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Technical Proposal 3/08/2023, Amended 3/28/2023

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Proposal Number: Task Order – Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)

Direct Technical Assistance (DTA)

Title: BRIC Direct Technical Assistance Program

Offeror's Name: *Resilience Action Partners*

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Introduction

The Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) non-Financial Direct Technical Assistance (DTA) initiative is a vital effort aimed at providing full support to communities that may not have the resources to begin climate resilience planning and project solution design on their own. In Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21), BRIC DTA received an overwhelming number of requests from communities in need of technical assistance. This highlighted the great need for and importance of providing non-financial technical assistance to underserved communities with hazard risk. Based on the high volume of requests in FY21, FEMA is expanding its investment in this initiative in the FY22 grant cycle to at least 40 communities, to help build capacity and capability at the local level.

As assistance for communities has grown, it is imperative for BRIC DTA to set itself up to manage the needs of the growing initiative in ways that meet FEMA's quality standards. The program needs to bring in the right expert partners to provide the full range of technical assistance necessary to build DTA communities' capacity to secure and use mitigation funds. This range of services includes community-driven resilience planning, support for community engagement, partnership and project governance support; and other ways to build the capacity that communities may need to move from project concept to a successful grant application. It also includes the types of support that programs have demonstrated to be a best practice in accelerating the building of resilience through technical assistance and grants.

The process to set up BRIC DTA for success is a marathon, not a sprint. The communities supported by this program are diverse. As we strive to serve the Whole Community, we must listen to our stakeholders and communities. We must seek to further understand their unique needs in intentional, deliberate ways. We know that capabilities lie across a community – sometimes with the staff, and sometimes with community-based, faith-based, or non-governmental organizations. Our *Resilience Action Partners* team has seen this firsthand, as we've worked with communities across the country through previous and current Community Engagement and Risk Communication (CERC) contracts. We are excited to support BRIC DTA and apply these successful strategic principles to this important work.

The *Resilience Action Partners* team is uniquely suited to support BRIC DTA and the program's communities. We offer the following experience and skills, which we will bring to each engagement as dictated by the community's needs:

- Understanding and knowledge of Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) programs: Our team has acquired an extensive knowledge of HMA programs, including BRIC DTA, through work on the CERC and other contracts. We understand the various programs, the aspects that are unique to each, and the challenges that communities commonly face in participating in them.
- Deep community engagement experience: We have been supporting FEMA in engaging with communities for nine years and are helping architect the definition of what equitable engagement looks like for the Agency. We will leverage this existing expertise in equitable community engagement to support efficient, collaborative, and solutions-oriented work that brings meaningful solutions to all communities identified for DTA.
- Behavioral science and human-centered design specialists: *Resilience Action Partners* brings FEMA experience in applying proven behavioral science, communication, engagement, and design strategies and tactics to private and public sector clients around the world. We will use this expertise as we develop meaningful communication and engagement tools, interventions, and processes that are designed to deliver local impact and build community capacity, using human-centered design principles to identify and remove barriers to mitigation.
- Broad-based planning services: We understand the power of community planning, development, and policies to reduce risk. Our planning staff extends beyond mitigation planning and includes land use planners, landscape architects, designers, and strategic planners. They collaborate to design shared spaces that are safe, accessible, and equitable for all. From building strategic and vision plans to revising community regulations and ordinances, our staff is ready to provide planning technical assistance.

