



## Joint Working Group on Labor in Cocoa Farming

### Request for Proposal (RFP)

<b>Agency:</b>	Joint Working Group on Labor in Cocoa Farming (JWG)
<b>Funding Opportunity Title:</b>	Meta-analysis of surveys reporting on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL), Forced Adult Labor (FAL) and Trafficking in the cocoa sectors of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana
<b>Geographic Target Countries:</b>	Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana
<b>Announcement Type:</b>	Fixed Rate Contract
<b>Funding Opportunity Number:</b>	2009-001
<b>Date of Announcement:</b>	December 18, 2009
<b>Deadline for Applications:</b>	January 21, 2010, 4:59 pm Eastern Time/USA
<b>Point of Contact:</b>	Allison Arbib, Verité/Joint Working Group on Labor in Cocoa Farming Secretariat, <a href="mailto:aarbib@verite.org">aarbib@verite.org</a> , 001-413-253-9227 Tel, 001-413-256-8960 fax.

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Joint Working Group on Labor in Cocoa Farming (JWG), created in July 2009, will hire a group(s) to conduct a meta-analysis of the various studies on Worst Forms of Child Labor, Forced Adult Labor and Trafficking in the cocoa sectors of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. It is the JWG's view that this meta-analysis will form the baseline upon which the JWG, and the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, as well as interested civil society and other institutions can build their future research and remediation efforts that relate to these issues.

By analyzing and integrating the research done from 2000 to date, it is envisioned that this meta-analysis will clearly articulate:

- The characteristics of labor practices, including trafficking, that exist in the cocoa sectors of each country at the time of the report.
- Trends (if any) that are evident from the data with respect to changes in the incidence of WFCL, FAL and trafficking since 2000.
- Recommendations regarding the types and frequency of data collection that can be used in each country to effectively describe the status of labor practices in each cocoa sector.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Address questions relating to this RFP to: Allison Arbib, Joint Working Group on Labor in Cocoa Farming Secretariat, [aarbib@verite.org](mailto:aarbib@verite.org) email; 001-413-256-8960 fax. All inquires should be made in writing. Please ensure that the name of the agency/company, a point of contact, viable e-mail address, and telephone number are clearly indicated on your submission. Responses to questions will be posted to the following website: [www.verite.org/programs/cocoa](http://www.verite.org/programs/cocoa)

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# **I. BACKGROUND**

## **About the Joint Working Group on Labor in Cocoa Farming**

The Joint Working Group on Labor in Cocoa Farming (JWG) emerged from the stakeholder consultation meeting, Knowledge into Action, convened by Verité on behalf of the global chocolate industry and the governments of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, in May, 2009. A civil society participant first surfaced the idea for such a pioneering inter-governmental group during one of the break-out sessions. This idea was discussed later during the plenary session and met with broad-based support. Under the leadership of both governments, the JWG was convened a few months later in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

The group agreed to address the following core issues:

- Trafficking, Remediation and Prevention
- Impactful Research (including meta-analysis, determining recommended data collection methodologies and frequency, developing and securing agreement on common measurements for progress, etc.)
- Coordination of Remediation efforts
- Other necessary items related to addressing the issue of WFCL, FAL and Trafficking in the cocoa sectors of each country

The group is composed of four representatives from each government, one civil society representative from both Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire and two cocoa / chocolate industry representatives. Funding for the Secretariat and outside technical assistance comes from the cocoa / chocolate industry, while the governments fund the three meetings each year. All meetings are held in West Africa. Verité is the interim Secretariat, but by the end 2011 it is envisioned that the JWG will identify and train a West African Secretariat.

## **About JWG Secretariat Verité**

At the pre-meeting of the Joint Working Group in July 2009, Verité was selected as the interim Secretariat. The Secretariat does not sit on the Joint Working Group and does not possess decision-making authority, but carries out the administrative and management functions for the board and provides technical support where appropriate.

Verité is a US-based nonprofit and award-winning pioneer in social auditing, training, and research. The organization has over a decade of experience working with governments, Fortune 500 corporations (and their local suppliers) through its global network of NGO partners. Verité works in over 60 countries to empower companies, factories, NGOs, governments, and workers to create sustainable workplace practices in factories and on farms. For more information on Verité, go to <http://www.verite.org>.

