XCEPT Call for Concept Notes

Policy Responses to Address Conflict Economies in Borderlands

XCEPT is commissioning research that examines policy and programme interventions in conflict-affected borderlands.

Key information	
Award number:	C2-G050
Programme Name:	Cross-border Conflict Evidence, Policy and Trends (XCEPT) research programme
Implemented by:	Chemonics UK
Funded by:	UK International Development, via the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
Call issue date:	Wednesday 20 August 2025
Q&A session:	Wednesday 3 September 2025, 13:00-14:00 BST
Clarification questions deadline:	Monday 8 September 2025, 10:00 BST
Submission deadline:	**Wednesday 17 September 2025, 10:00 BST**
Email for electronic submissions:	xcept-fund@chemonics.com
Likely total number of awards:	4-8
Value of each award:	Up to £120,000 GBP
Period of performance of each award:	12 months
Estimated start date:	December 2025
Point of contact:	Jenny Sharp, xcept-fund@chemonics.com

1 Introduction

The Cross-border Conflict Evidence, Policy and Trends (XCEPT) research programme brings together world-leading experts and local researchers to examine conflict-affected borderlands, how conflicts connect across borders, and the drivers of violent and peaceful behaviour. Funded by UK International Development, XCEPT offers rigorous public good research to advance scholarship and inform policies and programmes that support peace. The programme includes the XCEPT Research Fund (XRF) to commission high-quality new research.

This XRF call for Concept Note will support the development of 4-8 research projects that examine policy and programme interventions in conflict-affected borderlands, with a particular focus on surfacing **actionable insights to address challenges related to conflict economies and how licit/illicit economic activity intersects with conflict and governance in borderlands**.

Funding support up to £120,000 is available per award, depending on the scope of the research and methods employed.

2 Background

Since 2018, XCEPT has supported research to better understand conflict-affected borderlands in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia and how conflicts in these regions intersect through flows of people, weapons and resources, creating intricate cross-border conflict systems. These knit the formal and informal and the licit and illicit in ways that empower armed actors, enmesh conflict with crime and violent extremism, and ensnare local communities. They make protracted conflicts even more difficult to resolve.

Much of the past XCEPT-supported research has focused on conflict economies: how these evolve within borderlands; how they affect relations between the centre and the periphery; how they affect stability within conflict-affected countries; and how they create transnational linkages between conflict drivers across borders, regions, and even globally, across licit and illicit supply chains.[1] Past research has illustrated how, within borderland and cross-border conflict economies, rent-seeking and/or capture of trade routes or corridors by armed actors fuels cycles of violence.[2] Governance issues have also been shown to be a significant factor driving instability.[3] These might include government

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[1] See Gallien M. "Chequered value chains: globalisation made in the borderlands" in *Borders of Conflict: Navigating Policy in a Transnational Ecosystem*; Mansour R, ed. Durham: Global Policy, 2024.; Mansour R. "Introduction: The Transnational Conflict Ecosystem", in Borders of Conflict: Navigating Policy in a Transnational Ecosystem; Mansour R, ed. Durham: Global Policy, 2024; Soliman A and Demissie AA. "The 'conflict economy' of sesame in Ethiopia and Sudan". London: Chatham House, 2024; Eaton T and Yousef L. "How migrant smuggling has fuelled conflict in Libya". London, Chatham House, 2025; Jesperson S et al. "Illicit Flows Fuelling Conflict in the Tri-Border: Migration and Artisanal Gold Mining in Sudan, Chad and Libya". XCEPT and RHIPTO, 2021.

[2] See Schouten P. "Checkpoints, transnational trade and conflict". Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2025; Jesperson S et al 2021; Kindersley N and Majok JD. "Monetized Livelihoods and Militarized Labour in South Sudan's Borderlands". Rift Valley Institute, 2022; Schouten P. "Paying the Price: The Political Economy of Checkpoints in Somalia". Rift Valley Institute, 2023; Mohammed J. "Navigating Trade Controls; The Political Economy of Checkpoints along Somali's Garissa Corridor". Rift Valley Institute, 2023; Mansfield D. "Nimroz and Samangan: A comparative case study of shifts in Afghanistan's political economy since the Taliban takeover". London: XCEPT, 2024.

