Nickol Global Solutions Capabilities Statement
Updated March 2022

A growing woman-owned small business (WOSB), Nickol Global Solutions (NGS) is a USAID Implementing Partner that provides a wide range of management consulting and advisory services designed to fortify stakeholder capacity and effectiveness, including in public institutions, civil society organizations, and private sector firms. In the U.S. and overseas, NGS helps public and private sector clients assess and develop capacity; optimize performance and quality; enhance transparency and accountability; engage stakeholders; measure success; and communicate about their work—all with the aim of advancing development objectives even in the most complex operating environments. NGS is certified as a WOSB by the Small Business Administration and the US Women's Chamber of Commerce. We also hold an active facilities clearance (FCL) at the secret level. NGS offers the following overarching services and expertise:

Strengthening Governance and Accountability

NGS specializes in enhancing transparency and accountability through the engagement of civil society and other actors. We serve as prime contractor on a three-year, $3 million prime contract for the One Window for Citizens (OW4C) Project with USAID/**Cambodia** to tackle one of Cambodia's development challenges: strengthening the Royal Government of Cambodia's (RGC's) **accountability for public services** offered through the One Window Service Office (OWSO). In collaboration with two Cambodian partners, we have co-designed and piloted a suite of simple civic tech tools to create consistent, efficient access to information regarding OWSO administrative services in a way that accommodates all abilities of the population through a civic tech platform; a broad-based public outreach campaign; and monitoring tools to enable citizens and businesses to report on efficiency/satisfaction of services. Working in three provinces, OW4C's District Ombudsman Working Groups in Cambodia strive to enhance the quality and service of all OWSOs. In addition, our **civic tech tools** – which include an IVR system, a Facebook Chatbot, and a public dashboard – include feedback mechanisms to ensure citizens are able to inform on the quality of the services rendered by the OWSO. Alongside the civic tech tools, the community scorecards allow NGS to set a baseline for levels of satisfaction around OWSO services and to continually measure changes to quality of services with our civic tech tools. In addition, NGS is a major subcontractor to WWC Global on the institutional support contract to USAID's Democracy, Rights, and Governance (DRG) Center. NGS provides strategic communications, strategic planning, and operational support to the **DRG Center**, as well as short-, medium-, and long-term technical subject matter expertise in key disciplines such as elections and political processes, civil society, media strengthening, rule of law, human rights, and transparent and accountable governance. Recent consultancies have advised the DRG Center on **labor policy**, the **intersection of technology and democracy**, **anti-corruption**, and **international social movements** and collective action.

GESI Assessments, Strategy, Research, and Support

NGS understands that effective and sustainable development requires addressing identity-based inequities. NGS advisors have conducted research, assessments, and analysis on the contextual challenges facing underrepresented groups with a focus on women and girls, youth, LGBTQ, persons with disabilities, and ethnic and religious minorities. For instance, on the USAID Good Governance Initiative (GGI) in **Georgia** (implemented by Tetra Tech), NGS carried out research and provided technical support to GGI in the design and implementation of select GESI interventions by collecting and synthesizing evidence to better understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected different groups in the three target municipalities. NGS's research included quantitative data and qualitative data obtained through surveys, FGDs, and KIIs. NGS also advised and built capacity around **gender-responsive budgeting** at the municipal level, based on stakeholder consultations and other research. We are carrying out similar research and advisory services in **Ukraine** under the USAID Health Reform Support (HRS) project (implemented

by Deloitte), exploring collaboration models that infuse GESI sensitivities in health sector activities. In **Cambodia**, NGS is targeting youth, women, and marginalized populations in the design of our civic tech tools to enhance their knowledge about local service delivery and their ability to safely provide feedback about those services.

Outreach / Communications / Stakeholder Engagement

NGS's work with USAID's **Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA) Bureau** involved engaging multiple stakeholders to develop recommendations for a management assessment; it provided a deep and nuanced understanding of USAID's strategic communications structure, including its strengths and weaknesses. This extends beyond the role of LPA's public engagement staff to the Agency's bureau communicators (including PPL) to the mission-based development and outreach communicators (DOCs). Activities included mapping of a stakeholder's level of interest and influence and conducting key informant interviews as well as focus group discussions. For the OW4C Project, we are prototyping civic tech tools that will enable citizens to communicate with and receive information from the government regarding OWSO services. In addition, we are creating awareness of the OWSO services in communities via public forums, radio spots, social media, and door-to-door information campaigns. Our social media strategy leverages **Cambodia**'s Facebook-oriented population and includes the development of an OWSO avatar that will convey information to the public, enhancing transparency and quality of services. Furthermore, with the OW4C Project, we have conducted **community scorecard trainings with youth** to enable an assessment and awareness of the civic tech tools that serve the OWSO. The OW4C District Ombudsman Working Groups have raised a services improvement agenda and engaged the community based on active complaints and recommendations from the community scorecard, baseline survey, and civic tech tools. In addition, we are employing a number of traditional and non-traditional engagement methods to continuously engage local stakeholders (including community members, government employees, and youth) to ensure our civic tech tools will meet the needs of a wide range of users. In addition, NGS provides strategic communications support to the USAID/**Ukraine State Owned Enterprise Reform** Activity (SOERA) (implemented by Deloitte). Under SOERA, NGS is charged to disseminate information and generate support for key SOE reform issues through a robust communications strategy that is inclusive of stakeholders; aligns project messaging; and continuously evolves.

