SFOP0009810 Strengthening Sustainable Communities in Panama and Costa Rica
Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs
Questions and Answers, June 19, 2023

Question: We would like to convey X Organization's interest in participating in the Strengthening Sustainable Communities in Panama and Costa Rica funding call and have the following 13 questions:

Question # 1.) Should subrecipients be identified as part of the proposal? If the answer is no, we assume that the lead proponent will make the distribution corresponding to the activities of these subawards. Is that correct?

The subrecipients should be identified in the proposal narrative and what project activities that they will be working on. The applicant also needs to include in the M&E plan how as prime they would monitor subrecipient project activities. Additionally, the applicant needs to break out in both detailed line-item budget and the budget narrative the subrecipients budgets.

Question #2.) Sub-recipient 1 (non-profit organization providing training in Costa Rica and Panama to entrepreneurs and small businesses). We understand that it will be responsible to strength SBDCs capacities to provide support and training to SMEs and work force. Do the funds allocated by the project for this purpose include payment of the costs of carrying out these activities?

Please see page 27 of the Notice of funding opportunity for budget requirements of subrecipients:
" An allowable project must include the following budget items: Of the total $4,740,000.00, WHA suggests the applicant budgets for two subawards. The first subaward should be with an SBDC center or a local NGO focused on small business development in the Central America region at approximately $1,200,000; and the second subaward should be with a sustainable tourism development organization at approximately $800,000 to ensure that both subaward's project activities are implemented for the entire 48-month period of performance of the cooperative agreement. The applicant needs to include sub award budgets in their application submission. The applicant can modify these suggested amounts according to their project design submitted in their application."

If the applicant is the prime implementer, the subrecipients budgets need to cover all costs incurred of their subaward to implement subrecipient project activities to include salary, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, and other direct costs. Please refer to the PSI and NOFO instructions on subrecipients.

Question #3.) We understand that subrecipient 2 (sustainable tourism expert) will develop the tourism curriculum and plans. Will the SBDC execute the tourism curriculum or will recipient 2 responsible for it?

The sustainable tourism subrecipient organization should be responsible for implementing the sustainable tourism boot camps, the SBDC training curriculum focused subrecipient is supposed to develop training curriculum for small business development of supporting industries i.e. textiles, agricultural, restaurants, transportation, and sustainable tourism related activities.

Question #4.) Third party: We understand that third party will do the baseline, support the installation of the M&E plan and will prepare the final project evaluation. How many project evaluation will be done?

$200,000 to $400,000 should be allocated to third party M&E firm to do baseline and help in the creation of the M&E plan. There needs to be at least one final project evaluation. It is up to the applicant and the M&E firm if they would like to additional evaluations i.e. a mid-term report. However, the applicant's proposed budget must be should be in the recommended amount.

Question #5: Can activities be modified, deleted and included to improve implementation?

None of the seven project objectives or project activities that are included in the NOFO can be modified or deleted. However, if the applicant chooses, they can add additional project objectives and project activities if the applicant feels additional activities could improve implementation.

Question #6.) Understood as "firms" are those institutions that provide services to SBDCs. If the answer is no, indicate what it refers to.

Please see page 3 for the eligibility category. For profit firms are not eligible to apply for this NOFO. Please also see page 27 for the budget guidance that says for SBDC Centers or NGOS working on small business development are recommended for the subrecipient working on SBDC development.

Please see page 3 of the NOFO for eligibility requirements

Please see page 27 of the NOFO for budget requirements of subrecipients:
"An allowable project must include the following budget items: Of the total $4,740,000.00, WHA suggests the applicant budgets for two subawards. The first subaward should be with an SBDC center or a local NGO focused on small business development in the Central America region at approximately $1,200,000."

Question #7: Some attachments indicated in PSI (pg 3) are duplicated in the NOFO as part of the narrative proposal (Pgs 39-42): Resources and Timeline for Activities, Contingency & Security Plans and Protection Mainstreams (included in Risk assessment), Roles and

Responsibilities, Gender Analysis. ¿Could you please confirm that all of them are only attachments?

Page 39-42 of the NOFO are the required attachments and you must follow the PSI and follow the instructions.

Question #8: Do you agree if we prepare a Risk assessment including besides risk identification, contingency and security plans as well as protection mainstreams?

Risk identification, contingency planning, security plans and protection mainstreams are stand-alone requirements that the applicant must meet in drafting their proposal. If applicant chooses to submit all of these documents in one risk assessment that is their choice. However, the applicant needs to provide a detailed plan on how each of these required NOFO submission requirements will be met.

Question #9: Each subrecipient will manage their financial and administrative issues and staff related with the activities under their responsibility such as consultants hiring, bootcamps and training?

Yes, subrecipients submit their own proposal narratives, budget, budget narratives, timeline, etc. to the prime applicant to be approved and monitored by the prime. The subrecipients are responsible for managing their own finances to include consultants hiring, bootcamps and training etc. However, it is the prime's responsibility to monitor all subawardees through quarterly progress reporting requirements of both programmatic and financial reports. The prime applicant is also responsible for conducting site visits to subrecipients to ensure proper grant management and is responsible for providing proper oversight through a detailed subaward agreement with the subrecipient(s).

Question #10: ***PSEA Requirements should be included inside proposal narrative or attachments?***

An effective proposal should incorporate PSEA requirements both into project activities and how they are implemented in the proposal narrative and an applicant also needs to include a stand-alone PSEA plan as an attachment.

Question 11.) A significant number of indicators have as target (TBD-To be determined). Is the proponent expected to suggest the goals in such cases? If so, what would be the basis for these suggestions, considering that they are generally generated from baseline information?

For output and outcome indicators listed on page 15-17 of the NOFO in the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) the indicators with numbers are minimum indicator targets that have to be met. For indicators with TBD listed as the indicator target goal this was to allow for applicants to submit their own target goals. The applicant must provide target goals for each and every output and outcome indicator listed in their proposal and NOFO.

Question #12.) Outcome indicator: Full-time equivalent employment of firms receiving USG assistance. Which measurement unit do you suggest for this indicator?

For any TBD listed indicator the applicant needs to come with indicator targets that are reasonable and allocable to their own specific proposal.

Question 13): Fringe benefits: Please give specific examples of what should include in the budget form.

Please see the **budget guidelines** document in the resource document of the funding opportunity on grants.gov.
Fringe Benefits – State benefit costs SEPARATELY from salary costs and explain how benefits are computed for each category of employee - specify type and rate.