[3] See Soliman A and Demissie AA 2024; Abdi M. "Regularly Irregular: Varieties of informal trading in the Ethiopian-Somaliland borderlands".Rift Valley Institute, 2021; Abdirahman K. "Contested commerce: revenue and state-making in the Galkayo borderlands". Rift Valley Institute, 2021; Kochore HH. "Restructuring the Margins: Emerging Political Orders in Kenya's

officials' corruption and collusion in illicit trafficking, political tensions between the central government and 'peripheral' areas such as borderlands, national political elites' manipulation of borderland actors and resources, and the interconnection between local, national, and regional politics within these interconnected political economies. Past studies have also highlighted the gendered effects of these shifting trade, livelihoods, and conflict economy dynamics, and the connection with stability in borderlands or cross-border contexts.[4]

Research supported by XCEPT has often recognised and referenced policy tools, mechanisms, or approaches that in theory might address some of these issues. These include international or domestic cross-border trade policies; internal taxation or checkpoint regulations or policies; border post infrastructure, securitisation or other 'border hardening' policies or mechanisms; international sanctions and financial regulations; counter-trafficking and counter-smuggling initiatives (ranging from international monitoring and regulation to interdiction efforts); conflict mediation and resolution efforts; multilateral peace operations or interventions; and law enforcement, security, or stabilisation efforts, among other approaches. As identified in the prior research, these various tools or policy approaches have been pursued or supported by a range of policy actors, including local and national authorities, bilateral donors, regional bodies, international organisations and coalitions, or various combinations thereof.

Prior studies have identified ways that these policies have failed to achieve their purported objectives, or have even proven to be counter-productive in their results.[5] Some authors have highlighted that existing policy frameworks often fail to take a truly transnational conflict ecosystems approach or fail to adapt to future governance challenges, such as those related to natural resources and climate stressors or changing global economy and power dynamics.[6] Other research has suggested a neglect of the role of civilian agency in borderlands, and how borderland populations – often characterised as marginalised and exploited by political and military actors as sources of resources, cheap labour, or recruits – nonetheless engage with and can influence a wide range of conflict dynamics.[7]

XCEPT sees a need for further research on existing (or potential) policy tools that can inform the development of more effective approaches or response strategies. This also is a gap in the wider academic and grey literature addressing policy responses in borderlands, including research examining stabilisation, peace operations, peacebuilding, and development and economic policy. Research in these areas tends to be borderland-blind,

Borderlands". Rift Valley Institute, 2025; Thomas E and El Gizouli M. Sudan's Grain Divide: A revolution of bread and sorghum". Rift Valley Institute, 2020; Majok JD. "War, Migration, and Work: Agricultural labour and cross-border migration from northern Bahr el-Ghazal, South Sudan". Rift Valley Institute, 2021; Kindersley N and Majok JD 2020; Boukhars A. "Barriers Versus Smugglers: Algeria and Morocco's Battle for Border Security". Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, 2019; "Resistance in the Peripheries: Civil war and fragile peace in Sudan and Ethiopia's borderlands". Rift Valley Institute, 2021.

[4] See, for example, de Brunije K et al. "Life on the line: stability and livelihood challenges in coastal west African borderlands". London: XCEPT, 2025.

[5] See Mansour R and White M. "Why peacebuilding fails and what to do about it: evidence form conflict economies in the Middle East and Africa". London: Chatham House, 2025; Eaton T and Yousef L, 2025; Sims C, Ruiz A, and Krohley N. "Captagon in Iraq and Jordan: understanding the problem and evaluating the solutions". London: XCEPT, 2024; Saleem Z and Mansour R. "Responding to instability in Iraq's Sinjar district". London: XCEPT, 2024; Abdirahman K 2021; Tinti P. "Tackling the Niger-Libya migration route: how armed conflict in Libya shapes the Agadez mobility economy". London: Chatham House, 2024; Meddeb H. "The Hidden Face of Informal Cross-Border Trade in Tunisia After 2011". Malcom H Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, 2021.

