



USAID | SENEGAL
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

May 12, 2020

Notice of Funding Opportunity No: 72068520RFA00005

Program Title: Bridge Youth Connect (BYC) Activity

AMENDMENT NO.: 1

The purpose of this amendment is to modify the subject NOFO and provide answers to questions received.

The subject NOFO is hereby amended as follows:

A. The dates on the cover page of Original NOFO are amended to read:

Issue Date: April 14, 2020

Deadline for Questions: April 30, 2020

Original NOFO Closing Date: May 29, 2020 at 17:30 Local Dakar, Senegal Time

Revised NOFO Closing Date: June 12, 2020 at 17:30 Local Dakar, Senegal Time.

B. Responses to Questions Received:

GENERAL

1. I am an individual who is interested in helping with the USAID program. I have a few of questions that I have concerns about.
 - a. Can the Federal Reserves help maintain the overwhelming violence that corrupts that area or will it be armed security?
 - b. Can USAID hire people from that community to help with the project.
 - c. Will USAID be able to build schools or centers that will help the teens have some some type of position influences that will guide them in life.

USAID Response: a) No, the Federal Reserve does not have a role to play. b) Yes, the implementing partner will likely hire local nationals to help with the activity. c) No, this activity will not involve the building of schools.

2. In light of the global mobility and work challenges posed by COVID-19, will USAID extend the deadline for applications through the end of June 2020?

USAID Response: Application submission deadline has been extended from May 29, 2020 to June 12, 2020 at 17:30PM (GMT) Local Dakar, Senegal Time.

3. I am in the process of applying for the above funding opportunity but the option to apply is greyed out. I was wondering if you can assist me with this or point me in the right direction. Please see the screenshot attached below.

USAID Response: Applications must be submitted by email to the contacts provided in Section D.1. **Please do not submit applications through the Grants.gov website.** Please refer to Section D. 4., page 45 of the subject NOFO for more details on submission of applications.

4. Given the logistical difficulties presented by COVID-19, would USAID consider extending the deadline?

USAID Response: see response to question #2 above.

5. Does USAID expect offerors to have prepared a response to COVID-19 in our technical design?

USAID Response: Applicants may make any suitable technical suggestions in their applications.

6. Are there any Mission-specific blanket waivers in effect which will apply to an award resulting from this solicitation?

USAID Response: No Mission-specific blanket waivers is anticipated.

7. Please confirm that documents in Microsoft Office version 2010 or later are acceptable.

USAID Response: Yes.

8. Is USAID able to provide documentation to the selected recipient and its subrecipients and contractors to verify exemption of taxes for the program and for any posted expatriate staff members on the program?

USAID Response: USAID may address this with the apparently successful applicant based on the prevalent circumstances at the time of award.

9. As the recipient will be operating in Niger and Burkina Faso and need to hire employees in-country as well as expatriate staff and third-country nationals, would USAID kindly provide a copy of (or link to) the current bilateral agreement between the US and Niger and/or Burkina Faso in both English and French or confirm that there is no bilateral agreement between the US and Niger or Burkina Faso?

USAID Response: There is an existing separate bilateral agreement between the USG and Republic of Niger, as well as with Burkina Faso. This would be shared with the successful applicant after award.

10. Should applicants include Covid19 response considerations in the proposal?

USAID Response: see response to question #5 above.

SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

11. Could USAID please provide more clarity regarding the definition for the “break in educational continuity” referred to on page 9, “Young people are also confronted with a break in educational continuity between school, family, and community...” ?

USAID Response: This refers to young people being forced to leave school early due to obligations of family and community.

12. Will internally displaced youth within the BYC’s zones of intervention be considered as beneficiaries of the BYC’s activity?

USAID Response: Yes, they are considered beneficiaries for BYC.

13. Populations in the BYC intervention zones may be forced to migrate to neighboring communes and districts. In response to a humanitarian crisis, will the BYC Activity limit its response activities to the boundaries of the intervention zones?

USAID Response: There can be flexibility in determining the boundaries of intervention, especially given the nature of migration in the Sahel. Commune selection will be finalized during the refinement period.

14. On page 6, under Introduction, it states “*USAID is supporting the five-year Bridget Youth Connect (BYC) Activity focused on...*”. As this seems to be a simple error, can USAID kindly edit “Bridget” to the correct term “Bridge”?

USAID Response: Yes. The statement is now revised to read: “*USAID is supporting the five-year Bridge Youth Connect (BYC) Activity focused on...*”

15. **Pg. 23, Geographic Coverage and Target Populations.** The NOFO does not provide an estimate of beneficiary target numbers. However, Applicants who are already working in the BYC zones of intervention and who have conducted such targeting may have an unfair advantage in estimating targets. Can USAID provide further insight and ideally a range of young people between 15-29 that

would be targeted, assuming that the split would be 25% in Burkina Faso and 75% in Niger?

USAID Response: The 25%:75% Burkina Faso vs. Niger split is accurate for the initial Award, but remains subject to change if the Crisis Modifier is activated. USAID welcomes all applicants to use publicly available census and other data to inform targeting, combined with reasonable assumptions. USAID recognizes that the successful awardee will likely adjust those targets post-award based on field assessments.

- 16.Pg. 23, Geographic Coverage and Target Populations.** USAID notes that “Commune selection will happen in consultation with USAID during the refinement period” and “Applicants should consider layering interventions from this activity on to effective interventions from other ongoing or recent USAID activities to deepen the impact of the programming on target communities.” Apart from the OTI & SDP activities, are the RISE 2 programs (e.g. FFP DFSAs and Markets & Nutrition) also targeting volatile communes in the zones of intervention to enable collaboration?

USAID Response: RISE 2 programs are targeting food insecure areas, some of which happen to be in volatile communes.

- 17.** Could USAID please confirm that the implementor may begin piloting some activities before the 6-month refinement period concludes?

USAID Response: Yes, the implementor may begin piloting some activities before the 6-month refinement period concludes.

- 18.Pg. 36, Key Personnel and Staffing.** The NOFO states that “Applicants must propose, describe, and justify 5 Key Personnel positions including the Chief of Party (COP) and Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP).” Would USAID consider changing this to “Applicants must propose, describe, and justify up to 5 Key Personnel positions including the Chief of Party (COP) and Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP)” to allow for flexibility in the approach?