Institutional Support Services

NGS has a deep understanding of USAID's missions, bureaus, and independent offices; the technical sectors of international development; the Automated Directives System (ADS); the USAID Program Cycle; and the complexities of working in a variety of local contexts with USAID and with local partners. The amalgamation of this knowledge is manifested in our increasingly extensive institutional support services portfolio. Through the institutional support contract for the USAID Democracy, Development, and Innovation (DDI) Bureau's Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) Center, implemented by WWC Global, NGS is a major subcontractor that supports the DRG Center's operational, technical, and administrative functions. We provide long-term strategic communications, funds administration, and programmatic support, as well as myriad short-term technical expertise for the DRG Center's teams. Our role is to provide compliant, timely, high-quality, and flexible support to the DRG Center so that they can maintain high-quality staff for long-term needs and respond quickly with highly qualified personnel to surge needs. Under the USAID/Management Excellence for Operations IDIQ, NGS supports the human resources function for USAID/DRC and has completed a management review for the USAID/LPA Bureau. Under two separate USAID IDIQs for institutional support for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, NGS has provided a variety of short- and long-term technical and operational assistance. As a major subcontractor on our largest subcontract to date ($24.5 million over five years), NGS is provides a broad spectrum of support to USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) on its Institutional Support Contract, including M&E advisory services; communications and knowledge management; subject matter expertise; and operational and administrative support.

Political Economy Analysis (PEA)

NGS's experts have carried out PEAs in Cambodia, Georgia, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, and other countries. NGS has also conducted a **sectoral PEA** of the OWSO services in Cambodia in which we mapped existing and previous efforts to enhance OWSO service delivery, as well as mapped influencers, interests, and incentives that would be

key to the success of our civic tech tools. This landscape analysis allowed the program to avoid duplication of similar efforts, to coordinate with other donor-funded programs, identify potential champions to support greater accountability in services, and to build on lessons learned from past OWSO-focused projects. NGS advisors have facilitated workshops with stakeholders in third countries to examine challenges to basic services delivery, health, and education for designing programming in non-permissive contexts.

MEL / Adaptive Management

NGS leadership has a strong background in USAID's Collaborating, Learning, Adapting (CLA) Framework and implementing ADS Chapter 201 (USAID's Program Cycle). We offer CLA services to USAID and to other implementing partners. Our Cambodia OW4C contract, for instance, is an applied research activity with an iterative design. The activity addresses key learning questions which generate key knowledge to: help clarify and focus activity objectives; serve as an early warning system; forecast and report; promote ongoing discussions pertaining to activity scope and direction; and aid in effective management and decision making. We designed our Activity MEL Plan to support iterations of the civic tech tools and civic engagement methodologies to scale the civic tech innovations to other provinces. Throughout each phase of the Activity, NGS gathers data through several methods, including feedback mechanisms within the civic tech tools, community scorecards, and regular feedback loops. This data is analyzed and shared at multiple levels to help USAID and stakeholder communities document and understand what is working (and why) with these civic tech innovations, continually adding to the body of evidence for demand-side government accountability. NGS is an active partner on the USAID/PPL Monitoring Evaluation Learning Services (EVAL ME II) IDIQ. Finally, NGS is also carrying out context and third-party monitoring (TPM) in Syria for GiZ, providing research and technical support for TPM and atmospheric reporting across four geographic zones of territorial control. NGS provides information relevant for donor decision-making on projects in Syria, with a geographical focus on, but not exclusively limited to, the "de-escalation zone Idlib" in the northwest and areas under SANES-control in the North-East.

Co-Design and Co-Creation Facilitation

Importantly, NGS has honed its experience in carrying out fully virtual research, project implementation, and co-design of USAID programming. For instance, under the Innovative Design Services IDIQ, NGS provided fully virtual support and facilitation services for a series of three week-long co-creation workshops for the **Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)** in **Ethiopia** in 2021. NGS worked closely with BHA Activity Managers and the design team to further refine and prioritize objectives of the workshops. NGS also led a consultative process with the much larger community of USAID personnel and apparently successful applicants (ASA), **using Advanced Participatory Methods** (APM) to ensure that work planning is built on the interests of and led by the key stakeholders involved. We carried out this work with a geographically dispersed staff and set of stakeholders, all during a time of conflict in northern Ethiopia. The mission in Ethiopia was so pleased with NGS's facilitation that they rehired us to support the CLA Platform Co-Creation Workshop in 2022. NGS has also supported other co-creation efforts for USAID using participatory approaches to inspire new partnership opportunities, share innovative approaches, foster knowledge management (KM), and come to a common vision. We have designed agendas and collateral materials for varying levels and types of co-creation workshops, balancing facilitated sessions for networking and idea generation with concrete feedback and guidance from USAID on the prototype ideas being developed. NGS's other co-creation clients include the LPA Bureau, the Global Health Bureau, and USAID/Cambodia's Office of Global Health. Finally, for the OW4C Project, NGS uses co-creation and **human-centered design** to develop and iterate on civic tech tools and outreach efforts to enhance transparency around OWSO services.