## **Objectives / Scope of Work of the Meta-Analysis Activity**

The following items describe the scope of work of the Meta-Analysis:

1. Consolidate available survey data from each country since 2001 into a summary / compendium report including bibliography for each country; describing “in laymen’s terms,” the key labor characteristics within the cocoa sector of each country.
2. Describe any trends observed within the data that describe changes in key labor characteristics (such as child labor, worst forms of child labor, forced adult labor and trafficking) from 2000 to the present in each country.
3. Compare / contrast differences in data between countries
4. Based on the information described by the analysis, make informed recommendations regarding the frequency of surveys that is required to capture changes in the labor characteristics of each country’s cocoa sector.
5. Based on the analysis, make informed recommendations regarding best survey methodologies for future survey work.
6. Make recommendations regarding the use of “labor data gathering modules” that could be implemented to collect necessary survey data within other periodic national surveys
7. Describe the value and potential of unique information delivered by a labor survey compared to the data that can be collected by, for example, the community based child labor monitoring systems now being implemented in each country. This will include an overview of current and / or planned community based child labor monitoring systems
8. Compile and define a list of indicators relative to labor practices as used in previous studies. Based on this list, recommend a set of critical indicators and milestones that can describe progress made by the range of remediation programs in place in each country in reducing the incidence of WFCL, FAL and Trafficking in the respective cocoa sectors.
9. The submitted reports will include a commentary on definitions for key indicators and labor practices that have been used in previous surveys.

## **Summary of deliverables**

1. For Côte d’Ivoire Cocoa Sector:
  - a. Analysis of all surveys conducted since 2000;
  - b. Evaluation of data-gathering potential of currently planned child labor monitoring program; and
  - c. Comparison of recommended survey approach relative to child labor monitoring approach in terms of value of information that describes labor characteristics and progress made on reducing / eliminating WFCL, FAL and Trafficking.

2. For Ghana Cocoa Sector:
  - a. Analysis of all surveys conducted since 2000;
  - b. Overview of currently planned child labor monitoring program; and
  - c. Comparison of recommended survey approach relative to child labor monitoring approach in terms of value of information that describes labor characteristics and progress made on reducing / eliminating WFCL, FAL and Trafficking.
3. For both countries (1 report):
  - a. Commentary on suggested critical indicators of progress that most effectively describe progress made towards the reduction / elimination of WFCL, FAL and Trafficking in the cocoa sectors of each country.
4. Each of the above deliverables will be delivered in French and in English.

## **Priorities**

The Joint Working Group seeks to obtain a credible, evidence-based meta-analysis, which is of the highest analytical standards in the field of social research. The JWG expects the meta-analysis to be conducted in a transparent manner. Additionally, the JWG respects the willingness of the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to actively participate throughout this process. The JWG further expects that the governments, as well as all researchers who produced the earlier surveys that will be part of the meta-analysis, will be afforded the utmost respect. It is understood that activities will be conducted in a manner that is constructive and works toward building capacity while serving the best interests of children and laborers in the cocoa sector.

Additional background information on the Joint Working Group on Labor in Cocoa Farming is available at [www.verite.org/programs/cocoa](http://www.verite.org/programs/cocoa) (This site is still under construction and potential applicants are encouraged to write to Allison Arbib at [aarbib@verite.org](mailto:aarbib@verite.org) requesting additional information or reference documents in the interim.)

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION**

**Type of Award Instrument:** Fixed rate contract.

**Initial Award Period:** The JWG anticipates the initial period of performance to consist of a base period from February to May 2010. The absolute start date of activities will be negotiated upon awarding of the Contract Agreement.

**Award Amount:** No specified contract award amount has been set. The budget will be evaluated on the basis of its reasonableness with respect to activities proposed during the initial award period and in comparison with costs for conducting similar activities in the targeted geographic areas. Pre-award costs are not reimbursable.

