Proposal to Support

USAID | Pakistan

Empowering Pakistan: Entrepreneurs (EPE) Activity
Request for Task Order Proposal (RFTOP) No. 391-RFTOP-09-004

Technical Proposal
USAID | Pakistan

Empowering Pakistan: Entrepreneurs (EPE) Activity

No. 391-RFTOP-09-004

May 4, 2010

Presented by
Sahara Development Group
Economic Services | South Central Asia

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Submitted To:
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May 4, 2010

Luis F. Garcia
A&A Specialist
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RE: SOLICITATION NO.: No. 391-RFTOP-09-004, Empowering Pakistan: Entrepreneurs

Dear Mr. Garcia:

The Sahara Development Group is pleased to submit our proposal to provide a program to empower female entrepreneurs in Pakistan to the US Agency for International Development. We believe that our submission meets all of the requirements of the request, and demonstrates that the Sahara Development Group team possesses the required level of skill and experience to perform the Statement of Work (SOW).

We certify that no USAID employee has recommended an individual for use under the proposed Task Order who was not initially located and identified by Sahara Development Group or our Subcontracting Team.

We are excited by the prospect of working with you, and we hope our proposal conveys our enthusiastic commitment to provide distinctive client service and highly specialized talent to this project. Our submission consists of our technical proposal and cost proposal sent electronically via email and submitted hard copy.

We look forward to working with you to improve the lives of the citizens of Pakistan. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact us at +1.858.232.7961. Should you have any contractual questions, please contact Yvonne Chen at +1.917.608.1587. Budget questions should be directed to Ridhima Kapur at +1.202.615.4471.

Sincerely,

Lauren Weir, Co-Director          Gillian Bath, Co-Director
Sahara Development Group          Sahara Development Group
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1.0 Executive Summary

Located in Southern Asia and bordering the Arabian Sea, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is home to 174,578,558 people. The World Bank classifies Pakistan as a “low-middle-income” country for its $446.1 billion GDP (PPP) and approximately 24% poverty level. In the past two years, Pakistan’s economic growth has slowed to 2 percent, causing poverty levels to rise and concerns about inflation to escalate. One factor of this decline is the low trade ratio marked by shrinking exports and imports. Additional concerns revolve around labor. The median age of Pakistan is 20.8 years, meaning that there are thousands of young people looking for a job. Within that age group and across all age groups, women face a particular challenge for finding employment, earning an income, and fighting off poverty. Pakistani women are among the most vulnerable and marginalized groups within the poor and near poor populations of rural and peri-urban areas. The reasons for this are manifold, including religious and cultural restraints on movement and education, restrictions on ownership and access to resources and assets, little access to credit, and limited economic options.

Figure 1: Project Goal, Components and Objectives

The Empowering Pakistan: Entrepreneurs (EPE) Request for Proposals (RFP) identifies four objectives and three components that, when met, will result in the increased incomes of 120,000 mostly women small- and medium-entrepreneurs in 20 districts in Pakistan. The Sahara Development Group’s (SDG) approach for implementing EPE reflects Pakistan’s unique context and requirements, as well as SDG’s understanding of EPE’s design and developmental

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1 World Bank, DB, 10
2 CIA World Factbook
3 CIA World Factbook
4 PEPA, 9
5 PEPA, 9
6 CIA World Factbook
objectives. It also reflects the SDG team’s lessons learned from implementing broad-based economic, social and community development programs around the world, in South Central Asia and particularly in Pakistan.

The SDG approach advocates focusing on the vibrant existing textile sector of the Pakistani export economy. Traditionally, Pakistan’s exports include textiles, such as garments, bed linens, cotton cloth, and yarn; rice; leather goods; sports goods; manufactures and chemicals; and carpets and rugs. Textiles, in particular, are a central source of Pakistan’s export earnings. Though a great many of textile exports are produced by females, these same females are often excluded from profitable engagement with the market through restricted access to credit, opportunities and the value chain. The SDG approach to improving incomes of these entrepreneurs focuses on impacts to both enabling structures and individual capabilities through project drivers. Specifically, SDG’s program design arranges the three USAID defined components to align with the project objectives. Most importantly, SDG’s program uses its experience, cultural understanding and pre-existing relationships in Pakistan to generate momentum and local buy-in to program activities.

The SDG Staffing Plan recognizes the need for both initiative and oversight, maximizes the use of highly-qualified local staff for the Chief of Party and two Deputy-Chiefs of Party, and emphasizes a representative, inclusive approach to program implementation.

The mobilization plan and first-year work plan emphasize the importance of accurate Needs- and Capability-Assessments, while beginning Life-Skills Training and community-level events early to demonstrate tangible ‘quick-wins’ to beneficiaries.

SDG’s budget maximizes return on investment, with an overall program value of nearly 34M USD, nearly 80% of which is in direct program cost and cost share. The full, detailed budget is included with the Cost Proposal and details how funding will be allocated for project objectives, activities, supplies, and special programs.

2.0 Technical Approach

2.1 Pakistan’s Development Context

Decades of conflict perpetuated by regional insecurity, political instability and piecemeal economic reform has adversely affected the Pakistani economy. The country has not benefited from the global market expansion that has buoyed its larger neighbor India over the last decade. However, recent commitments from donors hold the promise to set the country on a rapid, inclusive, and sustainable growth path. A critical element to establishing both economic and political security within Pakistan is to empower underrepresented entrepreneurs, improve service delivery to enterprises and communities, facilitate local development initiatives, and address business environment constraints that disproportionately affect smaller enterprises, particularly women in rural and peri-urban areas.

7 CIA World Factbook
8 CIA World Factbook
Pakistani women are among the most vulnerable and marginalized groups within the poor and near-poor populations of rural and peri-urban areas. The reasons for this are manifold, including religious and cultural restraints on movement and education, restrictions on ownership and access to resources and assets, little access to credit, and limited economic options. The result of these obstacles is “perpetual lack of access…the cycle of poverty and continuous socio-economic marginalization.” According to the USAID-sponsored Pakistan Economic Performance Assessment, “there is a large gender gap in labor force participation, exacerbated by lower access to education among women.” Recent statistics show that the literacy rate among women is 40% with a school enrollment rate for females of 57%. Labor statistics are comparably low. In 2008, the labor force participation for women was 19.6%, aggregated across Pakistan. Local rates differed significantly, from “22.8% in Punjab to 10.3% in Balochistan and just 8.4% for rural households.”

The lack of formal employment and economic opportunities is not a reflection of lack of skills, although education is very limited for women; rather, many women in rural and peri-urban areas possess certain skills that can be easily developed, furthered, and improved so as to produce highly marketable goods. Currently there is a small network for these types of goods with great potential to be expanded and organized for competition both nationally in Pakistan and in the international market. These goods include Pakistani crafts such as bangles, jewelry, embellished garments, hand spun cotton, wool products, agricultural goods, and others. In light of the cultural and religious restraints on women’s activities as well as women’s production potential, microenterprises have become a central method for Pakistani women to earn an income. Though it may sound straightforward, enabling and empowering women to lead a microenterprise successfully is riddled with challenges. “Rural and peri-urban poor entrepreneurs, especially women in Pakistan, generally remain trapped in a low value-added vicious cycle, producing cheap products for local markets, and earning small amounts of money for subsistence living.” These women have little formal education (numeracy and literacy), little knowledge or awareness of how markets work and are taken advantage of by more mobile intermediaries. Accordingly, women require not only basic education but also lessons related to market mechanisms, appropriate credit products, and general business planning to positively influence their incomes.