[6] See, for example, Mansour R (ed.) 2024; Gallien M 2024; Meddeb H. "Tunisia's Transformation Into a Transit Hub: Illegal Migration and Policy Dilemmas". Malcom H Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, 2024; Mulli AS. "Exploring the gender-climate-conflict nexus in conflict-affected borderlands in the Horn of Africa". London: XCEPT, 2024.

[7] Forthcoming literature review for XCEPT by Jentzsch C. and Masullo J., 2025.

with consideration for borderland dynamics and drivers often treated as a contextual detail or elided completely.

As a result, there is a gap in understanding policy responses at the nexus between borderlands and conflict and ways that international, national, or local responses might innovate to meet the challenges of cross-border conflict. In keeping with the overall goal of XCEPT to inform effective policy and programme responses, this call for proposals aims fill this gap and to support concrete, policy-focused research to inform borderland responses.

3 Description of the research to be commissioned

This Call for Concept Notes is designed to respond to and build on past borderland and cross-border conflict dynamics highlighted in XCEPT-supported research to date, generating more focused analysis **on policy responses or approaches that address the linkages between borderland conflict economies and the local, national and transnational drivers of conflict, as well as actionable recommendations for their improvement**. Proposals should make clear how the research will assess concrete policy tools, mechanisms, or strategies (whether past, existing or proposed) in response to borderland and cross-border conflict dynamics, and bring forward key considerations for more effective policy and programme design. This might include:

- **Policies, tools, or initiatives designed to address the ways that licit/illicit economic activity intersects with conflict and governance in borderlands**, including local, national, or inter-/transnational regulatory and oversight mechanisms (such as the Kimberley process related to conflict minerals, regulations to countertrafficking in persons, or initiatives to address illicit activity in protected natural environments); cross-border trade initiatives and regulation, including domestic or international taxation, financial, and trade policies or interventions; etc.
- Aspects of **stabilisation and security policies and interventions** that address conflict economies in borderlands, including cross-border security cooperation, border management, maritime interdiction, and/or peace operations and interventions led by regional organisations or other ad hoc coalitions, etc.
- Aspects of **governance or livelihood policies and interventions** that address conflict economies in borderlands, including anti-corruption and transparency initiatives, alternative livelihoods programming, or cross-border or regional coordination – as well as national or local initiatives.

To encourage more tractable, policy-focused analysis, research might consider specific policy tools, mechanisms, or approaches deployed by local or national government actors, by regional or multilateral bodies, coalitions, or international intervention efforts, including bilateral donor programmes. **Research should aim to surface actionable insights for policy stakeholders in the given contexts, while also demonstrating the applicability of findings to broader contexts**.

Research should consider not only the past challenges and conditions shaping the success of these policy approaches or tools, but also those that are likely to be relevant going forward. This should include **consideration of the resource-constrained environment**

for multilateral action and the need for greater reliance on supporting regional, national, and local responses.

Across all the research, an emphasis on how policies or interventions studied would affect or enable civilian and community agency in responding to conflict and conflict economies in borderlands is welcomed. Likewise, XCEPT encourages research that **considers the role of and implications for men and women** in the policies and interventions under study.

The XRF is committed to supporting equitable research partnerships and inclusive knowledge production. **We encourage Global South collaboration and projects led by or meaningfully involving researchers based in the regions under study**.

XCEPT has in-house capacity to conduct research using satellite and other remote data and open-source investigations. Applicants may consider integration of such methods and technologies into research on policy responses and programming, but do not need to consider budgeting for this service as it is funded separately.