USAID Response: No. Please provide 5 key personnel as specified in the NOFO.

- 19.** Could USAID please clarify how “nutrition sensitivity” in market systems facilitation will be considered or evaluated across BYC’s three objectives?

USAID Response: The most important consideration for BYC is to create and enhance viable and attractive livelihoods for vulnerable youth. Nutrition sensitivity is an important secondary outcome that should be considered where it can be achieved as part of supporting viable livelihoods.

20. Pg. 20, Affordable Mobile Phones Partnership. The NOFO states: “USAID has a global development alliance activity with a technology firm called NewPath that is targeted at leasing smartphones to beneficiaries. USAID will gain the ability to push information aligned with USAID development objectives to customers, as well as solicit information and feedback.” Would it be possible for USAID to provide more information about this? Specifically:

- a. Is there a limit to the number of phones that could be leased?
- b. What is the cost to lease the phones?
- c. Is there any information about the kind of phones that are available?
 - i. Are these KaiOS phones?
 - ii. Any information about the phones available, would be helpful

USAID Response: There is no limit to the number of phones that can be leased. This is a market demand issue. The beneficiaries will have to sign up to lease the phones, and the estimated cost of leasing the phones will be roughly \$2-5 per month, depending on the terms of the lease. Newpath will initially be working with smart feature phones running the Android OS, and will potentially work with KaiOS phones in the future.

21. On page 29 of the NOFO, Applicants are asked to “engage with and benefit populations and individuals supported under OTI’s NCCI programs in Diffa and Tillaberi and in Burkina Faso.” Is USAID able to share more information with applicants on the individuals and populations that NCCI benefitted, and/or provide access to relevant NCCI project reports?

USAID Response: Yes, please see Attachment I to this Q&A.

22. Given that soft skills and life skills are used interchangeably in the solicitation, what is USAID’s definition of soft skills? What is USAID’s definition of life skills?

USAID Response: Please consult USAID’s Education Policy <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1865/2018-usaid-education-policy> and USAID’s Policy Brief on Social-Emotional Learning for a definition of soft skills and related terms. <https://www.edu-links.org/learning/usaids-new-education-policy-brief-social-and-emotional-and-soft-skills>.

23. Can USAID confirm that budget and activity planning in the proposal should reflect the 75%-25% LOE split between Niger and Burkina Faso?

USAID Response: Yes, this is the correct split. This is subject to change based on crisis modifier invocation.

24. The NOFO clearly states that “commune selection will happen in consultation with USAID during the refinement period” (pg. 23). Can USAID confirm that applicants should provisionally assume full coverage of SDP and RISE II communes until the refinement period?

USAID Response: Applicants are welcome to make proposals about which communes will be of initial focus, with the understanding that those will likely shift post-award. Because BYC aims to enhance livelihoods and engagement of youth vulnerable to exploitation from VEOs, applicants should propose a technical approach that engages that population in an impactful, cost-effective, and realistic manner to achieve sustainable results. Applicant interventions should be within the specified geographies of Tillabéri, Maradi, and Diffa in Niger and Centre-Nord and Est in Burkina Faso. Collaborating with, and building on, current and previous U.S. Government funded activities in those regions is encouraged, but not required.

25. Can USAID confirm that applicant budgets are estimations given that the final commune selection will be determined once awarded?

USAID Response: Budgets should reflect the Applicant’s best understanding at the time of Application and will be rigorously evaluated. Prior to Award, USAID may negotiate adjustments to the submitted budget with the Apparently Successful Applicant. The Awardee and USAID may mutually agree to modify the budget post-Award if required.

26. Can USAID provide its own definition of “institutional entrepreneurship” (pg. 14 in the NOFO)?

USAID Response: The information provided in the NOFO should suffice.

27. Can USAID provide some illustrative activities or approaches that promote institutional entrepreneurship?

USAID Response: See question #26 above.

28. Can USAID confirm if an applicant should include a research partner at this stage, given the degree of collaboration surrounding learning and CLA agenda under the Bridge and RISE II initiatives?

USAID Response: Applicants are welcome to suggest partners that will best help them to achieve the goals of BYC.

29. Can USAID provide more specific guidance on how applicant should collaborate or complement the Development Credit Authority (DCA) in Burkina Faso and Niger?

USAID Response: The successful applicant will work with the DCA program to encourage lending to BYC beneficiaries. The DCA should be considered by applicants as an opportunity to direct funding to eligible youth-led businesses or to businesses that are committed to hiring youth. The successful applicant will work with DCA partners to sensitise them to the BYC approach, and encourage them to lend to BYC beneficiaries by demonstrating the support that entrepreneurs are getting.

30. The NOFO provides a brief description of the Sahel Development Partnership on pages 16-17. The NOFO does not mention whether BYC should coordinate activities with SDP activities. Will BYC be expected to coordinate activities with SDP? If so, how and in what ways? Will any collaboration with SDP compromise humanitarian principles?

USAID Response: Bridge Youth Connect is a part of the SDP. SDP is an integrated approach, as opposed to a project or activity, which brings together several parts of USAID programming in the region in a cohesive fashion. BYC will contribute to the second and third of SDP's three implementation arms:

- Intensive CVE programming in areas with active conflict or violent attacks (“hot” areas) in Tillaberi, Niger, and the Sahel and Est regions of northern Burkina Faso to address immediate VEO threats;
- Transitional livelihood, governance, and CVE programming focused on “warm” areas and former “hot” areas as conditions improve;
- Multi-sector resilience and development programming (e.g. RISE II) in more stable “buffer” areas prone to recurrent humanitarian crises with the flexibility to expand into former warm and hot zones as conditions further improve and resources allow.

The successful applicant will be expected to collaborate closely with all other SDP partners and participate fully in appropriate thematic groups and SDP-wide coordination bodies. The actual coordination function will be managed by USAID, with support from the Sahel Collaboration and Communication (SCC) activity. BYC will be a core contributor to SDP and applicants are welcome to describe their strategies for effective contribution to collective learning and adaptive management in a context with diverse stakeholders across all three lines of effort.