The Government of Pakistan has identified economic stimulus and growth as one of its key priorities and the U.S. Government has supported and responded to that by pledging funds and technical assistance to the country. USG funding is allocated to local agencies, non-profit organizations, and US-based organizations. USAID estimates that, currently, such organizations are “expanding the incomes of approximately 40,000 microentrepreneurs”. Past USAID funds have been used for projects such as “From Behind the Veil” and to fund activities through

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9 EPE RFA
10 PEPA, 9
11 CIA World Factbook.
12 PEPA, 31.
13 EPE RFA
14 USAID: Overview of Pakistan
15 EPE RFA
MEDA, Kaarvan Crafts Foundation, Hawwa Associations, Sungi Development Foundation, BEHBUD Pakistan, and the Enterprise and Career Development Institute.\textsuperscript{16}

Pakistan now has the opportunity to leverage the diverse skills of its female population, as well as donor and NGO commitments to address these development constraints. Realizing this potential requires adopting a new development approach that is at the heart of the EPE program. EPE’s design recognizes that a holistic, flexible and integrated approach is required to achieve the goal of market-oriented, sustainable and inclusive growth that contributes to poverty-reduction and gender and social equality.

\section*{2.2 Sahara Development Group’s General Approach to Implementing EPE}

The Sahara Development Group’s approach for implementing EPE reflects SDG’s understanding of Pakistan’s unique context and requirements, as well as EPE’s design and developmental objectives. It also reflects our team’s lessons learned from implementing broad-based economic, social and community development programs around the world, particularly in Pakistan.

SDG will continue to expand upon the efforts of existing projects and efforts to expand access to markets for women. This project is particularly timely as demand for “hand-made, local, organic” products is on the rise globally.\textsuperscript{17} SDG is focused on strengthening the microenterprise sector for women across the value chain. Women will be provided with skills and business training to enhance and empower their capability to produce goods of high demand and effectively manage their businesses. The approach also strengthens linkages between providers, producers, distributors, and markets. Intermediary entities, such as microfinance institutions and non-governmental organizations, will also be targeted through efforts at expanding their capacity and experience to provide necessary, effective, and accessible support and assistance to microentrepreneurs and microenterprises. Lastly, an Industry Working Group (IWG) will provide a forum for all parties to meet and coordinate their efforts and to lobby on behalf of thousands of women microentrepreneurs.

\textsuperscript{16} EPE RFA
\textsuperscript{17} EPE RFA
Specifically, our project arranges the three USAID defined components to align with the project objectives. Component One includes activities to support and strengthen the capacity of local partners to undertake, deliver, and implement value chain interventions, such as analysis, product development, skills development, training, and development of market linkages; and support entrepreneurship through training and improving opportunities for microenterprises and women-led small business clusters. Component Two will create a more supportive enabling environment that encourages growth in the microenterprise sector by facilitating the development of service providers, improved access to finance for women, establishing a network/association of non-profit, public, and private organizations, working with organizations to develop a sector strategy and improving women’s mobility to access services. Component Three will develop end markets for microenterprise products by strengthening *Aik Hunar Aik Nagar (AHAN)* as a results-driven relationship manager that facilitates effectively between microentrepreneurs and domestic and international markets.

Our approach amalgamates these three components with the four defined objectives by USAID to construct our strategy and organization. The objectives are arranged in the following table:
As we implement this approach, we will be guided by three cross-cutting themes that will inform the entirety of our work: gender, sustainability, and flexibility of scale. First, we have integrated specific gender and social inclusion activities in our approach, in line with EPE’s priorities to focus on female entrepreneurs. Furthermore, our gender sensitive approach spans the selection of beneficiaries and grantees, stakeholder and community outreach activities, value chain selection, staffing, and impact evaluation. Second, our approach is built to support long-term sustainability. To ensure sustainability SDG will identify opportunities to leverage EPE resources with partnerships in the Industry Working Groups and Global Development Alliances (GDA) in all objectives of the project. Specifically related to the training efforts, we will ensure a level of ownership is obtained by the local populations. Third, our approach incorporates elements of flexibility. From previous experiences working in Pakistan, SDG understands the need for flexibility in a project of this size. SDG’s sustainable approach integrates many local groups and businesses, which will allow our project to appropriately use an “accordion effect” to quickly scale up and down.
The districts identified in Annex F represent the districts targeted for EPE. These include the urban districts surrounding Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, and the peri-urban areas of Hyderabad and Faisalbad. These districts represent the required 20 districts for EPE activities.

As summarized in Figure 4 our implementation approach is based on the integration of the enabling agents to support growth—resources, technology, knowledge and skills, micro enterprise support networks—with the defined growth in terms of income and product. These enabling agents will generate improved economic outcomes for entrepreneurs, employees, and households, whether they participate in the formal economy, operate informally, or even subsist outside the monetized economy. Our work with enabling structures will be directly targeted at the same beneficiary populations. This integration of activities and building of cross-component linkages both reduces the possibility for “stove-piping” and leads to greater sustainable impact.
2.3 **Objective 1: Increase the Capacity and Capabilities of Intermediaries**

SDG proposes a three-phased model to increase the capacity and capability of private & public-sector intermediaries to support microentrepreneurs and the ability of these intermediaries to access market opportunities. This approach includes conducting analyses, building a supportive infrastructure, and facilitating partnerships.

The activities under this objective address aspects of all three components as identified by USAID. The first component, to strengthen lead institutions, is executed in this objective by conducting participatory needs assessment of partner organizations and building their capacity. The second component, which aims to support the small enterprise enabling environment, is supported by various support activities around the value chain and creating a manual for disbursement of the Innovation Support Fund. The third component, which focuses on domestic and international market development, is supported by the creation of a web portal that links entrepreneurs with buyers.

**Figure 5: Objective 1 Phases**

![Objective 1 Phases Diagram]

### 2.3.1 Conduct Analysis

Before the project can provide any valuable support to its beneficiaries, a strong understanding of the current environment is critical. In order to build this understanding, the project team will undertake two assessments in sequence, a Partner Assessment and Selection followed by a Value Chain Analyses.

**Activity 1: Partner Assessment and Selection**

The project team will identify lead supporting organizations from groups of local, national and international NGOs (such as Kaarvan Crafts Foundation, Sungi Development Foundation, and BEHBUD Pakistan) and public sector small industries centers sponsored by provincial governments (such as Enterprise and Career Development Institute and Mennonite Economic Development Associates).

To conduct the assessment, the project team will conduct interviews with the leadership of these organization as well as employees who work with the microentrepreneurs directly. This data shall be used to prepare an assessment of each of the organizations. These assessments shall be presented to key stakeholders of these organizations in a participatory fashion as a starting point for further discussion and the production of a SWOT\(^\text{18}\) for each lead organization. These final assessments will be prepared no later than three months after the project start up.

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\(^{18}\) SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is a strategic planning method used to evaluate business or project ventures.
On the basis of these final assessments, five intermediary organizations in each province will be selected as key partners for the EPE project. The project team will then work closely with the organization to prepare more detailed needs assessment of the scope of assistance required from the EPE project. Following this, SDG and the partner organization will develop a firm MOU to promote and support micro- and small-enterprises and increases their access to markets.