Geographic scope

The proposed research should concentrate on conflict-affected borderlands and cross-border conflict dynamics in XCEPT's core geographies:

- The Middle East, especially Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen
- The Horn of Africa, especially Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia
- Coastal West Africa and the Sahel
- Afghanistan and Pakistan
- Myanmar

Proposals that address other geographies will be considered. Research may focus on a single region or span multiple regions, with particular interest in research that offers comparative value for XCEPT's core areas of focus.

Expected outputs

The primary output of each award will be a high-quality paper, subject to external peer review and suitable for publication by the Awardee organisation or XCEPT, or prepared for submission to a peer-reviewed academic journal.

All projects should include policy-focused outputs, such as summary briefing notes and presentations to policy audiences. They should also include outputs geared for a wider public audience, such as commentaries, blogs, podcasts or videos. Applicants should list the outputs they plan to produce in the Application Form.

XCEPT will offer technical review and feedback throughout the process. In coordination with XCEPT, awardees are expected to leverage their professional networks to generate opportunities for policy uptake and impact. XCEPT will also provide opportunities for successful applicants to showcase their research at XCEPT-hosted events and through private briefings to key government and policy stakeholders at relevant stages of the project cycle.

In addition, XCEPT may convene successful applicants to share and refine research plans, foster collaboration, and cultivate a community of research practice; XCEPT likewise may support collective presentation of research findings in a workshop or convening at the

conclusion of research. Travel costs would be covered by XCEPT. XCEPT will work with author(s) to enable open access publication, in line with FCDO requirements.[8]

4 Funding levels

We anticipate issuing **between four and eight awards** under this call, across a range of funding levels. The final number of awards may be higher or lower, depending on the scale, quality, and strategic fit of the proposals received. Final decisions will be made by the Selection Committee, which will take into account the overall balance and diversity of the portfolio of research, including thematic coverage, geographic focus, and methodological approaches.

Applicants are encouraged to consider the appropriate scale for their project, bearing in mind the following indicative funding brackets:

- **Up to £15,000** – For desk-based research papers (sole or co-authored) drawing primarily on existing literature, data, and analysis. These projects are not expected to involve field data collection but may include remote interviews.

- **£15,000–£40,000** – For projects that include field data collection. At the lower end of the scale this may involve key informant interviews requiring travel; at the higher end it may involve interviews, surveys or field-based case studies in one or two locations.

- **£40,000–£80,000** – For projects involving more substantial field data collection, potentially across multiple sites or countries, and delivering more extensive outputs.

- **£80,000–£120,000** – For projects proposing a portfolio of research activities across multiple sites, potentially involving mixed methods and multiple outputs that offer comparative case studies in different geographies or address a more complex array of interventions.

Concept notes should explain the justification for higher budgets relative to the contribution to XCEPT objectives, scholarship, and policy.

5 Who can apply

XCEPT welcomes applications from both **individuals** and **organisations**.

Successful applicants will be responsible for receiving, managing, and reporting on the awarded funds, and must demonstrate the capability to do so in line with FCDO requirements for financial accountability and transparency. This includes maintaining appropriate financial systems and controls.

The awardee will also hold primary responsibility for **duty of care, safeguarding, and risk management** throughout the duration of the project, and must have appropriate approaches in place to manage these effectively.

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[8] See FCDO's (formerly DFID's) Open and Enhanced Access Policy.

Applicants should ensure that their proposed budget, and their approach to risk, safeguarding, and duty of care, are proportionate to the scale, scope, and complexity of the proposed research. These elements will be considered as part of the assessment process.

In line with these expectations, we do not anticipate awarding high value budgets to individuals acting outside of an institutional or organisational framework, unless they can clearly demonstrate the capacity to manage funds and responsibilities at that scale.

Applicants should name a **Principal Investigator** (and Co-Investigators, as relevant). We expect Principal Investigators to be academics, subject matter experts, or advanced practitioners engaged in research, policy, or programme activities. Principal investigators will usually hold a PhD, but other equivalent academic or professional qualifications will also be considered – for example, we encourage applications from former policymakers with deep experience working on relevant issues.