USAID seeks to implement BYC in accord with the promotion of human rights and to "do no harm" in its implementation. BYC is part of the USG's efforts to address and mitigate the drivers of support for violent extremist organizations.

31. In the NOFO section "Leveraging, Collaboration, and Partnerships" on page 19, it says that implementers "will actively collaborate with relevant government agencies, key USAID Implementing Partners (IP) and other partners working in the same intervention zone." Does this directive include partners who are intelligence/security/military actors? If yes, how and in what ways will BYC collaborate with them?

USAID Response: Applicants should propose the types of partnerships they believe will further the goals of BYC. Applicants may propose to engage with security sector actors as needed, and this will be closely guided by USAID during implementation to ensure positive outcomes and adherence to USAID regulations.

32. Page 20 of the NOFO states that USAID has a Development Credit Authority (DCA) for Burkina Faso already in place and is designing a new one for Niger. When will the Niger DCA be in place? Will the BYC activity be expected to collaborate with the DCAs in both countries?

USAID Response: The Niger DCA will tentatively be in place towards the end of the summer. However, COVID-related disruption may delay this. Yes, this activity will be expected to collaborate with DCAs in both countries.

33. Pages 19-23 of the NOFO lists the USAID activities for collaboration, however, the DFSAs are not on that list. Does USAID intend for this activity to collaborate with the DFSAs?

USAID Response: Yes, this activity should collaborate with DFSAs.

34. Page 23 states: "Based on the aforementioned collaborative implementation approach, the applicant will be required to work with RISE II, Bridge, and other USG partners and others to identify the most appropriate communes to implement the various components of these activities...Commune selection will happen in consultation with USAID during the refinement period." Will USAID please confirm that applicants should not propose specific communes in their application?

USAID Response: Applicants have the option to propose priority communes in their applications as a way to illustrate their technical approach and provide the basis for justifying their management approach, calculating budgets, and estimating targets. However, USAID reserves the right to request changes to the

targeted communes in order to better align BYC with other USAID IPs. In addition, USAID expects the successful Awardee to identify synergies with other partners during the refinement period and adjust geography as necessary.

35. There is no mention of GBV in the NOFO and Child Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) is mentioned in the context section only. Does USAID expect this activity to integrate GBV and CEFM prevention?

USAID Response: As per the gender “cross-cutting priorities” section on page 30, applicants should propose approaches that respond to the needs of the targeted communities.

36. Can USAID please clarify how the BYC crisis modifier will collaborate with other emergency humanitarian projects in the two countries and other projects with crisis modifiers under RISE II?

USAID Response: The modes of collaboration between humanitarian and development actors are still under development within RISE II. While USAID is engaging as needed to clarify roles and responsibilities among partners, the BYC implementer is responsible to ensure it has productive collaborative relationships. All USAID implementers must remain flexible and responsive during periods of crisis..

37. On page 27 of the NOFO, under Objective 2 it states: “Aside from the limited job opportunities in Niger and Burkina Faso which USAID seeks to address through other programs the constraints that youth face in their ability to earn income or improve their earnings are...” Can USAID please clarify what programs are being referred to here?

USAID Response: USAID/Washington has a project entitled “Catalyze” that will also operate in Burkina Faso and Niger. The goal of the activity in the Sahel will be to promote access to finance through blended capital, and work to support entrepreneurs by providing pay-for-performance grants to business development service providers. This activity is expected to begin operations towards the end of the calendar year, and will work directly with BYC to support its interventions.

38. On page 28 of the NOFO, under the Access to Finance section, it states: “USAID will have separate activities focused on access to finance”. Can USAID please clarify what these separate activities will be? What is the timeline of the startup of these separate activities? In what ways will BYC be expected to collaborate with them? Can USAID please elaborate on the geographical areas targeted, types of financial institutions, and likely credit amounts?

USAID Response: See response to question 37 above.

39. Page 28, under the Access to Finance section of the NOFO states: “The applicant should consider an appropriate cash transfer model for economically vulnerable beneficiaries or other target populations that need immediate gap-filling access to cash.” Does USAID see the use of cash as relevant in crisis modifier scenarios as well as a part of a package of livelihoods support provided to youth outside of crisis situations?

USAID Response: Depending on the crisis being addressed, and what the humanitarian actors are doing in the area, yes, this is potentially an appropriate response. The implementer would be expected to diligently coordinate with humanitarian and other actors, perhaps through participation in a cash working group. In a non-crisis scenario, grant-based assistance would also be possible.

40. Page 28 of the NOFO states: “Finally, qualified youth may be consumers as well as purveyors of financial services (such as tontine managers), depending on their capacity. The implementer should consider ways that this activity can facilitate the growth of a financial services business development support industry that can help businesses to sustainably and responsibly access finance.” A manager of tontines (which are ubiquitous in the intervention areas and require no project facilitation) is typically a trusted community member, and attracts little remuneration. Can USAID please clarify if the trainers of project-promoted savings groups can be considered as “purveyors of financial services” (NOFO pg. 28)?

USAID Response: Yes. Another example of a purveyor of financial services might be a business development service provider specializing in assisting small businesses to access and manage loans.

41. Page 33 of the NOFO describes an intensive piloting phase. Can USAID please indicate a scale of the pilot relative to the overall project outreach?

USAID Response: Applicants are free to suggest the scale of pilots that may demonstrate success.

42. Page 39 of the RFA notes a crisis modifier of \$12 million that applicants are to include as a set aside in their budget.

a. Please clarify whether this amount is inclusive of indirect costs.

b. Please note where this amount (\$12 million) should be included in the SF 424. Should it go in “Other”?

USAID Response: Yes it should be inclusive of indirect costs, and can be captured under Other.

43. Given the population of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Diffa, should separate activities be developed for the youth of that sub-population, or should they be integrated into the overall youth programming for Diffa?

USAID Response: Applicants are welcome to make the most technically appropriate proposal.

44. Can USAID provide a specific time frame for the refinement period at the beginning of the project? (p.23).

USAID Response: Six months.