### Activity 2: Value Chain Analyses

For the purpose of the EPE project, SDG believes it is more effective to focus on one primary sector and provide support to small microentrepreneurs, especially women, along the defined value chain. Not only is the textile industry Pakistan’s largest export industry, but it also has the highest engagement of women. Also, there are greater resources, better understanding and more willingness at the government level to support the further growth of this sector.

To further refine the support offered, SDG and its intermediary partners will identify ten key products within the textile sector and conduct value chain analyses to understand the needs of suppliers (cotton growers, shepherds etc.), manufacturers (those involved in spinning, weaving, knitting, dyeing, garment makers, designers), distributors (logistics services, clearing houses, export houses) and buyers (local, regional and international retailers). These analyses will focus particularly on the needs of the micro and small-sized actors in the value chain. The analyses will be completed six months after the launch of EPE.

By working together with the intermediary organizations on the value chain analyses, SDG will help build the capacity of the organization to conduct such assessments on their own.

#### 2.3.2 Build Support Infrastructure

Once a clear understanding of the landscape and market needs have been established, SDG can institute an appropriate support infrastructure. SDG proposes three main aspects for this support infrastructure including value chain development programs, innovation support funds, and the establishment of a dynamic web portal.

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<th><strong>Figure 6: SDG Partner Institutions</strong></th>
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**Activity 1: Value Chain Development Programs**

A primary outcome of the value chain analyses conducted in Phase 1 is to set up training programs for actors along the value chains that focus on increasing the access to market for micro and small women entrepreneurs. Within 18 months, SDG plans to have established three such training programs, together with the support of five intermediary partner organizations and identified suitable industry experts to provide training. SDG will work closely with these organizations to run the value chain training programs. By the end of the project, SDG will have supported 120,000 micro and small entrepreneurs through at least 10 successfully implemented value chain development programs.

In order to facilitate better customer orientation towards the beneficiaries, SDG will provide technical assistance with training support in the twenty districts identified by USAID. SDG will provide six trainers to work with each partner intermediary for a year until the establishment of the first training programs. These trainers will be industry experts in specific value chain activities and will train intermediary staff to serve as incubators and value chain consultants for microentrepreneurs.

**Activity 2: Innovation Support Fund**

Intermediaries with successfully trained staff will be granted access to the Innovation Support Fund, set up through EPE using earmarked $8 million. In order to ensure fair distribution of these funds, SDG will develop a manual for the intermediaries, defining the process of allocation and the criteria for selection of fund beneficiaries. This manual will be prepared within four months of project launch.

**Activity 3: Establishment of Web portal**

In conjunction with Innovation Support Fund, SDG will also establish a wider infrastructure of support for its intermediary partners. This infrastructure will be largely web-based and centered on a dynamic web portal which links buyers with sellers and provides real-time updates about producers, the products, market opportunities and relevant trade fairs.

The web portal will be designed along the lines of the Trade and Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) website, but specifically focused on the textile sector and micro- and small-level producers (particularly women). It will include a database of international wholesalers and local micro- and small-entrepreneurs operating in this sector. Data will be obtained from the federal, provincial and local governments, NGOs and private companies engaged in the Pakistani textile sector such as the TDAP.

SDG will contract the building and maintenance of the web portal to a suitable local organization. Within five months of project launch, SDG will define the requirements of the partner, publish a request for services, and interview at least three potential partners.

SDG will also work closely with its intermediary partners to explore different options for disseminating market information to micro- and small-entrepreneurs, particularly women who have mobility constraints. Possible solutions could include using local NGO offices, local TDAP
offices, provincial and national rural support programs and mobile phone access.

2.3.3 Facilitate Partnerships

Once the support infrastructure is in place, the focus will turn towards developing and maintaining suitable partnerships to ensure its continued effectiveness. Some examples of such initiatives include:

- **EPE-Government Relations:** SDG will also facilitate partnerships between the intermediary organizations and various Pakistani government agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Textile, etc. Within three months of the partner identification, SDG will initiate weekly meetings to define the scope and strategic objectives of these partnerships.

- **EPE-Beneficiary Relations:** In order to increase the intermediary organizations customer service orientation, SDG will require them to appoint Relationship Managers within the first year to facilitate the interaction between individual entrepreneurs and the intermediary. These Relationship Managers can identify the nature and level of support required by each entrepreneur, and assist them to enroll for the various training programs. These Relationship Managers should be engaged within the first year of the project.

- **EPE-Buyer Relations:** Concurrent with the development of the web portal, SDG will also help organize a Lead Cultivation Committee that just works towards sourcing new buyer leads (from international commercial merchants) and establishing relationships with such organizations. This Committee will initiate meetings with large commercial buyers and identify ways for them to engage with the project.

- **Stakeholder Communications:** SDG will also disseminate project information to the stakeholders on a regular basis, through the preparation and publishing of quarterly reports with project updates, industry development and other news.

2.4 Objective 2: Enable 120,000 Microentrepreneurs to Increase Production and Sales

The EPE project will enable 120,000 predominantly female microentrepreneurs to develop demand-driven products and services, as a means to help them sell more products in higher value-added domestic and international markets. This objective is an essential element to the success of the EPE project because it fulfills the link between the strengthened intermediary organizations, value chain elements, and increased incomes for the beneficiaries. Furthermore, this objective focuses directly on the microentrepreneurs to expand their technical and business skills and develop their direct networks with local, domestic, and international markets.

This objective addresses aspects of all three components as identified by USAID. The first component, addressing capacity of local partners, is executed in this objective through the increased development of demand-driven products, skills development training, and the development and strengthening of market linkages and networks. The second component aims
to strengthen and expand the supporting environment for microenterprise; this is attained in this area through the development and strengthening of service providers. The third component, which focuses on end markets and the role of AHAN, is included in this objective through activities aimed at increasing the experience and use of AHAN through microentrepreneurs’ reliance upon the network.

**Figure 7: Objective 2 Cycle**

This objective reflects the basic cycle of production for the targeted microentrepreneurs. It is difficult to identify the beginning or the result of any of these stages in isolation, as each one feeds into the next, as shown in Figure X. SDG aims at getting this cycle started by providing skills training as well as inputs and resources.

Overall, this objective builds upon and responds to findings from the initial Needs Assessment, Market Study, and Value Chain Analyses which identified key challenges for microentrepreneurs and especially women. As such, SDG has designed the schedule of activities to overcome these challenges through trainings, technical inputs and support, and linkages with markets and the AHAN network. The six result areas can be recognized as the identification of products and services, expansion and development of technical skills, expansion of business skills, providing necessary inputs, expanding linkages with markets, and increasing interaction with AHAN.

### 2.4.1 Identification of Products

These activities comprise mostly of assessments and evaluations to determine high-demand products in local craft markets and bazaars, domestic markets, and international markets, as well as to gauge the current skill levels and expertise of the beneficiaries. With the knowledge from surveys and analyses conducted prior to and at the start of the project, SDG has identified textiles such as garments, bed linens, cotton cloth, and yarn, as the most demand-driven products. These products will be the focus of skills training and marketing with the microentrepreneurs. In addition to initial market chain research, activities related to this area include efforts to connect the beneficiaries to local wholesalers and retailers, hold focus groups, and network with intermediaries.