Global South researchers and research organisations are strongly encouraged to apply, independently or in partnership / collaboration with researchers or research organisations based in the Global North. Applications that include meaningful participation of Global South researchers and/or organisations will be scored more favourably.[9]

Proposals should consider whether the research would be strengthened through the participation of researchers with **different disciplinary backgrounds,** or through partnerships between academics and policy professionals.

Applicants must specify whether **ethical review** (e.g., for human subjects research) is required from an Institutional Review Board (or equivalent ethics review body). The applicant will be responsible for obtaining such approval and provide relevant proof to XCEPT before any funds can be dispersed.

Applicants must be able to comply with the ethical and business conduct requirements outlined in Section 10 'Ethical and business conduct requirements', and the Chemonics' Supplier Code of Conduct, which is based on the FCDO Code of Conduct.

Eligible organisations

Organisations applying for funding should note the following:

- Applications from consortia, partnerships or networks of two or more organisations are welcome. For all consortia, a lead organisation should be declared.
- Applicant organisations can be either for-profit or not-for-profit.
- Government departments and agencies (national, regional, local) are not eligible to apply for this opportunity. This exclusion does not apply to publicly funded, independent, and non-political research institutes, which may be eligible provided they meet the other criteria outlined in this call.
- Any organisation applying for funding must be an organisation incorporated or legally organised under the laws of its place of business and must have the proper

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[9] For the purposes of this call, 'Global South organisation' refers to an organisation that is legally organised under the laws of, and has as its principal place of business or operations in, a country that is a recipient of official development assistance (ODA) (see OECD list here), that is based in an ODA-recipient country, and is conducting research in or on an ODA-recipient country. 'Global South researcher' refers to an individual who is a national of an ODA-recipient country, is based in an ODA-recipient country (or has been displaced from one in the past several years), and is conducting research in or on an ODA-recipient country.

licenses or registration or be able to obtain the necessary approvals to deliver the services required.

All organisational applicants are asked to confirm that their organisation has a track record of:

- Managing projects of equivalent scale.
- Engaging in the research area proposed.

For more information, please refer to the Concept Note Application Form.

6 How to apply

The application process involves two stages: Concept Note and full Project Proposal. A description of the application and award process is provided below, with estimated dates.

Date	XCEPT Application Process
20 August 2025	**Stage One:** Call for Concept Notes published
3 September 2025	Q&A session
8 September 2025	Clarification questions deadline
10 September 2025	Updated FAQs published
17 September 2025	Concept Note submission deadline
Early October 2025	**Stage Two:** Shortlisted applicants invited to submit full Project Proposals
Late October 2025	Project Proposal submission deadline
November 2025	Due diligence and Project Proposal assessment and award
December 2025	Kick off

Stage One: Concept Note

The Concept Note stage enables applicants to outline their research idea and approach to enable XCEPT to determine who should be invited to submit full Project Proposals.

i) Concept Note preparation and submission

To apply, applicants should prepare and submit the following:

- **Concept Note Application Form** (max. 1200 words). The concept note should demonstrate how the proposed research addresses the objectives outlined in this call. References to relevant literature should be included as footnotes, which will not count towards the word limit. The Concept Note should include the following (word limits are indicative):

  - **Research idea and evidence gap** (600 words), including a statement of the project's focus and the problem or issue(s) it will address, the research questions and hypotheses, potential contribution to the field (both policy and

scholarship), and brief overview of the current evidence gaps in relation to the research idea, with reference to the relevant literature.

- **Methodology** (300 words), including the empirical strategy and methods the research will employ, why they are appropriate, and the timeline for delivery. Ethical considerations and institutional review processes should also be included here, including the plan for obtaining ethics approval.
- **Expected outputs** (100 words)**,** such as papers, policy briefing notes, events, blogs, podcasts, videos, and data sets. The anticipated publication pathway or outlet(s) should be included.
- **Research team** (200 words), including the track record of the Principal Investigator / team, and the extent to which individuals and/or organisations from the Global South lead and meaningfully participate during different stages of the research cycle, from research design to data collection, analysis, validation, authoring, and uptake.