**Release and Waiver of Liability:** In consideration for the administrative and operational fees paid to any contractor, the contractor must agree to assume all risks and to release in advance and hold harmless and discharge the JWG , its members, and representative groups, as well as the Secretariat (Verité) from any liability and to waive all rights with respect to any and all claims for damages for death, personal injury, or property damage, including but not limited to medical bills, lost wages, pain and suffering, attorney fees, and court costs, which the contractor(s) may have, or which may accrue to any person involved in the administrative or operational aspects of the contractor(s) as a result of their performance of their services pursuant to the applicable Contract Agreement, even though this liability may arise through no fault of the verifiers or the person in question, or from the negligence or carelessness on the part of the person or entities being released.

**Note to Applicants:** Selection of an organization as a potential Contract Agreement recipient does not constitute approval of the Contract Agreement application as submitted. Before the actual Contract Agreement is awarded, the JWG may enter into negotiations about such items as program components, implementation plans, funding level, and administrative systems in place to support the Contract Agreement implementation. If the negotiations do not result in an acceptable submission, the JWG reserves the right to terminate the negotiations and decline to fund the application. In addition, the JWG reserves the right to further negotiate program components after award. Neither the JWG nor Verité will have any responsibility to any submitting organization prior to the signing of a definitive Contract Agreement.

### III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

#### Eligible Applicants

Any international, educational, not-for-profit, or commercial organization(s); universities and/or other research institutions; private development and research agencies; or community-based or public international organization(s) capable of successfully developing and implementing statistical analyses as described herein in the respective countries of Côte d'Ivoire and/or Ghana is eligible to apply. Applications from government or quasi-government agencies will not be considered. An applicant must demonstrate a country presence, independently or through a relationship with another organization(s) with country presence. Preference will be given to a team that is able to operate in both English and French.

Any potential for conflict of interest must be presented and is subject to disqualification from the competitive process. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest that is later determined to exist will result in permanent exclusion from any future awards from the JWG and possible termination of any then existing Contract Agreement.

If two or more applicants, who do not constitute a single legal entity (hereinafter referred to as “Associations”), join in applying for the award, each member of the Association (hereinafter referred to as an “Associate”) must be individually eligible for award. All references to “the

Applicant” refer to Associations, as well as individual applicants. All Associates must sign, and agree to be bound jointly and severally by, the awarded Contract Agreement, and all must designate one Associate as the “Lead.” Any such Association must submit to the JWG, as an attachment to the application, an Association agreement, reflecting an appropriate joint venture, partnership, or other contractual agreement and outlining the deliverables, activities, and corresponding timeline for which each Associate will be responsible. Copies of such agreements will not count toward the page limit.

If any entity identified in the application as an Associate does not sign the Contract Agreement, the Lead must provide, within 30 days of award, either a written subcontract agreement with such entity, acceptable to the JWG in its sole discretion, or an explanation as to why that entity will not be participating in the Contract Agreement. The JWG reserves the right to re-evaluate the award of the Contract Agreement in light of any such change in an entity’s status, and may terminate the award if the JWG deems appropriate.

For the purposes of this proposal and the Contract Agreement award, the Lead will be: 1) the primary point of contact with the JWG and/or the JWG Secretariat Verité to receive and respond to all inquiries, communications, and orders during the contracted activity period; 2) the only entity with authority to receive payment directly from the JWG and/or the JWG Secretariat Verité; 3) responsible for submitting to the JWG all deliverables, including all technical and financial reports related to the award, regardless of which Associate performed the work; 4) the sole entity to request or agree to a revision or amendment of the award or related documents; and 5) responsible for working with the JWG and/or the JWG Secretariat Verité to close out the award activity or its extension. Each Associate is ultimately responsible to the JWG for overall performance under the applicable Contract Agreement, regardless of any assignment of specific tasks, but Associates may agree, among themselves only, to apportion the liability for such performance. Each Associate must comply with all applicable standards and regulations that govern their activities, and is individually subject to audit.

### **Cost Sharing or Matching Funds**

Applicants are not required to share costs or provide matching funds. Applicants are restricted from using funding from other donors or private contributions to cost support this activity.