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Activity 1: Build Relationships with Wholesalers

SDG will develop stronger relations with five to seven local wholesalers in each district, two local markets in each village, and five local retail networks by the sixth month of the project through interviews, meetings and project awareness in the communities.

Activity 2: Focus Groups

SDG will hold three individual and one combined focus groups in each village or district to utilize the experiences of women entrepreneurs, local businessmen, and local officials by the fifth month of the project.

Activity 3: Build Relationships with Intermediaries

SDG will develop stronger relations with previously identified intermediaries in non-profit, private, and public sectors from Objective 1 to identify demand and potential markets through increased communication, access, networking, and training throughout year one. Individuals will be identified in each district that can provide experience, insight, and opinion on the trends of local and domestic markets as well as international markets. These connections will also be utilized as initial market resources and sales opportunities.

Activity 4: Build Relationships with AHAN

SDG will develop stronger relations with AHAN as a marketing agency and resource through increased interactions with AHAN, utilization of AHAN services, and training in the last quarter of year one and the first quarter of year two.

2.4.2 Expansion and Development of Technical Skills

The activities in this section are the crux of this objective. SDG will provide the identified beneficiaries with training and technical support to expand their skills sets to produce high quality, demand-driven products based on market conditions; market these goods for sale locally, throughout Pakistan, and internationally; and to interact with and understand market and demand dynamics. This task will yield sustainable results for the direct beneficiaries, their families, and their communities. These skills can be easily transferred and shared among beneficiaries, and adopted by partner organizations for future training and technical services.

Activity 1: Evaluate Skills and Establish Working Groups

SDG will evaluate the current skills of beneficiaries through review of previously made products and interviews. SDG will then establish training and working groups based on geographic location and technical sector of expertise within textiles. Each working group will focus on at least one specific community and establish a training center, which may also be used as an office to ensure easy access for women.


**Activity 2: Building a Training Environment**

Each working group – in conjunction with project staff and the local partner NGO – will be responsible for creating a project plan to encompass a timeline for the securing of appropriate facilities and materials for training. SDG will monitor progress initially with weekly meetings. Simultaneously, the working groups will establish a relevant curriculum based on the products in the particular area.

### 2.4.3 Expansion of Business Skills

The focus of this area is to expand the ability of the targeted microentrepreneurs to effectively establish and manage their businesses. Many microentrepreneurs, and especially women, in Pakistan do not have professional training, including accounting and finances, business administration, and marketing, that is essential for running a business. Women are at an especial disadvantage as millions of them, particularly older generations, do not have any education in literacy or numeracy. The activities for this sub-objective attempt to rectify that situation for the long-term by teaching the beneficiaries to write their name, their village’s name, and the name of their products and to do basic addition and subtraction for purchasing supplies and selling their goods. Such skills, in addition to business, finance, and management skills, are also critical to business expansion for these entrepreneurs as their sales and incomes increase and they have the opportunity to expand their production.

**Activity 1: Establish Curricula**

SDG will develop the curricula for these trainings, including topics like literacy and numeracy, finance and accounting, business management and marketing.

**Activity 2: Work with Training Working Groups to Launch Learning**

SDG will teach the curriculum to the working groups defined in 2.4.2 Activity 1, and establish a process similar to “training of trainers” to ensure sustainability. Following these initial trainings, the working group member will host these training at the identified location three times per week for six months.

### 2.4.4 Provide Necessary Inputs—Financial and Materials

These activities aim to rectify the lack of access to necessary resources and inputs, including money and production materials, for many microentrepreneurs and especially women. The long-term goal of EPE is to enable and build the capacity of local NGOs and MFIs to take over these activities and continue to link entrepreneurs and producers with supplies and funding.

**Activity 1: Provide Compensation for Training**

For the three months of technical training and the six months of business training, EPE will cover the direct costs associated with training, including travel, meals and a small honorarium to defray lost production time.
Activity 2: Production Materials

EPE will also provide production materials to facilitate the technical training for three months and to supply increased production during the six months of business training. The production materials will be provided in standard amounts for all beneficiaries based on a determination of efficiency and demand at the end of the technical training. At the end of this nine month period, the local NGOs, MFIs, value chain suppliers, and the industry working group will continue to supply necessary credit and financial support and production materials for the duration of the project and beyond.

2.4.5 Increase the Linkages and Access to Markets

These activities are necessary supplements to the technical and business trainings, as the beneficiaries will have products to be sold that are high-quality and demand-driven and will have the knowledge to do sell. Activities in this objective aim at strengthening linkages established in Objective 1 from the entrepreneur side. These entrepreneurs can then market and sell their products successfully in local markets and bazaars, domestic markets and bazaars, and international markets. In addition, project staff will work with local NGOs, the IWG and beneficiaries to develop and implement a branding and marketing strategy.

Activity 1: Identify Domestic Markets

SDG will identify higher value-added markets domestically by the end of the first quarter through market analyses, value chain analyses, needs assessments and information from interviews and focus groups conducted under 2.4.1.

Activity 2: Identify International Markets

SDG will identify higher value-added markets internationally by the end of the second quarter through market analyses, value chain analyses, needs assessments and information from interviews and focus groups conducted under 2.4.1. SDG will create identifiable links by the end of year one.

2.4.6 Increase Interaction with AHAN

SDG will strengthen and develop the AHAN network from the beneficiary, entrepreneur side, to be a more effective broker, market, and resource for thousands of microentrepreneurs throughout Pakistan. The purpose of these activities is to strengthen the links between the targeted entrepreneurs and AHAN as a market and resource. In cooperation with AHAN, the beneficiaries will target their products to more markets and increase awareness of the new brand and of AHAN. Specific activities include:

- Expand brand to AHAN during years four and five
- Sell and market goods to larger markets and bazaars through AHAN as an intermediary
- Enable AHAN to become a leading provider of hand-made goods in Pakistan by utilizing it as a key broker and site for exchange by year five
- Enable AHAN to become a well-known and respected provider to international markets by utilizing it as a key broker and site for exchange by year five
2.5 Objective 3: Enhance the Microentrepreneurs Supporting Environment

To meet the requirements of Objective 3, SDG will successfully foster an industry working group that vigorously and effectively supports microentrepreneurs and lobbies with local, national, government and market intermediaries along the value chain. SDG will expand the capacities of previous networks and bring new partners into an expanded network. This network will help provide a seamless entrepreneur-supporting infrastructure along the value chain. The centerpieces of this initiative will be the Qeemti brand Certification, district and national Small Entrepreneurs and Women's Industry Working Group (IWG), and Global Development Alliances (GDA).