- **Summary budget**. Please provide a high-level breakdown of estimated costs across major categories (e.g. personnel, activities, equipment, etc.) sufficient to demonstrate feasibility and value for money. This should include costs related to fieldwork, editing and publication, dissemination, etc.

The Concept Note Application Form should be submitted as a Microsoft Word document. Only applications in English will be reviewed. Footnote references will not count towards the word limit. Please note that application forms differ depending on whether you are applying as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.

- **Curricula Vitae (CVs)**. CVs must be provided for the Principal Investigator and any Co-Investigators (maximum three CVs in total). Each CV should ideally not exceed two pages and should include a list of relevant publications, if applicable.

The completed Concept Note Application Form and CV(s) should be submitted via email to XCEPT-Fund@chemonics.com by the date specified in the 'Key information' table at the top of this document. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. **Applications must indicate in the subject line of the email the following: "C2-G050 Policy response + [Name of lead (whether individual or organisation)]".**

Applicants may submit several proposals, but no organisation or individual will be awarded more than one award as the lead applicant.

XCEPT will endeavour to answer clarification questions from applicants at any point during the application process. Those questions and answers that XCEPT feels would be useful for all applicants will be incorporated into an FAQs document. Any questions that you would like addressed should be submitted to XCEPT-Fund@chemonics.com.

ii) Concept Note assessment and evaluation

This step is led by members of the Selection Committee and the XCEPT team. It will consist of an eligibility screening followed by a review and assessment of the Concept Notes, according to the Evaluation Criteria detailed in Section 7 of this document ('How will your Concept Note be assessed?').

A shortlist of **10-15 applicants** will be invited to prepare and submit full Project Proposals for evaluation by the Selection Committee.

Applicants will be notified of the evaluation result by email. We expect to notify applicants within 2-3 weeks of Concept Note submission.

Depending on their scope and complexity, Concept Notes for desk-based papers based primarily on existing literature and data may be selected for evaluation by the Selection Committee **without the requirement to submit a full Project Proposal**. Such applicants will be notified at this stage.

We will not be able to provide feedback on unsuccessful concept notes.

Stage Two: Project Proposal

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full Project Proposal following Concept Note evaluation.

i) Project Proposal preparation and submission

Shortlisted applicants will be asked to complete a full technical application, providing past performance examples, completing due diligence forms, and submitting a detailed budget and workplan. Further details on requirements and evaluation will be shared at this stage.

Shortlisted applicants will have 3-4 weeks to complete their Project Proposal.

ii) Due diligence

FCDO requires all award holders to be subject to due diligence and risk assessment. This process will run in parallel to the assessment of the Project Proposals. No final award decision will be taken before this has been completed.

iii) Project Proposal assessment and award

The Project Proposal Selection Committee will make a final decision to make awards based on the proposed projects, the due diligence assessments and risk assessments, and the shape of the overall portfolio.

Chemonics UK will finalise the award with each award holder, taking into consideration feedback from the Selection Committee and the due diligence and risk assessment. The onboarding process is expected to run from November–December 2025.

7 How will your Concept Note be assessed?

Concept Note applications will be assessed by members of the Selection Committee and the XCEPT team. Applications will be judged based on the criteria below. **Please note that this evaluation criteria should be considered as a guide only.**

In addition to the strength of individual submissions, some decisions may be made on a strategic basis across the programme, for example, based on geography or thematic area or to promote equity and inclusion.