- **Dedication to equitable outcomes:** To support socially vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, who may be marginalized and underserved, we must engage with them in meaningful ways. Our equity team brings extensive experience in developing training, strategies, resources, and materials to help FEMA achieve equitable outcomes. We will leverage our established best practices and industry expertise to support BRIC DTA and its partners in meeting communities where they are.
- **Bench of tribal subject matter experts:** *Resilience Action Partners* understands that every tribal nation has unique needs and capabilities for building climate-resilient and prepared communities. Our subject matter experts (SMEs) in tribal engagement will train and educate FEMA, our team, and our partners in this arena. They will also see that those working with tribal nations have the proper resources and cultural understanding to engage, and that all strategic communication materials are appropriate for those tribal nations and align with the 2022-2026 FEMA National Tribal Strategy. And, recognizing that different communities will have unique needs, we will pull in the right experts from our extensive SME network, to have the best possible team to support each community.
- **Strategic community-assessment research and strategy development:** Our experience with community-assessment research and strategy development is centered on co-creation and collaboration with local stakeholders. Working with BRIC DTA, our goals will be to identify important markers in a community's profile that will guide engagement and communication planning quickly, and to develop and apply an engagement strategy that reflects local input and priorities. We will prioritize the experiences and perspectives of community members to build strategies that are efficient, scalable, and tailored to the community's unique needs.
- **Guidance and standard operating procedure development expertise:** As the first CERC contractor, we are no stranger to developing guidance and standard operating procedures to support efficient, scalable operations. We have developed guidance documents and community-facing toolkits across FIMA, including the Risk MAP Playbook, the Tribal Mitigation Planning Handbook, and the Natural Hazard Retrofit Program Toolkit. We have also set up a range of internal and external processes. As the DTA program continues to grow, documenting and sharing guidance and practices will become even more important.
- **Strong record of cross-contractor collaboration and partnership:** We are ready and able to work, professionally and collaboratively, with any other contractors involved with DTA engagement in a particular community. As we do so, we will develop and share best practices. We also have the capability to offer and bring community engagement, strategic planning, community planning, and economic decision making to the support mix.
- **Leaders in partnership development and implementation:** Our team has a proven track record of developing comprehensive and effective partnership strategies that have helped foster strong and lasting relationships between FEMA and the communities it serves. We have honed our expertise in identifying and engaging with traditional and non-traditional partners who can help amplify our message and enhance our outreach efforts. By leveraging the strengths and expertise of these key stakeholders, we will work together to strengthen community resilience.
- **Conversation-changing creative asset development and production:** We have the versatility and creative acumen to develop and customize materials to fit the unique needs of communities. We are experienced in translating creative assets into appropriate languages and editing them to meet the CERC contract's plain language requirements. And we have the creative and strategy expertise to think about solving problems in different, out-of-the-box ways.
- **Expert virtual, hybrid and in-person meeting and webinar facilitation:** This team can make meetings or existing engagements accessible to communities and internal audiences. This includes facilitation, technology oversight, and cooperating with local communities in designing engagements, webinars, and on-site visits that are a locally authentic and equitable experience.
- **Sound program management:** We have a proven record of efficient operations, contract management, and innovation. This includes meeting all timelines, developing work plans, and planning, scheduling, and co-hosting regular meetings across FEMA's various contractors.

The Base Period of this task order will be focused on three main activities:

1. Set up the tools and processes that build community capacity to plan and secure funding for mitigation.
2. Apply and test these strategies and processes with communities, to identify which practices best help communities build capacity.
3. Provide parallel support to those communities.

In the Option Period, *Resilience Action Partners* will take the best strategies and proven practices identified during the Base and apply them to build continued, meaningful community support and trust, and the capability to secure funding for mitigation. The following proposal details the type of support we will provide for BRIC DTA. It is informed by the lessons learned and best practices garnered through past CERC support, and it considers BRIC DTA's unique challenges and opportunities for the future.

Performance Work Statement

This section outlines *Resilience Action Partners'* proposed Performance Work Statement (PWS). The five task areas are aligned to the Task Order Statement of Objectives.

Task 1: Program Management

The purpose of this task is to enable reliable and efficient operations, support of Mitigation Directorate and BRIC program governance structures, and forward-thinking innovation throughout the applicable FEMA and Resilience programs. This task will establish and maintain task order and program management processes, quality standards, reporting, and other processes.

1.1. Initiate Task Order in Coordination with FEMA.

- 1.1.1. Coordinate with other contractors and FEMA regional and headquarters staff on DTA to provide coordinated service delivery across the United States and its territories.
- 1.1.2. Deliver Transition-in Plan within 10 calendar days of task order award. (Contract deliverable)
- 1.1.3. Attend a kickoff meeting hosted by FEMA, within 7 calendar days of the task order award date, to reach a common understanding of program priorities, milestones, deliverables, and IDIQ requirements. (Contract deliverable)
- 1.1.4. Provide meeting minutes from the kickoff meeting within 2 business days of the meeting. (Contract deliverable)

1.2. Establish Task Order Program Management Processes

- 1.2.1. Deliver a Program Management Plan (PMP) with an Integrated Master Schedule (IMS) and Annual Budget Plan (ABP) within 15 days of the kickoff meeting. (Contract deliverable)
- 1.2.2. Provide a Quality Control Plan within 30 days of the kickoff meeting.
- 1.2.3. Provide an internet-accessible means to manage and monitor the performance and progress of tasks. Tools may include items capable of web-accessible document sharing, illustration, and tracking of project schedules. These tools are to be independent of and not directly integrated with any FEMA information system.
- 1.2.4. Establish processes for allocating funds for supporting each community. This includes defining the projects, approving the project scope, and providing budget for that project.

1.3. Ongoing Performance Management and Progress Reporting

- 1.3.1. Track and share a project schedule, provide status updates, and track task order deliverables.

1.3.2. Submit a monthly progress report to the Project Manager (PM) and Contracting Officer's Representative (COR), by the 30th day of the following month, that includes the task and the name of the community that received assistance. (Contract deliverable)

1.3.3. Provide an invoice, itemized by the task and name of community that received the assistance, for all costs incurred by *Resilience Action Partners*, as well as any subcontractor, partner, or associate.

1.3.4. Schedule, plan, facilitate, and summarize reoccurring and regular meetings with applicable FEMA staff and other contractors. Meetings may be held in person, via conference call, or via webinar, at least monthly, for the duration of the Task Order. Meeting summaries will be provided within 5 business days of each meeting.