Figure 8: Objective 3 Organizational Relationships

This objective addresses important aspects of all three USAID-identified project components. The first component, addressing capacity of local partners, is executed in this objective through the incorporation of local implementation partners into the district and, where appropriate, the national-level IWGs. The majority of the activities in this objective form the primary effort to the second component, strengthening and expanding the supporting environment for microenterprise. SDG will establish, promote and train IWGs to both advocate for SME-appropriate policy and assist in the identification and provision of services at local and national levels. The training and development of the Policy and Microfinance Committees will be key in achieving the second component. The third component, which focuses on end markets and the role of AHAN, is largely achieved through the successful and viable development of the Qeemti brand and certification process.
2.5.1 **Qeemti brand Certification**

In previous development projects in Pakistan, SDG heard a phrase commonly used by local women to describe articles of clothing and handicrafts they found attractive: Qeemti, the Urdu word for 'precious'. SDG’s technical approach fosters a branding for both end items and manufacturing processes that can carry the Qeemti brand. SDG NGO partners will be trained to ensure that these items and processes meet standards of quality, social and environmental responsibility. Microentrepreneurs will receive certification training and benefits pro bono, while beneficiaries above a certain income who wish to sell under the Qeemti brand will be required to pay a licensing fee. Qeemti brand products will also sell products directly to international and regional consumers through a web portal. When Qeemti becomes financially self-sufficient and the GoP support for Aik Hunar Aik Nagar (AHAN) ends, responsibility for and control of the Qeemti brand may be transferred to AHAN to ensure their long-term viability and evolution into a results-driven, financially successful market actor.

2.5.2 **Industry Working Group**

*Activity 1: Establish a District-Level IWG*

The district-level IWG will be composed of key stakeholders in the local entrepreneur economy, across all relevant levels of the local value chain. The district-level IWG will also include representatives from local NGOs involved in microenterprise, women's empowerment, civil society and other related activities. The NGO representation in a given area shall not, as a rule, exceed the representation of the entrepreneurs from the local community. The size of the district-level IWG will be decided through a participatory decision-making process during the initial public meetings. The market and value chain analyses will identify the necessary value chain representatives that should be included in each local district. The district-level IWG will be responsible for identifying key issues and challenges facing small and medium entrepreneurs and women entrepreneurs in their communities. In addition to being a forum for entrepreneurs to identify issues impacting their livelihoods, it will also be a place where the local stakeholders can attempt to solve problems through community action.

SDG will utilize our existing links with the Pakistani business and development communities to identify NGO, government and business partners willing to support the national and district IWGs. Using these partners, we will conduct baseline surveys in the targeted districts to identify beneficiaries and stakeholders to participate in the working group. Following a brief public media campaign to build awareness of our program activities, we will host a series of district-level community meetings where we describe the framework of the district and national IWGs and ask for nominations to the IWG. We will utilize a participatory decision-making approach to determining size, by-laws and rules for electing representatives to the national-level IWG. The first meeting of the national-level IWG will occur after the election of district representatives and will focus on establishing the national-level IWG. Subsequent meetings will include representation from the Government of Pakistan stakeholders, financial institutions and other networks.
**Activity 2: Establish a National-Level IWG**

The national-level IWG (NIWG) will be composed of key stakeholders from across the national and district economies. Each DIWG will send two elected representatives to the national-level IWG meetings, at least one of which must be a female entrepreneur. The NIWG shall also include non-voting representatives from the Pakistan Ministry of Industries, the Pakistani Planning Commission and the Small- and Medium Enterprise Development Authority. Relevant interested NGOs may send non-voting representatives. An emphasis will be made to ensure voting representation of the Pakistani Microfinance Network and other microentrepreneur-supporting financial organizations. The NIWG may serve as the mechanism through which banks are offered DCAs in order to support the microentrepreneur industry. Staff and facility costs associated with the NIWG may be supported through a 100,000 USD line-item. The NIWG will be responsible for lobbying the government of Pakistan for small-entrepreneur friendly economic policies and broadening ties to international markets. As such, our program will conduct lobbying training through our NGO partners for the national-level representatives. In addition, the NIWG will be responsible for the stewardship of the Qeemti brand.

**Activity 3: National Leadership Development: Microfinance and Policy Committees**

The Microfinance and Policy Committees will improve the access and ability of women to participate in the creation of policy. With the training achieved for the Qeemti certification, EPE will encourage volunteers at the NIWG to serve on Microfinance and Policy Committees. There will be quarterly meetings for the first three years and biannually thereafter. At the first quarterly meeting, each committee will be produce firm project plans for the both the policy agenda and the microfinance association, with the facilitation from our staff as necessary. Within twelve months of the project start date, the formal association of organizations working in micro and small enterprise development will be established. A specific agenda will be developed to address identified policy constraints affecting micro and small enterprise development within eighteen of the project start. SDG will develop a functioning Micro and Small Entrepreneurs Association that can effectively link its members to services and advocate on behalf of its members by year five.

**2.5.3 External Linkages—Global Development Alliances**

To encourage increased lending to female microentrepreneurs, SDG will collaborate with microfinance institutions and other intermediaries to develop GDAs that expand lending activities, developing innovative forms of financing and removing impediments that constrain female microentrepreneurs. SDG will utilize our existing relationship with companies such as World Market, Pangaea, World Stock and other, to encourage partnership between Pakistani entrepreneurs with the Qeemti brand and IWG. A minimum of two GDAs will be established by the end of year two. A minimum of five GDAs will be established by the end of year four.
2.6 Objective 4: Empower Female Microentrepreneurs to Access Finance and Participate in the Sector

SDG believes that EPE will be a change agent that facilitates a participatory development process which changes people’s perceptions of the value of women’s work and increases women’s participation in the microenterprise sector. Once people are given the tools to create change, including practical skills for project planning and organizing, then they can assume a leadership role on projects.

2.6.1 Awareness-Building

Given that change is such a sensitive issue and therefore must be of a self-reliant nature—our staff will assist in the process of change, i.e. bringing people together for informal discussions. From there, the role of facilitation can assume more practical aspects like leadership development and relationship building. Furthermore, to reinforce awareness building SDG will initiate a media campaign to perpetuate the sharing of knowledge across communities and regions.

With respect to all awareness building, the rollout of the awareness-building campaign will be phased, starting with the districts within Islamabad. As a result, feedback on the successes and failures of achieving culturally-competent and persuasive gender awareness-building will be used as a proof of concept for continuing awareness-building during the life of the program. The early successes in Islamabad during the initial three months will serve to improve future talks and more generally will serve as market research for the media plan.

Activity 1: District-Level Awareness Building

To mitigate constraints to female participation in the microenterprise sector, change must first start with awareness building in a self-reliant participatory approach. In past projects in Pakistan SDG successfully trained local leaders and female entrepreneurs to exchange their experiences with those families who are averse to the idea of women’s microenterprise. SDG will utilize our decades-long relationships with progressive local leaders in Pakistan as well as the hundreds of successful female borrowers of SDG microloans. Pointing to industry best practice, any activity that focuses on working with women must divide group work into groups of individuals with common interests and social status. Women and men will be initially divided into separate groups.

EPE-sponsored speakers will lead orientation trainings with all-female and all-male groups in discussion in each district at the office at least once a month for the first six months of year one, and then once every three months thereafter. The nature of the meeting is dialogical and future-oriented, with the intended purpose being to recruit potential participants and to acculturate men and women to the importance of women’s contribution via the increased incomes of microenterprise profits. These informal discussions at first will define the needs of the women entrepreneurs from their perspectives by utilizing a variation of the following questions:

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20 As based on Oxfam Gender Training Manual by Suzanne Williams, Janet Seed, Adelina Mwau,
1. What are the financial hardships you face in your family/this village? Do you have any ideas about how to improve your financial situation? What is the history of these problems in your district or in your family?