45. Can USAID provide a specific time frame for the intensive piloting phase of the project, which is stated to take place during years 1 and 2 of the activity? (p.32) Does this timing mean that Scale Up should be planned for years 3 to 5?

USAID Response: Applicants are welcome to suggest tentative timelines for piloting, with the understanding that scale-up phases for different types of interventions may differ.

46. The RFA covers regions of Niger and Burkina Faso. Considering that some regions such as Tillabéri in Niger and Est in Burkina Faso are neighbouring, will USAID expect proposals to consider cross-border dynamics and include activities that address them?

USAID Response: Applicants may suggest such elements in their applications if it will strengthen their approach.

47. RFA p. 23 –a Geographic Coverage and Target Populations, Niger – The USAID Forecast mentioned that focal areas in Niger would include Zinder (in addition to Tillabéri, Maradi and Diffa), yet Zinder is not listed in the RFA. Can USAID confirm that Zinder is no longer in the scope of this activity unless identified for future Crisis Modification Activities?

USAID Response: Yes, Zinder is no longer identified in the NOFO as a region to be targeted. However, applicants should be prepared to shift geographically post-award if necessary.

48. On page 23 of the NOFO, under Geographic Coverage and Target Populations, it states “*Commune selection will happen in consultation with USAID during the refinement period. However, since the majority of the population is in rural areas, the applicant should expect most implementation to be serving those populations, including if they have migrated to more urban locations.*” Can USAID confirm that the Activity will be required to support youth that have migrated out of the target regions into urban areas outside of the geographical

coverage? Should applicants only consider migration to urban/peri-urban areas within the regions of focus such as Tillaberi and Kaya?

USAID Response: Applicants should primarily consider migration within the focus regions. However, applicants are welcome to propose interventions outside of the focus regions if deemed compelling.

49.RFA p. 23 - Geographic Coverage and Target Populations, Burkina Faso – The USAID Forecast mentioned that focal areas in Burkina Faso would include the region of Sahel (in addition to the regions of Centre-Nord and Est), yet the Sahel Region is not listed in the RFA. Can USAID confirm that Sahel is no longer in the scope of this activity, unless identified for future Crisis Activities?

USAID Response: USAID confirms that Centre-Nord and Est are the geographic areas of focus in the NOFO. This may change post-Award depending on needs and opportunities.

50.RFA pp. 36-37 – The three Key Personnel to be proposed by applicants – Does USAID expect that at least one of the proposed Key Personnel be based in Burkina Faso?

USAID Response: Page 48 of the NOFO states that Applicants must propose five (5) Key Personnel. Applicants may propose the staffing locations that make the most sense and that will ensure effective implementation of their approach. Successful applicants will ensure sufficient decision making authority in Burkina Faso to allow for independent and responsive programming.

51.Related to the above: Does USAID anticipate (prefer) that all Key Personnel and other full-time Activity staff work out of one central Activity Office in Niger, with heavy regional travel between the countries (transport, per diems, etc.)?

USAID Response: See answer to Question #50 above.

52.On page 23 of the NOFO, it is stated that "This activity will focus on the most vulnerable young women and men....USAID will work with the successful applicant to confirm the criteria for vulnerable youth to be targeted by the activity." Can USAID provide more details on the intended definition of "most vulnerable" (e.g. extreme poverty thresholds)?

USAID Response: The definition presented on page 23 suffices.

53.On page 23 of the NOFO, it is stipulated that "The current expected level of effort will be seventy-five percent in Niger, and twenty-five percent in Burkina Faso". Can USAID please clarify if the expected ratio is related to labor costs only or to total program costs?

USAID Response: This relates to total program costs.

54. Pg. 38, Crisis Modifier and Shock Response. “The \$12 million crisis modifier provision in the BYC award, when activated by USAID, authorizes the Implementer to incur costs under the activity line item entitled “Crisis Modifier” in response to a shock, crisis, or ongoing stressor.” Will the \$12 million crisis modifier follow the same 75% for Niger and 25% Burkina Faso split?

USAID Response: The \$12 million crisis modifier’s geographic allocation will depend on the nature of the crisis and the available funding.

55. On page 28 of the NOFO, it is stated that "In addition to the envisioned interventions in the BYC activity described above, USAID will have separate activities focused on access to finance." Can USAID please provide additional information on the upcoming solicitations related to access to finance, such as a brief scope of work?

USAID Response: See answer to Question #37 above.

56. On page 32 of the NOFO, it is stated that "The six month workplan should include next steps for each area to illustrate the phased implementation approach planned." Can USAID please clarify what "phased implementation" refers to? Would USAID consider removing this requirement because the next steps will depend on results and findings of the six month refinement period?

USAID Response: The phased implementation is described in the aforementioned 6 points in the same paragraph. USAID is asking for what this phased implementation during the first six months would look like.

57. On page 33 of the NOFO, it is stated that "Note that pilots may make use of different treatment arms on randomly assigned participants or, where applicable, similar treatment arms on different populations." Does USAID have expectations in terms of how we balance this idea against the idea of youth-led and beneficiary-driven programming (i.e. youth helping choose programming and their pathways within it)?

USAID Response: USAID has no expectations of this balance, and applicants are welcome to make proposals that are technically appropriate and in line with USAID’s positive youth development policy.

58. On page 33, the NOFO states the following: “Upon completion of assessments and data-gathering to build out the theory of change and evidence gaps/assumptions regarding the links in the theory of change, the implementer will engage in an intensive pilot phase to test the causal assumptions in the theory

of change.” Can USAID confirm that the cost of the research involved in testing these causal relationships should be included as part of the budget for this project?

USAID Response: Yes.

59. **On pages 32 to 34**, the NOFO describes a three-step approach to define the TOC, intensive piloting and scale-up. Given that interventions will be piloted and defined during the life of the award, can USAID confirm that with the proposal USAID would want to see a high level budget for project activities, which can be defined in greater detail during the intensive piloting phase, and submitted 5 months after award?

USAID Response: The budget and accompanying documents submitted should follow the NOFO guidance on page 50-56 and be sufficiently detailed to allow USAID to conduct the budget analyses indicated in the NOFO. USAID and the Awardee have the option to modify the budget post-Award as necessary.

