



USAID | RWANDA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Reference: Notice of Funding Opportunity 720-696-23-RFA-00002
Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) Market Systems Development Activity

Subject: Amendment 01

Date: January 30, 2023

Dear Prospective Applicants:

The U.S. Agency for International Development (“USAID”) amends the above-referenced Notice of Funding Opportunity (“NOFO”), originally issued on January 11, 2023.

Amendment 01 provides responses to questions from prospective applicants and revises the NOFO in response to these questions as detailed in the attachments.

Sincerely,

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Agreement Officer
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USAID/Rwanda

Enclosures

Attachment 1_Amendment 01 NOFO 720-696-23-RFA-00002

Attachment 2_USAID Answers to Prospective Applicants Questions

Attachment 1: Amendment 01 to NOFO 720-696-23-RFA-00001 HSS Next

The NOFO is hereby amended as set forth below:

1. Section **A. Program Description**, the number of book retail locations has been revised to 300 in subsections *A.1 Introduction* (p.5) and *A.5 Approach* (p.22).
2. Section **D.4 Application Submission Instructions**, the last sentence is revised as follows:

“File size must not exceed 25 MB per email.”

3. Section **D.6 Business (Cost) Application Format**, subsection(d) **Budget and Budget Narrative**, paragraphs 1 and 2 are revised as follows:

- “1) Salaries – Must be proposed consistent with 2 CFR 200.430 Compensation - Personal Services. The applicant’s budget must include position title, salary rate, level of effort, and salary escalation factors for each position. Applicants must explain all assumptions in the Budget Narrative. The Budget Narrative must demonstrate that the proposed compensation is reasonable for the services rendered and consistent with what is paid for similar work in other activities of the applicant. Applicants must provide their established written policies on personnel compensation. If the applicant’s written policies do not address a specific element of compensation that is being proposed, the Budget Narrative must describe the rationale used and supporting market research.
- 2) Fringe Benefits and Allowances– (if applicable) If the applicant has a fringe benefit rate approved by an agency of the U.S. Government, the applicant must use such rate and provide evidence of its approval. If an applicant does not have a fringe benefit rate approved, the applicant must propose a rate and explain how the applicant determined the rate. In this case, the Budget Narrative must include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., superannuation, gratuity, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in U.S. dollars and as a percentage of salaries. Allowances, when proposed, must be broken down by specific type and by position.”

4. Section **D.5 Technical Application Format**, subsection (e) **Technical Application Body**, the page limit is revised from 30 to 35 pages.
5. Section **D.6 Business (Cost) Application Format**, subsection h) **History of Performance**, delete “five years” and replace with “three years” in the first sentence of the paragraph.

(End of Attachment 1)

Attachment 2: USAID Answers to Prospective Applicants Questions

Question 1

Would USAID consider removing the requirement for “demonstrated technical expertise in book supply chains” from the COP requirements, as long as that requirement is met within the key personnel team.

Answer 1

No

Question 2

Can key personnel resumes be included in an annex, not within the page limit of the technical application? Within this annex, will USAID consider allowing three page CVs for each key personnel candidate?

Answer 2

No, please note the page limit for the technical application body has been increased to 35 pages.

Question 3

Is there a specific template applicants should use for History of Performance?

Answer 3

No

Question 4

Page 17: The Theory of Change states that “... private book chain enterprises’ capacity is improved to produce and distribute affordable high-quality **textbooks** and TLM...” Can we then assume that the project is looking to build a Public Private Partnership for **textbooks**, increasing the private sector’s ability to produce **textbooks** to be procured by the government, despite the current policy of REB in-house textbook development? Or should the implementer concentrate on TLMs outside of textbooks, and if so, how do we define TLMs? The IRs mention “supplementary TLM,” “TLM,” “high-quality textbooks and TLM,” “high-quality TLM,” “quality TLM,” and “books and reading materials” (and elsewhere in the NOFO “child-focused TLM”) somewhat interchangeably. Could USAID please describe any substantive differences it sees among these terms?

Answer 4

While textbook development is done in-house at REB, the activities of production (printing) and distribution of textbooks are currently conducted by the private sector in Rwanda. A variety of other types of teaching and learning materials (supplementary readers, workbooks, reference texts, posters, etc) are also both developed and printed by the private sector. The solicitation uses the term TLM to refer to all of these types of materials; variation in the types of TLMs produced also depends on the client market in question (government or consumer).