## **IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

**Application Content:** Applicants must follow the solicitation instructions, fulfill the conditions and requirements contained herein, and supply all information requested. Making false statements within the application to the JWG will disqualify the applicant from consideration. The application will meet the following requirements:

- Title page should include the following information:
  - Lead Organization Name

- Name of Associates and/or Other Local Partners
- Contact Information
- Funds Requested
- Proposed Period of Performance.
- Two-page abstract summarizing the applicant profile information, organizational capabilities, experience, proposed approach/methodology, deliverables, timeline, and funds requested;
- A table of contents listing the application sections and page numbers;
- A project narrative that includes:
  - Understanding of the Issues Surrounding this Meta Analysis;
  - Project Implementation Plan, that includes:
    - A work plan that identifies major project activities, deadlines for completing the activities, and person(s) or institutions(s) responsible for completing activities;
  - Organizational Capability / Experience;
  - Staff Qualifications; and
  - Budget Narrative and Budget Forms.
- Proposals must be submitted in English in an MS Word document;
- Budget figures must be expressed in U.S. dollars;
- Project narratives may not exceed 25 single-sided (8.5” x 11”), double-spaced pages, using a 10-12 point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins;
- The appendix has a specific page limit that must be adhered to; and
- Each application must include the required sections listed below.

**Application Submission Dates, Times, and Email Address:** Proposals must be submitted electronically and received by the JWG Secretariat, Verité, on or before January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010, 4:59: p.m. eastern time/ USA. The JWG will rely on the date and time stamp that is placed on incoming e-mails as registered via the Internet. Due to size of documents, applicants may want to consider placing all application-related documents into one or two zipped files before attaching and transmitting the e-mail to Verité. Please submit e-mail with attachments (i.e., application, appendices, and any other application-related documents), to: Allison Arbib, Verité/Secretariat, [aarbib@verite.org](mailto:aarbib@verite.org).

## **Section 1 - Abstract**

The abstract is limited to two (2) pages. It should provide a summary of the applicant's capabilities, experience, approach to conducting activities, timeline of deliverables, and expected cost. No confidential information should be included.

## **Section 2 – Understanding of the Issues Surrounding Cocoa in Côte d’Ivoire and/or Ghana**

## **Section 3 – Project Implementation Plan**

The applicant should specify the methodology and approach to be undertaken by the applicant and local partners to complete the meta-analysis activity.

## **Section 4 - Organizational Capability**

Applications should include a clear description of the applicant, its Associates, and/or local partner's including an Organigram of the project structure. A detailed description of previous experience conducting meta-analysis including:

1. The organization and/or donor for whom the work was performed;
2. A contact person in that organization with his/her current phone number;
3. The dollar value of the grant, contract, or Cooperative Agreement for the project;
4. A brief summary of work performed that is related to those required under this solicitation;
5. The time frame and professional effort involved in the project; and
6. A brief summary of accomplishments.
7. The ability of the applicant to work in English and French.

It should be noted that the many of the surveys that will form the basis of the meta-analysis were conducted in either English or French. The JWG will not pay to have these surveys translated for use by project awardees.

This information on previous grants, Cooperative Agreements, and contracts held by the applicant must be provided in the appendices and will not count toward the maximum page requirement. The JWG reserves the right to contact the organizations listed and use the information provided in evaluating applications.

The narrative should include a description detailing the experience and background of the Lead organization in Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, and/or in the West Africa region. If the Lead organization does not have country presence and will be working with Associates and/or local partners, a clear description must be provided regarding the Associates and/or local partner's capacity and

experience in the skills required to perform the tasks under this solicitation, language capabilities, and knowledge of cocoa and the geographic areas of study.

The technical skills and capabilities sought include but are not limited to:

- Experience in performing meta-analysis or similar reviews of complex data sets that describe social / labor practices within a distinct population.
- Documentation of the applicant's (and partners) legal status should be included within the appendices.

## **Section 5 – Qualifications of Key Staff**

A summary paragraph describing the qualifications, skills, and experience of the proposed project director, primary investigators(s), and other key staff to ensure that project activities are accomplished with quality and in a timely manner should be provided.

A resume, not to exceed two (2) pages, must be included for all proposed key staff positions, such as the Project Director, primary statisticians, senior/technical managers, field coordinators, and technical consultants for the Lead organization, Associates, and/or local partnering organization.