60. **On p. 34, under “Illustrative Indicators,”** the NOFO states, “The following illustrative indicators should be considered as part of the applicant’s AMELP.” Would USAID confirm that Applicants should review the listed indicators and select those that are relevant for their proposed approach?

USAID Response: Applicants should propose the indicators that can provide the best opportunity for learning and gauging success.

61. Crisis modifier:

- a. is it correct to assume that the crisis modifier of \$12 million should be presented as a line in the final budget and that the successful applicant will program these funds after award and as directed by USAID?
- b. How do we include the crisis modifier in the proposal?
 - i. Should we assume that we propose an initial 5-year approach and targets for \$23.5 million?
 - ii. Should a separate section within the proposal be reserved for activities that would fall under the crisis modifier? If so, how many pages should be set aside and do these count towards the total number of pages?
- c. Should the crisis modifier appear as a lump sum in the overall budget or should the amount be budgeted like the rest of the project budget, as a sub-budget?

USAID Response: The estimated total budget for BYC is \$35.5M of which \$12M is set aside as a line item for the crisis modifier. Budgets should include \$12M as a crisis modifier plug figure, this may be distributed evenly across the five year

budget, although it is not expected to be used every year. The Applicant should not propose Crisis Modifier activities at this time. If the Crisis Modifier is activated post-Award, the Applicant will submit a separate budget and work plan description of the proposed new activities.

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

62. RFA p. 40 – Period of Performance Dates for Budgeting, Candidate-recruiting and other Programmatic-design Purposes – Can USAID please confirm that it is reasonable for applicants to use the activity start-up date of September 1, 2020 (in which case, the POP closing date will be August 31, 2025)? (The RFA states “estimated start date will be on/about September 2020.”)

USAID Response: All dates remain estimates e.g. as the NOFO submission deadline is extended, so will the estimated start date.

63. The expected Level of Effort will be seventy-five percent in Niger, and twenty-five percent in Burkina Faso. Will the applicant need to visibly show USAID the expected level of effort throughout all expenses within the budget?

USAID Response: Yes.

- 64.P. 41, Authorized Geographic Code. Would USAID consider making the Authorized Geographic Code 935 in light of the global procurement issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic?

USAID Response: Yes.

65. Is there only going to be one award in Burkina Faso, or will there be multiple awards which would allow us to submit a project with a budget of \$225,000 to \$250,000?

USAID Response: USAID intends to make one (1) Cooperative Agreement award pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity to cover both countries of Burkina Faso and Niger. Refer to Section B.1., page 40 of the NOFO for more details.

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

66. Section C.2. states that no cost-sharing is required under this award, however Section D.6.e. mentions that the budget narrative must itemize the federal and non-federal (cost share) amounts. Can USAID please confirm that cost share is not mandatory under this award?

USAID Response: USAID confirms that cost share is not mandatory under this award, and will not be evaluated.

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

67. We understand that USAID has stated their preference that the technical and cost applications each be submitted as consolidated email attachments, while allowing for the situation that this may not be possible. In the event that multiple attachments need to be submitted, is there a limit on the number of attachments (per email) for the submission?

USAID Response: No limit. But file size must not exceed 10MB per email.

68. Under “(f) Organizational Capacity and Experience” on p. 50, USAID asks for the experience and capacities of major sub-awardees to be included in the narrative. Can USAID please clarify its definition of a “major sub-awardee” relative to the total estimated award amount (not including the crisis modifier funds)?

USAID Response: Major sub-awardees” are sub-awardees whose proposed costs exceed 20% of the Prime’s proposed total cost or perform a key element of the BYC activity.

69. Under “(g) Programming in Insecure Zones” on p. 50, there appears to be a word missing after “drivers of”. Can USAID please confirm the word(s) that should follow?

USAID Response: The words that should follow are: “instability and violent extremism”.

70. On p. 49, USAID asks applicants to include in Annex 2, their plan for “establishing nodes of collaboration with other relevant activities.” Noting the description of the SCC project’s role (described on p. 19 on the NOFO), should applicants assume that SCC will support and facilitate establishing the nodes of collaboration during the refinement period, or should applicants plan and budget for all activities related to identifying the nodes of collaboration, and jointly planning collaborative activities with other USAID projects?

USAID Response: SCC will support and facilitate this process, but the implementer is ultimately responsible for the success of this collaboration effort.

71. **Pg. 43, General Content and Form of Application.** Page 43 of the NOFO states that “Both the Technical and Business (Cost) Applications must be written in English language”. Will USAID accept letters of commitment from our Sub-awardees in French?

USAID Response: Yes

72.Pg. 44, General Content and Form of Application: The NOFO states: “The technical application must be in a searchable and editable Word or PDF format as appropriate.” Please confirm that signed PDF documents such as the Key Personnel Letters of Commitment and Letters of Commitment from Sub-Awardees in the technical annexes do not need to be submitted in searchable and editable format and can be submitted as standard PDF image files.

USAID Response: Yes. USAID confirms the statement above.

73.Pg. 46, Technical Application Format. The NOFO states that the technical application must contain “Annex 9: Letters of Commitment from Sub-Awardees (if any)”. Will USAID also accept Letters of Collaboration from resource organization and other collaborating partners as part of Annex 9?

USAID Response: Yes.

74.Pg. 48, Management Approach and Staffing Plan: The NOFO indicates that “Applicants must demonstrate how they will engage marginalized populations (including women and youth) or provide meaningful ongoing insight to design, programming, and learning, as part of the management plan.” Does USAID’s reference to marginalized populations include refugees and internally displaced persons? Are applicants expected to work with these groups?

USAID Response: Yes, the implementer will be expected to work with these groups.

75.Pg. 49, Annex 3: Organizational Chart: Will USAID allow applicants to submit Annex 3: Organizational Chart on 11x17 size paper in order to maximize space and readability?

USAID Response: No.

76.Pg. 51, c) Required Certifications and Assurances: The NOFO lists item 2 as “Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B) in this section.” However, the SF-424B Form is also listed as a requirement under Section b) SF 424 Form(s) on page 51. Please confirm that Applicants only need to include the SF-424B Form, along with the other SF-424 Forms, listed on page 51 and that we do not need to provide a duplicate copy of the form in the Required Certifications and Assurances section of the Business (Cost) Application.

