RECRUITMENT: Program Manager – Thrive Global Development Alliance

BACKGROUND
Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) began activities in Tajikistan in 1993, when it mounted a humanitarian response to acute food shortages in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent civil war. Since then, the Foundation has become a leader in implementing high-quality projects characterized by its hallmark long-term commitment and community-driven approach. AKF is positioned as one of the country’s most trusted and effective socio-economic development partners. AKF’s programs cover a broad geographical area encompassing 36 districts in all four regions – GBAO, Khatlon, Districts of Republican Subordination (Rasht Valley) and Sughd – reaching approximately 1.9 million people. This work is situated within agriculture and food security, economic inclusion, civil society, health and nutrition, early childhood development and education themes. The foundation’s main goals are: building economic opportunities and employment; strengthening civil society institutions; promoting sustainable natural resource management; and, developing and investing in social services sustained by communities, local civil society institutions and the government.

Thrive Global Development Alliance is a five-year, $20 million project that expands the AKF and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) partnership both technically and geographically to reach 165,000 direct and 460,000 indirect beneficiaries in all 16 districts of Tajikistan along the Afghan border. Thrive will advance the partnership by enhancing integrated socio-economic development for men, women, boys, and girls in Khatlon Oblast and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast. To achieve this goal, Thrive will ensure local governance institutions deploy resources and social services effectively through: improved management of resources and social services by local governance institutions; and increased access and use of quality social services by men, women, boys and girls in targeted communities. AKF will also ensure improved performance of targeted smallholder farmers and entrepreneurs through: increased access for targeted women and men entrepreneurs to growth-oriented financial and technical assistance services; and increased access and use by targeted women and men smallholder farmers to agricultural technical assistance and productive assets.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE
The Program Manager will oversee Thrive project implementation and coordination across all implementing partners, including progress against planned activities, results, objectives, and goals. The Program Manager will supervise a project management team, and report directly to the Chief Executive Officer of AKF in Tajikistan. The Program Manager will act as the equivalent of what USAID terms a “Chief of Party” for the project – s/he will serve as the primary point of contact for engagement with the donor, and will hold the responsibility for directing staff and partners on the successful implementation of Thrive. This position is based in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.
RESPONSIBILITIES

Project management and coordination
• Oversee project implementation across all implementing partners, including ensuring progress against project activities, results, indicators, budgets, objectives and goals for both AKF and AKDN partners on the project
• Lead coordination activities, including convening a Strategic Engagement Forum, a Partners Coordination Committee, and monthly progress review meetings with implementing partners
• Develop annual work plans, annual budgets and all other deliverables required by the donor
• Ensure delivery of project activities on schedule, on budget and in accordance with the project agreement and subsequent plans/budgets agreed to with the donor
• Liaise with USAID AOR and activity managers on different aspects of project management and reporting
• Participate in USAID Partners meetings, including Feed The Future, and coordinate as needed with other donor-funded projects
• Support AKF’s Partnerships & Policy Unit with management of the overall US Government relationship, and where relevant, represent AKF at development community events
• Organize senior and working-level site-visits for USAID officials, and conduct regular monitoring visits to ensure quality implementation

Reporting and compliance
• Ensure accurate and timely internal and external project progress reporting, particularly quarterly and annual technical and financial reporting to USAID
• Ensure project activities comply with USAID rules and regulations set out in the project agreement or otherwise applicable under USAID policy, including securing prior approval for construction, environmental compliance, etc.
• Guide and backstop development of communications materials (e.g., success stories) and visibility (e.g., sign boards, banners) as outlined in the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan
• Monitor and approve budgeted project expenditures

Monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning
• Support establishment and implementation of systems to monitor and report on progress, performance indicators and objectives
• Guide implementation of the monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning agenda, including project assessments and evaluations, and program improvement activities, such as Reflection, Solutions, and Coordination sessions

Staff management
• Manage, and where necessary guide recruitment of, the AKF project management team of six direct reports to ensure smooth project delivery across functions
• Track and review staff performance
• Supervise project staff by providing input, feedback, guidance and direction
• Identify capacity building needs to enhance relevant technical and managerial skills

ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS
• Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree in social sciences or other related disciplines
• Minimum 7 years of professional experience in project or program management and in large, complex multi-sector international development projects
• Ability to create a sense of community among partners and team members
• Ability to perform at a high level and diplomatically with a range of stakeholders (e.g., local provincial, national government, private sector, NGOs, and beneficiaries)
• Good knowledge of planning, budgeting, managing, monitoring and controlling projects
• Good knowledge and experience (preferred minimum of 4 years) applying USAID rules and regulations
• Strong leadership, administrative, management and communications skills
• Excellent written and verbal communication and presentation skills in English
• Willingness to live and work in Dushanbe, Tajikistan with periodic travel to program areas in GBAO and Khatlon districts

ASSET QUALIFICATIONS
• Professional experience in Tajikistan, Central Asia, or similar geographic contexts
• Knowledge of Russian or Tajik languages
• Experience integrating gender equality and women’s empowerment issues into development activities