If an individual for the senior level positions has not been identified, the applicant must submit a one-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a resume. If not a current employee of the Lead organization, Associate, or local partnering organization, a letter certifying availability to start performing duties within 15 days of contract award is required.

## **Section 6 - Budget**

The JWG anticipates awarding flat rate comprehensive, expenses inclusive contract(s) to successful applicant(s). Awards will be made to one or more qualified consultants pursuant to a definitive Contract Agreement. Preference will be given to a “general contractor model” working with various entities on the ground in the targeted geographic areas. However, this preference does not preclude using one general contractor to conduct research activities in each respective country or from local entities responding to this RFP.

The proposal must include the following and the stated page limits must be adhered to:

1. **Summary Budget**– the budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, in U.S. dollars, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories, as applicable: (a) Personnel; (b) Fringe Benefits; (c) Travel; (d) Equipment; (e) Supplies; (f) Contractual; (g) Consultant Fees; (h) Other Direct Costs; (i) Total Direct Charges

[sum of (a) through (h)]; (j) Indirect Charges; and (k) Totals. **The summary budget cannot exceed one (1) page in length.**

2. **Line-Item Budget** – the line-item budget must provide sufficient information for each summary category to justify the inclusion and reasonableness of the costs presented. **The line-item budget cannot exceed three (3) pages in length, and must be articulated as follows:**
  - a. *Personnel* – Identify staffing requirements by each position title and a brief description of duties. List total salary/wages to be paid for each position, percentage of overall time, and number of days devoted to project.
  - b. *Fringe Benefits* – State benefit costs separately from salary costs and explain how benefits are computed for each category of employee. Specify the type and rate.
  - c. *Travel* – Identify staff and participant travel, including: international airfare; in-country travel; domestic travel in the U.S.; and per diem/maintenance (includes lodging, meals, and incidentals for both participant and staff travel). For purposes of budgeting, please note that rates of maximum allowance for foreign travel are available at: [www.policyworks.gov](http://www.policyworks.gov). Per Diem rates may not exceed the published U.S. allowance rates, which the JWG is adhering to, but institutions do have the option of using lower per diem rates.
  - d. *Equipment* – Provide justification for any equipment purchase/rental, defined as tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of USD 1,000 or more.
  - e. *Supplies* – List items separately using unit costs (and the percentage of each unit cost being charged to the grant) for photocopying, postage, telephone/fax, printing, office supplies, and equipment not subject to item (d).
  - f. *Contractual* – For each subcontract, provide a detailed line-item breakdown explaining specific services. In the subcontract budgets, provide the same level of detail for personnel, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, equipment, and direct and indirect costs required of the primary applicant.
  - g. *Consultant Fees* – If consultants will be used in the grant, provide all costs related to their activities, including travel and per diem costs.
  - h. *Other Direct Costs* – These will vary depending on the nature of the proposed activities. Identify each cost and provide justification.
  - i. *Indirect Charges* – If your organization has an indirect cost rate agreement with a government entity, include a copy as an addendum to the budget, and indicate how the rate is applied. A description of the costs included within the indirect charges should be provided.
3. **Budget Narrative** – A budget narrative must accompany the line-item budget to sufficiently justify each identified cost. Also, a description of the cost accounting system used by the applicant and partners must be included. **The budget narrative must not exceed three (3) pages.**
4. **Most recent audit** – A copy of the applicant’s (and partners) most recent financial audit should be included within the appendices. If no financial audit has been conducted, this

should be noted, with a description of the steps to be taken by the Lead organization to safeguard the expenditures of contract award funds.

Contract agreement funds may not be encumbered/obligated by the contractor before or after the period of performance. Encumbrances/obligations outstanding as of the end of the Contract Agreement period may be liquidated (paid out) after the end of the Contract Agreement period. Such encumbrances/obligations may involve only specified commitments for which a need existed during the Contract Agreement period and that are supported by approved contracts, subcontracts, purchase orders, requisitions, invoices, bills, or other evidence of liability consistent with the applicant's purchasing procedures and incurred within the Contract Agreement period. All encumbrances/obligations incurred during the Contract Agreement period must be liquidated within 60 calendar days after the end of the Contract Agreement period, unless a longer period of time is granted by the JWG, in its sole discretion.

