported by graphs, tables, or other figures as appropriate.
* A qualitative and quantitative narrative description of tourists’ trends and crowding in KNP, RSBCA, and RKWS areas in different time.
* A qualitative and quantitative narrative description of the experience utilities of local, national, and international visitors in KNP, RSBCA, and RKWS areas.
* A qualitative and quantitative narrative description of the acceptable and tolerable state of tourism resources, support facilities, and levels of recreational attributes for visitors for conservation and protecting the environment in KBAs.
* A qualitative and quantitative narrative description of the increasing and acceptable trends of visitors’ crowding and recreational activities, which are consistent with ecological, vegetation coverage, and conservation aspects.
* A qualitative and quantitative narrative description of the increasing trends of socio-economic benefits for BFD, CMOs and local communities from the acceptable trends of visitors crowding and conservation fees.
* Articulation of significant concrete recommendations for the planners and managers of tourism.
* Design implementation framework for concerned authorities that help identify limits and opportunities and hence, anticipate and prevent, or modify, those tourism activities which may threaten key environmental attributes for the protected areas.
* A conclusion section that summarizes the causal relationship of sustainable tourism development that will control and reduce tourism related threats to biodiversity.

**ID. AUTHORITY/GOVERNING REGULATIONS**

USAID Ecosystems/ Protibesh Activity grant awards are made under the authority of the U.S. Foreign Affairs Act and USAID’s Automated Directive System (ADS). Awards will adhere to guidance provided under [ADS Chapter 303](https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303), “Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations” and will be within the terms of the USAID Standard Provisions as linked in the annexes, as well as the *USAID Ecosystems/ Protibesh Activity* grants procedures.

ADS 303 references two additional regulatory documents issued by the U.S. Government’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the U.S. Agency for International Development:

* 2 CFR 200 [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, Subpart E](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=2e11c56f4c402a68fd92aee657de8475&mc=true&node=sp2.1.200.e&rgn=div6) (U.S. applicants are subject to 2 CFR 200 in its entirety)

Full text of 2 CFR 200 can be found at <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl>. *USAID Ecosystems/ Protibesh Activity* is required to ensure that all organizations receiving USAID grant funds comply with the guidance found in the regulations referenced above, as applicable to the respective terms and conditions of their grant awards.

Under the *USAID Ecosystems/ Protibesh Activity* grant program, USAID retains the right at all times to terminate, in whole or in part, *USAID Ecosystems/ Protibesh Activity* grant-making authorities.

**SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION**

The USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity anticipates a single grant award expected no to exceed BDT 1,500,000 (excludes cost contribution). It is anticipated that grant award may range from between BDT 1000,000 to BDT 1,500,000 but the final amount will be dependent upon grant activities and final negotiation and may be lower or higher than that range*.* The applicant must provide a detailed budget for the research including all costs associated with the development of methodology, data collection and analysis, and report development. The duration of the grant award under this solicitation is expected to be no more than four (4) months. The estimated start date of grant awarded under this solicitation is July 01, 2024.

**SECTION III. ELIGIBILITY**

**IIIA. ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS**

This RFA is being issued under full and open competition, and we are seeking a diverse pool of applications. Promising individual (attached with organization), group of individuals, or organizations new to USAID funding are encouraged to apply.

To qualify as a researcher (individual, group of individuals, or organizations) for the research, the applicant must possess the following qualifications:

* Applicants must be a registered Bangladeshi formally constituted, recognized by and in good standing with appropriate Bangladesh authorities, and compliant with all applicable civil and fiscal regulations.
* Applicants must sign certain required certifications prior to receiving a grant. USAID Ecosystems/ Protibesh Activity

The project will work with the successful grantee to draft a marking and branding plan which will be annexed to the grant agreement.

The applicant must show some cost contribution during developing the budget which is required to execute the proposed activities/tasks. No specific percentage is required.

To qualify as a researcher (individual, group of individuals, or organizations) for the research, the applicant must possess the following qualifications:

* **Education and expertise:** The researcher should have a relevant academic background in economic valuation, social science, conservation, or a related field. Additionally, the researcher should have the necessary expertise and skills to conduct culturally sensitive and inclusive research in the field with a diverse set of stakeholders, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
* **Knowledge of local context:** The researcher should have a deep understanding of the cultural and socioeconomic context of communities in and around KBAs, including the local practices, traditions, and economic use of and dependencies on natural resources and ecosystem services.
* **Ethical considerations:** The researcher should have a strong understanding of ethical considerations in research, particularly in the context of working with vulnerable or marginalized populations. The researcher should have a plan to ensure informed consent, protect confidentiality, and minimize harm to participants.
* **Collaboration and communication skills:** The researcher should have excellent collaboration and communication skills, particularly in working with local stakeholders and partners. This includes the ability to communicate research findings to diverse audiences in a clear and accessible manner.
* **Capacity to work with stakeholders:** The researcher should have the capacity to work with a range of stakeholders, including relevant government departments, conservation organizations, and local communities.
* **Capacity to deliver actionable insights:** The researcher should have the capacity to deliver actionable insights based on the study results. This includes the ability to present the data in an understandable and useful way, and to present conclusions, figures, and other findings in a way that can be used by development practitioners, policy makers, government, and non-government agencies.

The USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Actvitiy encourages applications from new organizations who meet the above eligibility criteria.

**SECTION IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

**IVA. INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS**

Applicants must propose strategies for the implementation of the program description described above, introducing innovations that are appropriate to their organizational strengths. The applicants should submit five documents: concept paper, budget (both excel and scanned copies), implementation timeline, copies of valid legal registration and organizational charter and by-laws.The concept paper must be signed by an authorized agent of the Applicant.