2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the woman working? Is it ok for women to work inside of the home? What prevents your family from allowing its women to work? Do you know someone who is a woman and works? How do you feel about them?

3. Have you thought about how a second income contribute to improving your family's ability to save and deal with unexpected or life cycle expenses such as medical bills or marriages?

Both groups will receive a brief introduction to the IWG microloan opportunity which is available to microentrepreneurs. After the separate discussions, the two groups will be asked to convene and elect speakers to share what was discussed in their separate groups. Finally, the families will be asked to enroll in the microloan opportunity, and to invite other families to future meetings. There will be an incentive component, such as a meal that will be donated in-kind by our existing microfinance partner in that district.

**Activity 2: Leadership-Level Awareness Building**

SDG has connections with district officials and other leaders spanning 35 years. We consider these leaders our champions, who will assist with the EPE project by leading trainings and focusing on broadening the opinions of local leaders. Leaders disengaged in the EPE program will be asked to talk about the problematic low rate of women in microenterprise and then will be asked to define what they believe to be an appropriate action. Following our team will work with them to establish this strategy within the EPE framework. For example, they may be asked to give a short speech about the importance of women’s work in their next district meeting, or to publicly congratulate the business of a woman that has contributed to the district. Others may volunteer to take larger actions, such as imams, who may choose to speak about the value of women’s work in an upcoming prayer to men.

**Activity 3: Male-Level Awareness Building**

The entire family unit is encouraged to attend district-level meetings. There will be a separate male support group for those men who accompany female relatives. The purpose of inviting men to this group is to motivate hesitant men to allow their female relatives to participate in chapter meetings and second, to enroll men in the possibility of encouraging their male peers to support other women joining the IWG. Ultimately, the objective is to sensitize men to the importance of gender equality in terms of women’s role in the family and as microenterprise owners. Many of these meetings will be hosted by men whose female relatives have thriving microenterprises, also speakers from other districts and local opinion leaders and luminaries on the topic of microfinance for women will speak occasionally to the men’s group. Incentives will be given for men who are able to recruit more men, and thus women to IWG meetings. A staff facilitator be on hand to answer any questions men have about the usefulness of women’s work or other
concerns.

**Activity 4: Media Campaign**

SDG will contract with a marketing specialist in Pakistan to develop a media campaign strategy that employs a soft sell approach to attract attention to the benefits of women’s work, without acting as a threat to the family structure. At a minimum this plan will address the social attitudes and perceptions towards women participating in micro-enterprise activities and decreases the controversy of women’s work. The media campaign strategy will be completed six months after project start-up and will be implemented twelve months after the project start up. Some potential mass media options, based on past successes in changing women's roles in Pakistan include the following: targeted advertisements of the IWG microloan opportunity on radio and television and poster in urban areas that features both men and women benefitting from the opportunity. At the same time, SDG will focus more on engaging more with religious leaders and garnering their voluntary approval of women-run microenterprises. Moreover, as the target audience (poor men and women) is largely illiterate, media platforms will focus on being able to communicate through word of mouth and without requiring the consumer to read the message.

**2.6.2 Increasing Women’s Access to Participation**

**Activity 1: Female-Friendly Bazaars**

SDG will develop the concept of Craft Bazaars within the community to provide a secure, female-friendly, tourist-oriented physical ‘marketplace’ in each of the 20 districts to enable female microentrepreneurs to sell their products directly to vendors, buyers and wholesalers. SDG will utilize social and resource maps to create a single Bazaar Committee representing the 20 districts to develop a strategic project plan by the end of the first year. Two female-friendly bazaars will be established in the city centers of Islamabad and Lahore within six months and a project plan will be established. The location of the two market places was determined by EPE based on the data collected by the social and resource maps from previous projects we have implemented in Pakistan. Two project plans will be completed and implemented by the Committee to create the individual market places.

The bazaars will be fully organized by district-based Bazaar committees. The success of these bazaars and committees will serve as a proof of concept. The committee members will come together as a group to write the proof of concept at the first quarterly conference of IWG.

Following the success of the Islamabad and Lahore examples, a Bazaar Committee will be established within each DIWG no later than month six of year two. Then, the branding team will create the necessary branding proposal, periodically meeting with intermediaries and Bazaar Committee. By the end of year two the branding proposal will be complete.

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21 The concept is implemented in Delhi India to provide craft women a secure selling market place. The absence of secure market place is found to be one of the major impediments in female entrepreneurs’ mobility.
The Bazaar committee will assess the possibility of incorporating a female Craft Bazaar into the existing “Food Streets” within major cities, and the potential for creating independent craft bazaars where this is not possible, as a means to support women’s mobility and access to the intermediary market. The Committee will create a flexible multifaceted project plan to support this.

The Committee will work collaboratively with the defined district governments from the 20 districts to create necessary infrastructure and provide support. To facilitate this relationship the Committee will publish and distribute monthly status reports and host quarterly meetings with government stakeholders.

The Committee will also work collaboratively with the USAID-funded Community Rehabilitation Infrastructure Support Program (CRISP). As part of this effort, SDG will facilitate monthly meetings to work with the CRISP project to mobilize GoP, traditional leaders, and community members to prioritize and design and socio-economic improvement projects, such as the Craft Bazaars. By the sixth month of year two the Bazaar Committee, SDG and CRISP will have developed and completed a MOU, communications plan, and project integration plan.

Within the first six months of year two, the Committee will have produced a firm project plan based on the data collection during year one and the experiences of the two proof-of-concept market places applicable to the twenty districts and varying scenarios. Inclusive within the project plan will be an approximate number of entrepreneurs targeted, to be no less than 5,000. These project plans will include a mission statement, management plan, defined activities, requests for funding, and staffing plan. The Committees’ proposal will be subject to approval by EPE staff.

**Activity 2: Mobile Sales Agents**

One aspect of SDG’s vision for mitigating the women’s access to participation is solving the bottleneck of the homebound women, who are unable to leave their homes. However, through a mobile sales agent who visits a woman’s house, who is a woman herself, and who is allowed to bring inputs and serve as a go-between, the issue of non-participation may be overcome. The mobile sales agents are certified and trained by IWG using a modified curriculum that is derived from the USAID project “Behind the Veil”. The curriculum will be focused on the ten identified products. Mobile sales agents will earn income from serving as an input and output transporter for the homebound entrepreneurs and will also be able to sell at the female-friendly bazaars and ‘food streets’ which homebound women are forbidden to frequent. A total of 200 mobile sales agents, an average of ten in each district will be deployed throughout Pakistan within 6 months of project start up. At least 5,000 rural and peri-urban micro and small enterprises will achieve growth in scale of their enterprises, demonstrate increased mobility and better interaction with community and move beyond being home-bound by the end of year five.

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22 CRISP provides support services and funding of up to $500,000 for individual community infrastructure projects.
3.0 Key Personnel
SDG has assembled a dynamic and flexible team that satisfies EPE’s experience requirements and can deliver results. Supporting this key staff on the ground in Pakistan is a dynamic group of SDG subject matter-specific international and national advisors who will work in partnership with project staff on the ground. These experts will provide EPE with the experience and skills required to take advantage of windows of opportunity, to remain flexible and to act quickly where the largest impact can be achieved.