## V. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA

This section identifies and describes the criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals for the JWG research activities covered by this RFP on the basis of 100 points.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Applicants should note that the following criteria: 1) serve as a standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, and 2) serve to identify the significant matters that should be addressed in all proposals. The JWG will award grants to the applicants whose offers represent to the JWG the best value on the basis of technical merit and quality.

Each application will be evaluated by selected representatives of the JWG and further reviewed and agreed to by the full JWG. The evaluation criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this RFP.

- **Understanding of the Issues (10 points):** This section should demonstrate the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding meta-analysis of studies to document and report on WFCL, FAL and Trafficking in the cocoa supply chain in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, as well as relevance to the scope of work described in this RFP.

**Methodology / Approach for Meta-Analysis Activities (30 points):** Applicants should describe what they propose to do and how they will do it. The proposed activities must directly support accomplishing all areas within the Scope of Work.

**Organizational Capability / Experience (30 points):** Applicants should demonstrate their ability to develop and implement programs in the targeted geographic area(s). Applicants must demonstrate how their resources, capabilities, and experience will enable them to achieve the stated scope of work within the designated timeframe. Team should have bilingual competencies or local partners.

**Qualifications of Key Staff (20 points):** The JWG will consider the appropriateness of the selected project director, in view of the role and responsibility that person will play in guiding the process from implementation through to completion, and the qualifications of principal investigator(s) and other senior / technical managers, field coordinators, and consultants. Position descriptions submitted in lieu of the resume will be reviewed for the appropriateness of the qualifications and skills identified. Also, the JWG will consider the ability of the applicant to ensure a timely start-up of activities following contract award.

**Summary and Line-Item Budgets, and Budget Narrative (10 points):** Costs will be evaluated for realism, control practices, and efficiency. The JWG must determine that the costs paid for this award are reasonable and will be allocated to the proposed project activities. This will consist of a review of the budgets and narrative to determine if the overall costs are realistic for the work to be performed, if the costs reflect the applicant's understanding of the allowable cost principles established by universally accepted cost accounting standards and if the costs are consistent with the program narrative.

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

**Award Notices:** The contract award shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the JWG Secretariat, Verité, on behalf of the JWG. Verité is the JWG official Secretariat, and is delegated the authority by the JWG to write, award, and administer contracts. The JWG's legal status is pending and Verité will act on its behalf in the interim. The contract award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient through either mail or facsimile transmission. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing. Following notice of award, successful applicants must return a signed copy of the Contract Agreement to Verité.

**Anticipated Time to Award:** Applicants should expect to be notified of the status of their submitted proposal within 30 days after the submission deadline. Following this initial notification, Verité staff will provide information at the point of notification about the requirements for the contract award, which may include revisions to the activities proposed. The JWG reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the process.

Applicants should be aware that there will be a short time span between contract award and expected start-up of activities. Successful applicants can expect an expedited contract award within 45 days after the JWG approves their application.

The top applicants may be requested to answer specific questions from selected members of the JWG that may include an overview of the approach to achieving the scope of work activities, the applicant's experience and capabilities, and qualifications of their team to perform activities. The

successful applicant(s) will be provided an orientation to information and groups operating in each country in order to assist with start-up and ensure quality of the meta-analysis.

Applicants selected for an award must meet the following reporting and policy requirements:

- **Reporting Requirements:** Specific final and interim reporting requirements will be determined as part of the award evaluation process and will occur as a result of further discussion between the applicant and representatives of the JWG.
- **Policy Requirements:** Contractors are required to agree to the following special conditions prior to a grant being awarded:
  - Certification that applicant has no pre-existing conflict of interest or will become engaged in any activities that would constitute such.

## VII. DISCLAIMER

Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the JWG, nor does it commit the JWG to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the JWG reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the JWG has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the JWG.

In all events, the terms and conditions of an awarded Contract Agreement will apply following signature by the parties and this RFP will have no further application.