**IVA1. PRE-AWARD RISK ASSESSMENT**

All organizations selected for award are subject to a pre-award risk assessment conducted by the USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity, to ascertain whether the organization has the minimum management capabilities required to handle US government funds.

**IVA3. INELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity grant funds may not be utilized for the following:

* Co struction or infrastructure activities of any kind.
* Ceremonies, parties, celebrations, or “representation” expenses.
* Purchases of restricted goods, such as: restricted agricultural commodities, motor vehicles including motorcycles, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, contraceptive products, used equipment; without the previous approval of *USAID Ecosystems/ Protibesh Activity*, or prohibited goods, prohibited goods under USAID regulations, including but not limited to the following: abortion equipment and services, luxury goods, etc.
* Covered telecommunication and video surveillance equipment or services – per the standard provision entitled “Prohibition on Certain Telecommunication and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment”, grant funds including direct and indirect costs, cost share and program income may not be used to (1) procure or obtain; (2) extend or renew a contract to procure or obtain; or (3) enter into a contract (or extend or renew a contract) to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems that use covered telecommunications equipment or services (“CTES”) as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part of any system. This prohibition covers certain telecommunications equipment and services, including, but not limited to, phones, internet, video surveillance, and cloud servers, produced or provided by Huawei Technologies Company, ZTE Corporation, Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, or Dahua Technology Company (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) unless *USAID Ecosystems/ Protibesh Activity* has determined that there is no available alternate eligible source for the CTES. For fixed amount awards, this restriction is only applicable if any of the milestones are for telecommunication or video surveillance services or equipment.
* Alcoholic beverages.
* Purchases of goods or services restricted or prohibited under the prevailing USAID source/ nationality (Cuba, Iran, North Korea and Syria).
* Any purchase or activity, which has already been made.
* Purchases or activities unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by the *USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity* Project.
* Prior obligations of and/or, debts, fines, and penalties imposed on the Grantee.
* Creation of endowments.

**IVB. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

Concept papers shall be submitted in English and should not be more than approximately twelve (12) pages.

Concept papers (including the budget and supporting documentation) should be submitted in electronic format to the USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity offices at the email address below and should reference RFA No. Small Grants: 009. Applications must be submitted no later than 05:00 pm local time, on April 25, 2024. Late or unresponsive applications will only be considered at the discretion of USAID Ecosystems/ Protibesh Activity.

USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity

EMAIL: [Protibesh-Grants@chemonics.com](mailto:Protibesh-Grants@chemonics.com)

In addition to the application forms, budget and impletmentation timeline, applicants should submit the following to the USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity:

For Organizations:

* A copy of the Applicant’s valid legal registration,
* Copy of organizational charter and by-laws.

Please submit all questions concerning this solicitation to the attention of Felix Gaschick, Chief of Party,via email to [fgaschick@chemonics.com](mailto:fgaschick@chemonics.com) and [Protibesh-Grants@chemonics.com](mailto:Protibesh-Grants@chemonics.com)*.* USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Actvitiy will assist applicants in understanding the application process, and can provide coaching in application development at the request of applicants.

**SECTION V. APPLICATION MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA**

Evaluation criteria for technical proposal for research on Tourists Carrying Capacity and Management Assessment are as follows:

* Research objectives and methodology: The proposal ought to clearly state the research objectives and describe the methodology to be used to achieve them. The methodology should be appropriate and rigorous and should demonstrate a clear understanding of the research problem.
* Feasibility and sustainability: The proposal shall demonstrate that the research is feasible, given the time, resources, and expertise available. It should also demonstrate that the research is sustainable, with a plan for the dissemination of results and long-term impact.
* Research team and expertise: The proposal should provide information about the research team, including their qualifications and experience in relevant areas if applied by a team. The team should demonstrate the necessary expertise to carry out the research.
* Budget and timeline: The proposal should provide a detailed budget and timeline for the research activities. The budget should be realistic and reasonable, and the timeline should be feasible given the scope of the research.
* Ethical considerations: The proposal should address ethical considerations related to the research, including any potential risks to human subjects, the environment, or other stakeholders. The proposal should also demonstrate a commitment to ethical research practices.

Full applications will be evaluated against the merit review criteria in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Merit Review Category** | **Rating (Points)** |
| Clarity of research methodology | 30 |
| Feasibility and sustainability of research | 20 |
| Research team and expertise | 30 |
| Cost Efficiency | 20 |
| **Total** | **100** |

Additionally, the USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity will ensure environmental soundness and compliance in design and implementation as required by 22 CFR 216.

**SECTION VI. AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

All grants will be negotiated, denominated and funded in local currency. All costs funded by the grant must be allowable, allocable and reasonable.

Issuance of this RFA and assistance with application development do not constitute an award or commitment on the part of the USAID Ecosystems/ Protibesh Activity, nor does it commit the USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, USAID Ecosystems/Protibesh Activity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received and reserves the right to ask further clarifications from the offerors. Applicants will be informed in writing of the decision made regarding their application.

1. Jahan, Kazi Moriom and Akhter, Halima. 2018. Impact of Ecotourism on the Environment, Society

   and Culture of Ratargul Swamp Forest in Sylhet, Bangladesh. Asian Journal of Environment & Ecology, 8(1): 1-8, 2018; Article no.AJEE.45214, ISSN: 2456-690X [↑](#endnote-ref-2)