USAID Response: Yes. Confirmed—only one is required.

77.Pg. 51, Pre-award Terms Incorporated by Reference: Please confirm that: a Branding Strategy, and Marking Plan, and any Conflict of Interest Pre-Award

Term documentation are not required as part of the Business (Cost) Application. If they are required for submission, please clarify the instructions/requirements for the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan.

[USAID Response: Only the Apparently Successful Applicant will be required to submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan before award. Refer to NOFO Section D.6.j\) on page 56 for details.](#)

78. On page 44 of the NOFO under General Content and Form Application, it states “c) If applications contain text boxes, they must be in no less than 10-point font, as to not unduly interfere with readability.” Can USAID clarify if this applies to text boxes and tables as well.

[USAID Response: Yes, they are subject to the 10-point font size limitation.](#)

79. In the NOFO on page 46, there is a list of the format for the technical approach and a brief description if each section counts towards the 25-page limit. Can USAID confirm that an acronym list does not count toward the 25-page limit?

[USAID Response: USAID confirms that an acronym list does not count toward the 25-page limit.](#)

80. Pg. 56, History of Past Performance: The NOFO states: “The Applicant (prime only) must provide information regarding its recent (not to exceed 3 years) history of performance on any cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements (not to exceed 5) involving similar or related programs...” To ensure that USAID gets a full sense of our team’s technical expertise and capabilities, will USAID accept history of performance from our sub-awardees as long as it doesn’t exceed a total of 5?

[USAID Response: No. History of performance is required from only the prime applicants.](#)

81. Could USAID please consider requiring only a CV/Resume or a Statement of Qualification for Key Personnel instead of both as the supporting information and justification of qualifications will be similar in both documents for Key Personnel?

[USAID Response: Yes. USAID now requires Applicants to submit only CV/Resume for Key Personnel.](#)

82. Could USAID clarify which Annex the Past Performance Information should be included in for submission? The History of Performance section on page 57 provides the format in Annex #6 of the NOFO, but it does not list the Annex number for submission.

USAID Response: Annex #6 is to be submitted in the Business (Cost) Application.

83. Could USAID please complete the sentence on page 50, “Applicants must provide additional details on how they will adjust their technical approach to be effective in insecure zones and how this technical approach addresses drivers of...”? Based on similar sections, it may refer to drivers of conflict, but we want to be sure we fully understand USAID’s requirements.

USAID Response: See answer to Question #69 above.

84. Could USAID please consider providing a plug figure for subgrants to local organizations to achieve project goals so that all offerors work from a level playing field regarding USAID’s expectations?

USAID Response: No. USAID recognizes that applicants may have different technical approaches to the BYC and so are free to propose subgrants commensurate and unique to their solutions.

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

USAID Response: This information is not relevant to this NOFO. Applicants should use their established personnel policies and procedures for compensation.

86. Are Niger and Burkina Faso considered accompanied posts or unaccompanied posts by USAID?

USAID Response: At this time, Burkina Faso is an unaccompanied post for minors of USG employed expatriate staff, and Niger is an accompanied post. Implementing Partners should rely on their established policies and procedures on these questions.

87. 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?

USAID Response: Subrecipients that have established NICRA rates should include it to support proposed indirect costs in their budget.

88. On page 50, the NOFO states: “Applicants and their major sub-awardees (if applicable) should describe their organization’s experience and capacities (both technical and managerial) as they relate to being able to successfully implement BYC.” Can USAID please provide a definition of “major sub-awardees” for this activity?

USAID Response: See answer to Question #68 above.

89. Does USAID have a preferred format for Annex 6: Statement of Qualifications? If so, can a template be provided?

USAID Response: See answer to Question #81 above.

90. On Page 51, the NOFO requests form SF424b in sections b and c of the cost application. Can USAID please confirm that applicants should only include SF424b once in the cost application?

USAID Response: Yes. USAID confirms that applicants should only include SF424b once in the cost application.

91. Can USAID please confirm that the requested Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient on page 51 are only required from the prime applicant?

USAID Response: Yes.

92. Page 56: can USAID please confirm that applicants should include a draft Branding and Marking Plan as an annex to the cost application?

USAID Response: See answer to Question #77 above.

93. Can USAID please confirm that applicants may use their own summary and detail budget template provided it aligns with the illustrative template provided in Annex #1 and the major cost categories described in Section D.6.e?

USAID Response: Yes. But it must conform with the Budget Categories found on Section B of SF424A form.

94. On page 50, Annex 9, it is noted that USAID requests applicants not to pursue exclusive agreements with local partners. Could USAID specify that applicants be REQUIRED not to pursue exclusive agreements with local partners, in order to avoid confusion regarding messaging that local partners might receive from different applicants?

USAID Response: Yes, that is our preference. In addition, USAID will not consider or be bound by any exclusive agreements or commitments made by local partners or key personnel to competing applications.

95. **Pg. 56, History of Past Performance:** The NOFO states: “Applicants should use the format provided in Annex #6: Past Performance Information of the NOFO to document the detailed information as requested. The completed forms should be included in the application’s appendix/annex”. Will USAID allow Applicants to

use their own past performance information form template as long as it includes the same information as that of the format provided in Annex #6?

USAID Response: Yes.

96.Pg. 56, History of Past Performance: Under the Business (Cost) Application format, the NOFO states: “The completed [Past Performance Information] forms should be included in the application’s appendix/annex.” Please confirm that Applicants should include the past performance information forms as part of the annexes for the technical application, not as an annex to the business (cost) application.

USAID Response: History of Performance is required from Prime applicants only. Past Performance Information (Annex #6) is to be included in the Business (Cost) application package only. However, Applicants should provide sufficient detail in the technical narrative to facilitate assessment of Merit Review Criterion #3. Annex #6 on page 82 of the NOFO is the template to be used by Applicants.

97.On page 51 of the NOFO, USAID requires that the budget “must be submitted as one unprotected Excel file (MS Office 2000 or later versions) with visible formulas and references and must be broken out by project year, including itemization of the federal and non-federal (cost share) amount.”