Question 5

Often, USAID requires project materials to be open licensed through Creative Commons. Will that be the case for this project? What will be the copyright and licensing requirements for any materials published through this project?

Answer 5

This question will be answered during implementation, as conditions vary depending on the client/market, the type of material, and other evolving factors.

Question 6

With regards to the summary budget template provided as Annex 1: Fringe Benefits and Allowances are rolled up as one category. Would USAID find it acceptable for the Applicant to include these as 2 separate categories to better align with the SF424 categories?

Answer 6

SF424A does not have “Allowances” as a separate category. Please include allowances under Fringe Benefits. Please see “Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) Form Instructions” for guidance.

Question 7

In order to propose salaries that are comparable with USAID’s salaries, would USAID kindly provide its local compensation plan for CCN staff?

Answer 7

Please see the table below:

LCP Range		Daily Rate (USD)	
		Minimum	Maximum
FSN 1	FSN 5	\$13.15	\$55.28
FSN 6	FSN 8	\$38.82	\$94.39
FSN 9	FSN 11	\$75.22	\$205.09
FSN 12	FSN 13	\$168.39	\$381.81

Question 8

The RFA requests several cost documents from the applicant (e.g. Representations and Certifications, NICRA, etc.). Are these items required from proposed subrecipients, or only from the prime applicant?

Answer 8

Representations and Certifications are required to be submitted by the prime applicant only. Please note, it is the responsibility of the primary applicant to request Representations or Certifications from subrecipients when required by regulations. NICRA is required from both the prime applicant and all the proposed subrecipients, if they have a NICRA as stated in item 5) under Section D.6.(d).

Question 9

Given that many organizations have struggled to obtain a UEI, and given the supplementary guidance provided by USAID via AAPD 22-04 relative specifically to the exception at 2 CFR 25.110(c)(2)(iii), could USAID kindly confirm that the applicant may propose sub-recipients who have not yet obtained UEIs? Assuming that is the case, can USAID kindly confirm whether providing a case number of a helpdesk ticket in lieu of a final UEI will be sufficient for the approval of subawards?

Answer 9

The applicants may propose subrecipients who have not yet obtained UEIs, and provide a case number of a helpdesk ticket instead.

Question 10

Can applicants use the standard USAID short form for PPRs?

Answer 10

It is not clear what standard USAID form is referenced.

Question 11

Page 32 states “File size must not exceed 25 MB.” Can USAID kindly clarify whether this limit is per individual file or per email? Is there a limit on the number of attachments (per email) for the electronic submission?

Answer 11

The 25MB file size limit is per email. There is no limit on the number of attachments per email. However, applicants should consider the following guidance provided in Section D.4 of the NOFO: “USAID’s preference is that the Technical Application and the Cost Application each be submitted as consolidated email attachments, e.g. that you consolidate the various parts of a technical application into a single document before sending it. If this is not possible, please provide instructions on how to collate the attachments.”

Question 12

Please confirm that documents which require a signature may be submitted in pdf.

Answer 12

We confirm.

Question 13

Section A.1 *Introduction* on page five explains that one measure of success will be stimulating a private consumer market for children's books “in at least 500 retail locations,” but Section A.5 *Approach* on page 22 states “in at least 300 retail locations.” Would USAID please confirm the correct number of retail locations?

Answer 13

The correct suggested target appears on p. 22: “in at least 300 retail locations in at least 10 Rwandan Districts, or other appropriate numerical targets as proposed by the applicant.” The intent is to significantly expand retail availability of TLMs in a wide variety of settings; the applicant should confirm or revise the target and include justification in the application.

Question 14

Section D.5(e) *Technical application body* on page 34 states that key personnel resumes should be included “within the body of the application (not as an annex).” Would USAID please confirm that key personnel resumes will not count toward the 30-page limit for the technical application?

Answer 14

See the answer to question 2.

Question 15

Section D.6(d) *Budget and Budget Narrative* on page 36 instructs applicants to include Salaries and Allowances as a budget category, yet the Summary Budget Template in Annex 1 includes Allowances with the Fringe Benefits line item. Would USAID please confirm that Allowances should be included with the Salaries budget category and update the budget template in Annex 1, as necessary?