XCEPT

Evaluation criteria	Scoring
Research idea and evidence gaps • Relevance to the themes, questions, and XCEPT focus geographies described in this call. • Clarity of the proposal, clear description of the conceptual and analytical framework, and precision of the research question(s). • Clarity of identification of policy relevant dimensions of the topic and potential for providing evidence that can improve policy responses. • Originality of the proposed topic and knowledge of relevant existing literature and evidence gaps. • Consideration and integration of relevant gender dimensions.	**40**
Methodology • Aptness of the methods proposed, including rigour and robustness of the empirical strategy to address research questions and test hypotheses and of the approach to data collection and analysis. • Feasibility of the methodological approach, based on the time and budget proposed. • Robustness of quality assurance processes built into the design, implementation, writing, and dissemination of the research proposed. • Aptness and robustness of approach to ensuring ethical research standards throughout the project cycle. • Integration of gender- and conflict-sensitive research practices from design to implementation. • Feasibility and realism of plan for accomplishing the deliverables and delivering on time and within budget. • Relevance and aptness of proposed outputs for policy impact and contribution to scholarship.	**30**
Research team • Academic credentials and experience delivering research related to the research idea. • Track record using the proposed methodology. • Relevance of existing networks for research access and policy stakeholder engagement. • Evidence of ability to produce rigorous, high-quality research outputs and to extract and communicate policy implications. • Extent to which individuals and/or organisations from the Global South lead and meaningfully participate across the research cycle, from research design to data collection, analysis, authoring, and uptake.	**30**
Total score	*100*

8 Contracting

Successful applicants will be contracted directly by Chemonics UK, which manages the XRF. The type of contract issued will depend on the nature of the applicant – whether an individual or an organisation – and, in the case of organisations, their legal status (e.g. for-profit or not-for-profit).

- For organisational applications submitted by a **consortium**, a lead organisation must be designated. This lead organisation will serve as the formal contract holder with Chemonics UK.

- For individual applications with **co-investigators**, XCEPT prefers that co-investigators be engaged as subcontractors under the lead's contract.

If the arrangement described above raise significant complications, then we can consider alternative mechanisms.

Successful applicants will be expected to report their progress on a regular basis, for example through quarterly reporting.

XRF awards are made under the authority of FCDO Standard Terms and Conditions, and Chemonics' Supplier Code of Conduct, based on the FCDO Code of Conduct. The XRF is required to ensure that all organisations receiving FCDO funding comply with the guidance found in the regulations referenced above, as applicable to the respective terms and conditions of their awards.

FCDO retains the right to reject Chemonics' proposal of any successful applicant and terminate, in whole or in part, a subsequent award at any time.

This call does not establish an obligation for Chemonics UK to fund any activity or provide any awards to any applicants.

9 Q&A session and clarification questions

To learn more about this funding opportunity, please join the **virtual question and answer (Q&A) session** on the date specified in the 'Key Information' table at the top of this call. This will be an opportunity to ask questions about this call. If you are interested in joining the Q&A, please confirm your attendance by completing this form: https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/37decac8-ae95-41c8-b3d2-6c5546ebb314@7c1f24a6-7d39-452c-8237-0726e3b19a73

If you have any **clarification questions**, please ask them at the Q&A or email them to the Point of Contact by the deadline date specified in the 'Key Information' table at the top of this call.

10 Ethical and business conduct requirements

Chemonics is committed to integrity in procurement, and only selects grantees based on objective business criteria such as technical merit and value for money.

Chemonics does not tolerate fraud, collusion among applicants, falsified proposals/bids, bribery, or kickbacks. Any firm or individual violating these standards will be disqualified

from this solicitation process, barred from future opportunities, and may be reported to both our Office of Business Conduct and FCDO.

Programme 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 favourable treatment regarding this solicitation. Any improper request from a programme employee should be reported to BusinessConduct@chemonics.com.

Applicants responding to this Call must sign the declaration included at the end of the Application Form, to include the following as part of the proposal submission:

- Disclose any close, familial, or financial relationships with Chemonics or project staff. For example, if an offeror's cousin is employed by the project, the offeror must state this.
- Disclose any family or financial relationship with other offerors submitting proposals. For example, if the offeror's father owns a company that is submitting another proposal, the offeror must state this.
- Certify that the prices in the application have been arrived at independently, without any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other applicant or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition.
- Certify that all information in the proposal and all supporting documentation are authentic and accurate.
- Certify understanding and agreement to Chemonics' prohibitions against fraud, bribery and kickbacks.