If a lower tier partner has an organizational “sealed bid” policy that considers Home Office, Expat Salaries, Fringe and NICRA rates proprietary, will USAID

- a. Consider our submission responsive to the NOFO and accept that partner’s budget without the budget detail for those specific categories visible as part of the Prime’s Application, and
- b. Allow the partner to submit a separate unprotected budget directly to USAID?

USAID Response: Yes. But submission must be made before the deadline of the NOFO, and must be clear enough to enable USAID to understand which application it relates to.

98.Can USAID confirm that only the lead applicant can submit Past Performance Information (Annex 6 of Cost Application), specifically excluding sub-applicants?

USAID Response: See response to Question #96 above.

99.Can the applicant include an acronym section before the technical approach section that will not count towards the page limit?

USAID Response: Yes.

100. Can USAID specify the requirements concerning font and font size for graphics? Would USAID consider other fonts for graphics?

USAID Response: They are subject to the 10-point font size limitation. Refer to Section D.3.c) of the subject NOFO for details.

101. Page 50 states: “Applicants must provide additional details on how they will adapt their technical approach to be effective in insecure zones and how this technical approach addresses drivers of.” Can USAID please clarify if this sentence is incomplete and if so, provide the remaining criteria?

USAID Response: See answer to Question #69 above.

102. Page 45, Section D, Part 3h states: “The explanation must identify the factors upon which each estimate is based and show the arithmetic in reaching the cost figure,” in reference to the budget narrative. Can USAID confirm that the offeror does not need to include written arithmetic in reaching the cost figure in the budget narrative if the detailed calculation is clearly demonstrated in the excel budget, thus, avoiding duplicative information and ensuring, per Page 50, that the cost application “be as concise as possible while still providing necessary details.”

USAID Response: The Budget Narrative must contain sufficient detail to allow USAID to understand the proposed costs, and must be thorough, including sources for costs to support USAID's determination that the proposed costs are fair and reasonable, and allocable to BYC.

103. Page 40 (also referenced on Page 23) states that “The expected Level of Effort will be seventy-five percent in Niger, and twenty-five percent in Burkina Faso.” Could USAID confirm that this means seventy-five percent of the total budget will be for Niger and twenty-five percent of the total budget will be for Burkina Faso, as opposed to allocating level of effort (i.e. person-days, person-months) to each country?

USAID Response: See response to Question #53 and #63 above.

104. Is the crisis modifier fund of \$12 million inclusive of indirect charges?

USAID Response: Yes.

105. Can USAID provide details on the level of detail for activities requested in the cost application? For example, given the different phases of 1) Build out the theory of change, 2) Intensive Piloting, and 3) Scale-up, does USAID prefer that

applicants provide a plug figure for activities, given that the different phases will likely require reconfiguration of activities?

USAID Response: No.

106. RFA p. 46 – Technical Application Annexes (not counting toward the 25-page limit) – In addition to the nine required annexes listed on this page, can applicants include additional annexes, such as Letters of Collaboration from non-costed resource groups, governmental counterparts and/or private-sector partners?

USAID Response: Yes.

107. RFA p. 46 – No Acronyms List appears in the list of elements to include in the Technical Application. Can USAID please confirm that no Acronyms List is needed?

USAID Response: See response to question #99 above.

108. RFA p. 56 – Business (Cost) Application’s “History of Performance” forms – The instructions state that these are from prime applicants only and that no more than five (“not to exceed five”) projects can be included. Can a prime applicant include fewer than five, if fewer such projects have been implemented during the last three years? Is it ok to include those projects that closed out in 2017 but no further back than 2017?

USAID Response: The Applicant (prime only) must provide information regarding its recent (not to exceed 3 years) history of performance on any cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements (not to exceed 5) involving similar or related programs.

109. Please confirm that section C.6.i History of Performance (page 56 of the NOFO) is the same as a request for PPRs. Further, please confirm that PPRs are:
- a. required from the Prime applicant only; and
 - b. PPRs should NOT be placed in the technical application but rather in the cost application
 - c. Is there a preferred template for this information?

USAID Response: See response to Question 96 above.

110. Could USAID please confirm Annex #1 is a sample budget and that offerors may submit their own template, as long as it complies with the layout and structure outlined?

USAID Response: Yes. But it must conform with the Budget Categories found on Section B of SF424A form.

111. Could USAID please confirm that applicants do not need to include a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan in the proposal submission?

USAID Response: See answer to Question #77 above.

112. Could USAID please confirm what information it would like to be included in the “History of Performance” section? Currently, there are small differences in the information requested in the submission instructions on page 56 of the RFA and the Annex 6 template provided.

USAID Response: See response to Question #96 above.

113. RFA pp. 56-57 – Can USAID please confirm that no Branding Strategy and Implementation Marking Plan is to be included with Applications?

USAID Response: See answer to Question #77 above.

114. The NOFO articulates that "these data must be provided in the main text of the technical application (in addition to required organizational data for the Cost Proposal)". Can USAID confirm if any other required documents such as Evidence of Responsibility is required for both the prime organization and/or partners for this funding opportunity?

USAID Response: No. Required data is as contained in the NOFO.

115. On page 53 of Section D6 (Business/Cost Application Format) of the NOFO, it is stated that "Procurement or Rental of Goods (Equipment & Supplies), Services and Real Property" should include Equipment and Supplies, Services and Real Property. However, in the Illustrative Budget Template provided in Annex #1, there are two separate categories for Equipment and Supplies (categories 4 and 5 respectively). Can USAID please clarify the following:

- a. Whether “Equipment and Supplies” should be two separate categories in accordance with the detailed budget template or combined in one section as "Procurement or Rental of Goods (Equipment & Supplies), Services and Real Property," per instructions in the NOFO?
- b. If the detailed budget format follows the NOFO requirements and has a combined category "Procurement or Rental of Goods (Equipment & Supplies), Services and Real Property" as noted on page 53, can USAID please confirm that these costs should be still split in the Object Class Budget Categories (Equipment and Supplies) in the SF-424a form?
- c. Can USAID please confirm that the cost of renting a field office to be included in “Other Direct Cost” category rather than "Procurement or Rental of Goods (Equipment & Supplies) described on page 53 of the NOFO?