Answer 15

Please include allowances under Fringe Benefits. The Budget Narrative language in the NOFO has been revised.

Question 16

Section D.6(h) *History of Performance* on page 39 states “The Applicant must provide information regarding its recent history of performance for all its cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs...”. What criterion will be used to determine program similarity?

Answer 16

The criteria for determining program similarity are the size, scope, and complexity of a program. Please note the timeframe has been revised from five to three years.

Question 17

The RFA requires three different numbers (300, 500, or 1000) of book retail sites outside of Kigali (500 retail sites on page 5, 300 retail sites on page 22, and 1000 retail sites on page 25).

- a. Would USAID please confirm how many sites are required?
- b. Can USAID please confirm how this number/s was estimated?

Answer 17

See the answer to Question 13.

Question 18

Can USAID please confirm if formal baseline and endline evaluations are required for the activity? Should these costs be budgeted by applicants?

Answer 18

The applicant should plan for a baseline assessment that will provide needed information for implementing each component, and should also plan for a corresponding endline assessment. These costs should be included in the activity MEL costs.

Question 19

Can USAID please confirm if there is a third-party monitoring contract the implementing partner should plan to work with?

Answer 19

This will be confirmed at a later date.

Question 20

Can USAID please confirm whether Applicants are required to submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan at this proposal stage? Page 35 of the RFA states, “The applicant must ensure the budgeted costs address any additional requirements identified in Section F, such as Branding and Marking.” and page 39 states, “The applicant must ensure the budgeted costs address any additional requirements identified in Section F, such as Branding and Marking.”

Answer 20

As stated in Section D.6(i) on page 39 of the NOFO only “The apparently successful applicant will be asked to provide a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan”. However all applicants “must ensure the budgeted costs address any additional requirements identified in Section F, such as Branding and Marking.”

Question 21

Please confirm if the summary MEL Plan and Summary Timeline are included in the 30-page limit for the Technical Application Body or if they can be submitted separately as technical application annexes?

Answer 21

We confirm that the summary MEL Plans and summary timeline must be included in the Technical Application body. Please note that the technical application body page limit has been increased to 35 pages.

Question 22

I have a question about the opportunity which I understand will entail a single agreement. Is it intended that a single proposal be provided? Is there any more information available on the scope of the proposal required?

Answer 22

Please see section C.4 of the NOFO on the number of proposals (applications) and Sections D.3 through D.6 of the NOFO for detailed instructions on the format and scope of applications.

Question 23

Does the term 'Book Development Policy' (e.g. in A1, p. 5) stand for both TLMs and supplementary reading books?

Answer 23

The Book Development Policy is a government of Rwanda policy currently in draft form; the final scope has not yet been determined.

Question 24

Why is DFID's investment in textbook policy development during the period 2000-2015, including the decentralized textbook ordering system, not mentioned?

Answer 24

The additional contextual information is duly noted, and contributes to the noted trend of a history of significant work on TLM-related issues in Rwanda.

Question 25

Is the current textbook policy officially adopted by the GOR and applied as a basis for TLM planning, procurement and supply?

Answer 25

See the answer to Question 23.

Question 26

The budget format includes the "Allowances" category with "Fringe"; the detailed budget description on page 36 lumps the Allowances in with "Salaries". Could USAID please clarify if Allowances should be included as a part of salaries or fringe?

Answer 26

Please see the answer to question 15 above.

Question 27

Can USAID please limit the number of past performance references applicants must include in the cost application to 5?

Answer 27

No, however, please see the answer to question 16.

Question 28

Can USAID please specify if subrecipients need to supply any documentation for the cost application other than a budget and budget narrative (such as a completed Certifications and Representations)?

Answer 28

Please see the answer to question 8 above.

Question 29

Our organization appreciates the thorough, detailed RFA. Would USAID consider extending the proposal submission date by at least two weeks to maximize applicants' ability to be fully comprehensive in our responses?

Answer 29

No

Question 30

Can USAID please exclude the CVs from the 30 page limit and allow applicants to submit CVs as an annex, in addition to the 30 page limit?

Answer 30

Please see answer to question 2 above.

(End of Attachment 2)