In Pakistan our Chief of Party Surraiya Azzam will lead our staff of luminary technical experts in the field as well as generalist managers. SDG envisions exploiting these strengths to create a streamlined staffing model to implement the multiple EPE activities across 20 districts in Pakistan.

3.1 Inclusion Aspects of Staffing Structure
SDG has taken into consideration the need to include youth, women and other disadvantaged groups in the staffing of the EPE program to support the crosscutting themes of gender, sustainability and flexibility. Creating opportunities for these populations will be a driving factor of the hiring of local consultants in the value chain and economic networks. In addition, SDG is an equal opportunity employer and has left a number of local positions as to be determined so that to ensure a balanced representation. The Organizational Chart for the management and implementation of this project is included as Annex E.

SDG recognizes that true and impactful improvements in the lives of Pakistanis can only occur if those most at risk and disadvantaged are not only considered in program activities, but are actively engaged. To this end, SDG proposes that in each field office and team of skilled and experienced professionals work with locally disadvantaged women and others in a professional setting. As discussed above, SDG’s approach to sustainability includes the inclusion and establishment of IWGs and training programs led by local people. In addition to training, these people will work with project staff to become leaders and understand on a larger scale the dynamics of a project of this scale, and how EPE efforts is working with local people to increase the economic potential of the region and lift people out of poverty.

3.2 Staffing Plan
SDG offers a decentralized model of management in which each of the three major geographical areas will be managed by one regional manager, who works in conjunction with the Deputy-Chiefs of Party. Accordingly, SDG has identified two DCOPs to support EPE in Karachi and Islamabad respectively. DCOPs are also technical specialists in capacity building and micro and small enterprise/sales and marketing. The COP will support EPE in Lahore.
A detailed breakdown of the roles follows. To begin, per the EPE Request for Applications the following five key personnel are included in our staffing plan:

**Figure 9: Senior Staff for Sahara Development Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Responsibilities and Assignments</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surraiya Azzam</td>
<td>Agriculture and rural development specialist with 30 years of experience; former COP, USAID Director, agribusiness corporate executive and USAID Banking and Agribusiness Advisor.</td>
<td>Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abida Junaid*</td>
<td>Perform needs assessments, planning and development of training programs for USAID EPE. Other tasks include assessing, preparing and implementing strategies and monitoring progress for strengthening NGOs working in this program area and link them to marketing networks with a view to increasing sales; develop and implement management processes and resource allocation that ensures cost effectiveness and efficient delivery.</td>
<td>Islamabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCOP</td>
<td>Perform needs assessments, planning and development of training programs for USAID EPE. Other tasks include assessing, preparing and implementing strategies and monitoring progress for strengthening NGOs working in this program area and link them to marketing networks with a view to increasing sales; develop and implement management processes and resource allocation that ensures cost effectiveness and efficient delivery.</td>
<td>Karachi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, SDG believes the following paid staff is necessary to achieve success:

**Figure 10: General Staff for Sahara Development Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Responsibilities and Assignments</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Financial Officer</td>
<td>Support the COP’s financial management responsibilities; serve as a backup for the CEO in terms of reporting to back-end office in DC on all financial management matters. Also, the CFO will be responsible for supervising the security guards and drivers.</td>
<td>Islamabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Managers (3)</td>
<td>Ensure that district-level chapters and entrepreneurs are receiving the support they need to start and finance their microenterprises. Each will serve as the lead on all project management activities in their respective regional offices. They report directly to the COP. However, they must communicate directly with Deputy COP to make referrals for technical assistance e.g. product development trainings. They are responsible for all district-level administrative activities e.g. fulfilling all monitoring and evaluations needs for their assigned districts and building relationships with district leaders, service providers, microfinance organizations, etc. (average of seven districts in each region). They will also coordinate the quarterly national IWG meetings in which working group committees meet to make major strategic planning decisions.</td>
<td>Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications/Public Relations SME</td>
<td>Responsible for media plan document and planning ongoing awareness building activities including publication of quarterly newsletter.</td>
<td>Islamabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Development Training Specialist</td>
<td>Responsible for developing training programs that address development programs with a gender lens. Trainings will be used to develop demand-driven products and increase sales.</td>
<td>Lahore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Chain SME (30)</td>
<td>Responsible for identifying ten key products within the textile sector in Pakistan and conduct value chain analysis to understand the needs of suppliers, manufacturers, distributors and buyers. They will also develop the training materials and train-the-trainers trainings with partner staff. Each one will be responsible for specializing in one of the five distinct elements of the value chain.</td>
<td>Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Developer</td>
<td>Responsible for building and maintaining web portal.</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>Responsible for establishing registration, policy drafting consultation, local hire contracts and other legal agreements as needed.</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logician</td>
<td>Directly supervise the security guards and drivers. She will also be responsible for travel logistics and the delivery of equipment and supplies to the respective three</td>
<td>Islamabad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.2.1 Transition Plan

By the end of year four, a detailed transition plan will be submitted to USAID and distributed to all partner staff. In concert with the theme of sustainability the plan will include a set of recommendations for how local project staff will be mentored and developed to take on increased management responsibilities during the life of the project. This transition plan will include:

- An assessment of increased learning among partner staff in-house capability for sales and marketing, micro and SME development, value chain knowledge
- Incentives for local hires who have shown outstanding performance to be recruited as staff or consultants by lead partner organizations
- Benchmarks and strategies for how COP will mentor and develop to take on increased management responsibilities

### 3.3 Surraiya Azzam – Chief of Party

Ms. Azzam is a senior international development professional and former corporate executive with more than 20 years of experience in Pakistan and the United States. A proven leader, Ms. Azzam has worked with four leading Pakistani banks i.e. Habib Bank, Union Bank (now Standard Chartered, Pakistan), Bank Alfalah and Prime Bank (Now part of Royal Bank of Scotland, Pakistan). She is an experienced banker in retail, SME and consumer banking, sales force development and management, training and development, establishing new lines of business, building new institutions and also has expertise in production planning and supply chains. She is skilled in strategic planning, building and leading teams, setting up new lines of business, restructuring and right sizing to changing economic and market conditions, establishing and managing projects and mentoring and developing staff. Ms. Azzam’s full Curriculum Vitae and Letter of Commitment are included in this proposal as Annex H.

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**Figure 11: Summary of COP Qualifications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surraiya Azzam</th>
<th>Skills and Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Supervisory** | • Over 20 years of leadership in banking and economic development in Pakistan  
• CEO of Kashf Microfinance Bank Limited (KMBL) and other financial institutions  
• Proven female leader |
| **Skills** | • Relationship building and stakeholder management  
• Private enterprise capacity development  
• Bringing senior government officials, business and trade associations and interested parties together to achieve results |
| **Technical** | • Financial Management |
Experience

- Business planning in challenging situations
- Rural economic development and livelihood
- Financial, banking and credit

Education

- Master’s of Business Administration; University of the Punjab, Lahore

3.4 Abida Junaid – Deputy Chief of Party

Ms. Junaid is a highly experienced development professional with 25 years of field work including program management and microfinance. Ms. Junaid is an accomplished financial sector professional with 25 years of progressively responsible management and consultancy experience in microfinance, rural and agricultural finance, SME banking, and financial sector development in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and CIS. She has designed and implemented successful technical assistance projects funded by the UN, USAID, SDC, IFAD and the World Bank. Ms. Junaid’s full Curriculum Vitae and Letter of Commitment are included in this proposal as Annex H.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abida Junaid</th>
<th>Skills and Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory</td>
<td>• Over 25 years of leadership experience in program management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consultant for microfinance projects, and other financial development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Management experience with USAID, World Bank, UN, and other international organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>• Financial management and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Urban and peri-urban development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>• Financial Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>• Business planning in challenging situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rural economic development and livelihood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Financial, banking and credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>• Master’s of Business Administration; University of Toronto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12: Summary of DCOP Qualifications

4.0 Past Performance

As a recognized source of thought leadership in the implementation of economic reform and development, the SDG has successfully managed a wide range of projects for the public and private sector in some of the world’s most challenging environments, with landmark results. When USAID has needed a nimble approach with high flexibility in a challenging environment, the SDG has been the consulting firm of choice. We, together with our team of subcontractors and resource organizations, bring a depth of experience working in changeable environments in a pragmatic way that achieves results.