1.4. Security Requirement Compliance

1.4.1. Maintain a detailed inventory accounting system for Government-Furnished Equipment/Material or Contractor-Acquired-Government-Owned Property (CAP).

1.4.2. Provide contractors and subcontractors who are working on this contract with training on the Unauthorized Disclosure of Classified or Unclassified Information, OPSEC Awareness Brief, Insider Threat, Privacy at DHS, and the DHS Rules of Behavior.

1.4.3. Implement process for contractor employees to receive a favorably adjudicated public trust suitability prior to entry on duty (EOD). A Public Trust Pre-Appointment Fitness Determination shall be an acceptable form of EOD, pending the completion and final fitness determination of a full background investigation.

1.4.4. Safeguard all sensitive information.

Task 2: Community Outreach

The purpose of this task is to provide coordinated communications and engagement support and technical assistance for DTA communities. *Resilience Action Partners* will provide SMEs in behavioral science, data sciences, mitigation planning, outreach, strategic planning, FEMA HMA, and pre- and post-engagement coalition building. We will assist communities with programmatic and organizational outreach activities designed to enhance engagement and coalition building.

2.1. Regional Mission Support

2.1.1. Provide mission support (e.g., meeting preparation, status reports) to each region, helping achieve consistent and comprehensive planning, coordination, and management of community outreach tools for DTA projects. Assist all FEMA regions in developing and executing strategic stakeholder engagement and outreach plans in support of programmatic goals. Coordinate with other contractors and FEMA regional and headquarters staff on DTA to provide coordinated service delivery across the United States and its territories.

2.1.2. Research, share, and use industry best practices to help demonstrate where and how successful community engagement has driven actions, especially mitigation, climate adaptation, and equitable resilience. Provide counsel on ways to apply this learning to support efforts by DTA, FEMA regions, and stakeholders.

2.1.3. Support communities with communications and engagement by developing and disseminating materials that share community-informed messaging. These materials will include, but not be limited to, webinars, community education, feature stories, fact sheets, infographics, graphic and video production, toolkits, bulletins, and digital platform content.

2.2. Community Profiles

- 2.2.1. Research community profiles for each DTA community. Each profile will include: (a) community insights, (b) overall strategic timeline objectives, (c) a partnership map and messaging, (e) an engagement plan, and (f) process for measurement and iterative improvement.

2.3. Tools and Templates Development and Delivery

2.3.1. At the national and regional levels, design and implement community engagement strategies, products, tools, and templates for communities.

- Material development and engagement strategies will apply principles of behavioral science, data sciences, marketing, design, and strategic planning.
- Materials will be developed to support building DTA communities' capability to use the products and enhance their own coordination and collaboration to develop mitigation actions and resilient solutions. Building communities' capability will use best practices in behavioral science and experience design principles to strengthen community uptake and use.

Task 3: Strategic Coordination

The purpose of this task is to support the development, implementation, and integration of a long-term communications strategy for the DTA program.

3.1. Program Communications Strategy and Messaging

3.1.1. Support the BRIC DTA team in creating a long-term communications strategy and consistent messaging about communities within the initiative.

3.2. Program Integration

3.2.1. At the regional level, execute efficient risk communication tools and community engagement strategies for collaboration across the FIMA directorates and Mitigation branches.

3.3. Best Practices

3.3.1. Develop, plan, schedule, and support the regular sharing of communication products that highlight DTA community progress. This may include sharing news and updates from across the regions, lessons learned and best practices for DTA engagement, and DTA community engagement standard operating procedures with FEMA regional staff, contractors, DTA communities, or stakeholders.

- Identify, capture, and adapt best practices and lessons learned from other DTA projects to find efficiency and build upon existing work. Deliver a best practice update at the beginning of each fiscal quarter.
- See that no work is duplicated and that opportunities to identify and create templates or standard processes are used to provide standardized materials and approaches across programs and geographies.

Task 4: Partnerships

The purpose of this task is to support the development and maintenance of stakeholder relationships and partnerships.

4.1. Develop and Execute Partnerships Strategy

4.1.1. Identify, leverage, and empower communities to collaborate with partners.

4.1.2. Support the development of partnership strategy guidance that can be used as a template for community engagement strategies, activities, and planning.

4.1.3. Coordinate with regions and contractors to identify partners, stakeholders, resources, and needs.

4.1.4. Support DTA communities and other partners to share information on FEMA assistance, integration opportunities, and specific integration with other FEMA programs.

Task 5: Other Direct Costs

The purpose of this task is to allocate funding to support activities required under this PWS to support program management, community outreach, behavioral interventions, strategic coordination, and partnership building.

5.1. Other Direct Costs Required to Support Task Order Execution

5.1.1. Other Direct Costs required to support Task Order execution may include authorized travel (only travel in excess of 50 miles will be reimbursed); training materials, postage and shipping (which do not include the costs associated with e-QIP, background investigations, fingerprints, and/or EOD), stock images/video, media monitoring tool (Netbase), clips, hosting platform(s), event management vendor(s), technical support for material production and participant recruitment.