USAID Response: Cost application format must comply with the SF-424A Section B Budget categories with Equipment and Supplies separated as 2 distinct budget categories. Cost of renting field offices should be captured under “Other”

116. **Page 47, Section D.5.d, Technical Approach, paragraph 1 states:** “It must include a clear description of the conceptual approach—reflecting conflict- and nutrition-sensitive market systems facilitation—and general strategy being proposed, the expected outcomes and impacts, and the core interventions to implement the strategy.” Additionally, the theory of change included on page 12 states: “If at-risk communities have immediate economic support, and if economic resilience is increased in affected communities, and if there is increased job creation and investment, and if the youth have stronger transferable skills (life skills, functional literacy, and business skills) then economic opportunities will be enhanced.”

The Offeror respectfully requests confirmation from USAID/Senegal that technical approaches should not include a nutrition-sensitive market systems facilitation approach in consideration of nutrition not being included in the theory of change.

USAID Response: See answer to Question #19 above.

117. **“On page 51, the NOFO refers to a Certificate of Compliance. Can USAID confirm that no documentation is required from organizations that do not have a certification of compliance?”**

USAID Response: Yes. Certificate of Compliance is only required from organizations whose systems have been certified by USAID/Washington's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA).

118. **On page 52, Budget categories outlined are different from categories in the budget template and SF 424A. Can USAID confirm that applicants should present budgets using SF 424A budget categories?**

USAID Response: Yes. applicants should present budgets using SF 424A Section B budget categories.

119. **On page 52, the NOFO indicates that allowances need to be included in the same category as salaries. Can USAID confirm that staff allowances can be included as an ODC if that’s consistent with organizations’ budgeting practices?**

USAID Response: Yes.

120. Can USAID confirm that a statement from the prime providing the information required **on page 55**, will be sufficient to satisfy this requirement? This includes: Name of organization; DUNS Number; Confirmation that the subrecipient does not appear on the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) list; Confirmation that the subrecipient does not have active exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM); Confirmation that the subrecipient is not listed in the United Nations Security designation list; Confirmation that the subrecipient is not suspended or debarred; Confirmation that the applicant has completed a risk assessment of the subrecipient, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.331(b); and Any negative findings as a result of the risk assessment and the applicant's plan for mitigation.

USAID Response: Yes. Please refer to Section D6.g) on page 55 of the NOFO for more details.

121. Should past performance required on **page 56** be included as part of the cost volume?

USAID Response: See response to Question #96 above.

122. **On page 56**, can USAID confirm that the Branding Strategy & Marking Plan referenced will only be submitted by the apparently successful applicant as per NOFO page 70 and don't need to be included in the cost proposal?

USAID Response: Yes.

123. "Will USAID accept a sealed budget and NICRA letter from a sub-applicant, by which the sub-applicant's information is sent directly to USAID?"

USAID Response: See response to question #98.

124. In the testing assumption for learning during the intensive pilot phase, does USAID suggest implementing randomized control trials?

USAID Response: Applicants are welcome to suggest technically appropriate methodologies.

125. The NOFO says, "The draft AMELP submitted to USAID with the Application must include draft annual and life-of-project targets for performance indicators which will be further developed with USAID and partners during the refinement period." Are applicants permitted to proposed targets as TBD for indicators requiring a baseline per USAID guidance? (i.e EG 6-4, EG 6-5)

USAID Response: Applications should include draft targets.

126. Annex #1 references a summary budget format, however, the template is for a detail budget template. Please share the summary format.

USAID Response: They are the same document. Note: the template is illustrative.

127. The Excel file provided as Annex #1 is for a 3-year budget only, please confirm that the period of performance of this project is 5 years as noted on page 40 of the NOFO.

USAID Response: Annex #1 is only illustrative. This project is for 5 years as noted on page 40 of the NOFO.

128. Can USAID please confirm if applicants should submit applications just to the primary and alternate points of contact, or if applications should be submitted with a copy to Aminata Diallo at amdiallo@usaid.gov and Hamed Cisse at hcisse@usaid.gov, similar to the submission of questions?

USAID Response: All applications, and any subsequent correspondences should be submitted with a copy to Aminata Diallo at amdiallo@usaid.gov and Hamed Cisse at hcisse@usaid.gov.

129. Pg. 57, under Required communications materials, C. Biweekly Updates: USAID stipulates that the awardee is required to provide bi-weekly updates about program activities and plans. Would USAID kindly consider making this a monthly, as opposed to bi-weekly, requirement?

USAID Response: Yes, USAID will make this change to a monthly requirement.

130. Should the Crisis Modifier be presented as a single activity line item in the applicant's budget?

USAID Response: Yes. This may be distributed evenly across the five year budget, although it is not expected to be used every year.

131. Page 63, Section F, 3.A Quarterly Reporting: The requirement under Annex 2 to include a financial table containing the expenses of the reporting period, year to date amount, and remaining budget line exceeds the level of financial reporting allowed under 2 CFR 200.327, which states: "the Federal awarding agency may solicit only the standard, OMB-approved government wide data elements for collection of financial information." We kindly request that USAID remove this requirement from the quarterly reporting section.

USAID Response: USAID confirms the removal of this requirement from the quarterly reporting section.

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

132. RFA pp. 59-60 – Assigning “Points” or Weight to the four Evaluation Criteria factors - Will USAID kindly consider assigning evaluation-criteria points (out of 100 points) or percentages of importance to the four Evaluation Criteria? We understand that they are listed in descending order of importance but it would be helpful for applicants to allocate page-counts for each section.

USAID Response: Evaluation factors will remain in descending order of importance. USAID General Counsel has found that merit reviews using the adjective rating method provide more qualitative differences between applications as opposed to relying on points as a “mechanical” process.

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

133. Page 68 states, “An activity-level CRM will also be conducted during the activity-level environmental analysis process.” Should the Applicant plan to include this activity, and funds for this activity, in their technical application?

USAID Response: No. USAID has completed this activity and included it in the Initial Environmental Assessment (please see Attachment II to this Q&A). The activity must adhere to the findings of this CRM screening.