SDG has a proven track record of working with stakeholders to build sustainable program results. SDG has extensive experience leading complex projects of similar size and scope to EPE and our implementation team has extensive delivery experience across all of the technical areas. Please refer to Annex J for specific Past Performance details and Annex I for an overview of SDG’s Organizational Capacity.
5.0 Management Approach
The strength of the EPE initiative lies within the interrelationships of its four project objectives and the support of the cross-cutting themes. SDG has assembled a team that understands how these components work together and how to best achieve results in five years in Pakistan. Central to implementing success is how these professionals and organizations can be brought together to achieve rapid and sustainable results. Initially, this is reliant upon our unique office structure and mobilization plan.

5.1 Field and Home Office Structure
SDG’s management team is structured so that the field team is fully empowered to make necessary decisions, with real-time backstopping from the home office when specific, new resources are needed. Consistent with standard SDG practices, day-to-day program management and delivery responsibility will rest with the resident COP, Surraiya Azzam. To support Ms. Azzam from the home office, SDG has designated Lauren Weir and Gillian Bath as Engagement Directors and Home Office Manager for EPE. While decision making authority is fully vested with the COP, ultimate responsibility for project delivery rests with the Directors, who along with the project manager will coordinate with USAID in Washington, provide strategic guidance and support when needed. SDG’s management structure is designed to give full authority to the field while having optimum support from the home office. This allows the team in the field to focus on delivery while the home office can provide the resources needed in a timely fashion and work with the team to bring to bear the best and brightest professionals from our team.

5.2 Mobilization
SDG has a history of rapid mobilization, thoroughly demonstrated by launching projects in extremely challenging environments within one week of contract award. To ensure swift mobilization under EPE, project staff is ready to mobilize upon award and SDG’s component leads are already in country. SDG proposes a swift and intensive mobilization plan that will have leadership and support staff in place within 60 days of contract signing and key personnel within the first two weeks. During this early period of the project, the infrastructure and support for the project will be put in place through hiring office managers, specialists, and finalizing our draft plans while the baseline and analytical studies are undertaken. SDG’s three-month (90 day) work plan, included here as Annex B shows the details of this proposed early work by project staff.

5.2.1 Sixty Day Mobilization
SDG will use its existing in-country networks and local program staff to conduct all necessary pre-mission and mobilization activities. Activities will include:

- Find, lease and prepare office locations in Lahore, Islamabad/Rawalpindi and Karachi.
- Hire local support staff (regional managers, security, drivers, administrative assistants, maintenance)
- Initial contacts with partner organizations
In addition to these logistical tasks, each of the four project objectives possesses activities and tasks that begin in the first 90 days. By objective these include:

**Objective 1: Increase the Capacity and Capabilities of Intermediaries**

The first activity within this objective is the identification, agreement and baseline assessment of our 5 partner organizations operating in the 20 targeted districts. By the end of the third month, SDG will execute a Memorandum of Understanding with these organizations. The Sahara Development Group will also begin the Value Chain Analysis and hire 30 Value chain consultant/trainers to begin contributing to the Value chain curriculum. SDG will also draft and publish the scope of work for the Qeemti web portal.

**Objective 2: Enable 120,000 Microentrepreneurs to Increase Sales in a Myriad of Markets**

Based on early returns from the Value Chain Analysis from Objective 1 and community-level focus groups, the SDG will begin to develop a business/administrative/financial skills curriculum. Likewise, SDG will use the Value Chain Analysis to identify targeted higher value-added domestic markets by the end of Q1.

**Objective 3: Enhance the Microentrepreneurs Supporting Environment with Working Groups**

The Community-level focus groups from Objective 2 will be part of a broader public engagement plan to increase public awareness of SDG’s activities. These district- and community-level engagements will allow SDG to begin forming the district-level Industry Working Groups (DIWGs) as early as Month 8. SDG will also begin drafting the requirements for Qeemti Certification and a business plan for AHAN within the first 90 days.

**Objective 4: Empower Female Microentrepreneurs to Access Finance and Participate in the Sector**

The public engagement plan from Objective 3 will include focus groups and surveys that will inform the social change media campaign. This campaign will be aimed at countering cultural stereotypes about gender roles in finance, business and family life. Other early activities will lay the groundwork for the establishment of female-friendly craft bazaars in Islamabad and Lahore.

**5.2.2 First Year Mobilization**

By the end of Year 1, SDG will be heavily engaged in all 4 Program Objectives. For Objective 1, the Value Chain Training Program will be fully operational by Q3 and will continue through the life of the project. The Qeemti portal will be launched in late Q2 and will be fully operational in the market by the end of Q4. Life skills and business/financial/administrative skills training will begin in Year 1. The DIWG and NIWG will be fully functional; the NIWG will receive lobbying/policy-making training assistance during this year and will produce a policy recommendation for submission to relevant GoP officials. The Social-Change Media Campaign will roll out in Q3 and continue for the life of the Project. Each of these major steps
include supporting activities that are included in the SDG Implementation Plan, included here as Annex A.

6.0 Performance Monitoring Plan
Managing a project with as much flexibility requires a strong management team and staff as demonstrated above, as well as a clear work plan to govern mobilization, procurement and results. The draft three-month Work Plan is presented in Annex B and outlines the activities to be undertaken in the critical first three months of the project. Tasks may need to be adjusted after the early analysis has been completed in the beginning of the project.

Annex C – the Illustrative Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) – outlines the preliminary list of indicators, disaggregated by objective, that will be monitored throughout the project to determine whether or not SDG and its partners are achieving stated targets and objectives. These indicators include those specified by USAID, those included in USAID’s F-indicators framework, and those indicators identified as relevant and applicable by SDG technical staff. The annexed PMP specifies the anticipated result of/for each indicator by year and by life of award (LOA) periods as well as the position responsible for overseeing and ensuring the fulfillment of the targets. The final draft of the monitoring plan will be submitted to USAID no later than 90 days after project start-up.

Annex D – the Logical Framework – illustrates the big picture of EPE, how the objectives and components interact, and the causal logic between objectives, indicators, outcomes, and project success. EPE is a very complex undertaking and while SDG is confident in its ability, capacity, and competency in implementing EPE successfully, both the PMP and the Logical Framework are meant as illustrative depictions of intended processes and outcomes; if any of these elements changes due to programmatic adjustments, SDG will work with the USAID offices in Washington, D.C. and in Pakistan to modify accordingly.