

72066023RFA00005 – ARRETE Activity

Questions and Answers

1. Will USAID please consider a two-week extension of the due date due to accommodate for sufficient time for Q&A responses to be reviewed and integrated into proposals?

USAID Response: Unfortunately, we are unable to extend the deadline. The deadline for submission remains as August 2, 2023, at 8:00 am, Kinshasa, DRC Time (West Africa Standard Time Zone (GMT +1))

2. Under Objective 4 on page 12 of the NOFO, USAID indicates that “At the time of activating the Opportunity Fund, the implementing partner will receive a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) with a full SGBV program description component for their response.” Can USAID please clarify what is meant by “activating the Opportunity Fund” in this context? Further, can USAID please elaborate how it expects to issue a NOFO within an existing Cooperative Agreement? Does USAID intend to issue a single NOFO or multiple NOFOs under this component? Can USAID confirm that the applicant should earmark \$3m for the Opportunity Fund?

USAID Response: This request for application has a ceiling of \$18M for ARRETE program. USAID intends to “reserve \$3M” for the SGBV pilot component that will be designed after six (6) months. At that time, USAID will request the ARRETE implementing partner to design the pilot program using the knowledge that they have gained from the activity start-up. Only the ARRETE implementing partner and USAID will be involved in this process. Yes, the applicant should earmark \$3M for the Opportunity Fund and not program it at this time.

3. Under illustrative Interventions for Objective 2 (page 9-10), USAID refers to building skills and capacity of direct service providers and frontline workers. Will USAID please confirm that development of economic skills and reintegration programs will also qualify as acceptable services under Objective 2?

USAID Response: USAID will assess individual proposed technical interventions in line with the evaluation criteria published in the NOFO.

4. Under Section VI Donor and Interagency Collaboration, “USAID recommends the creation of a Financial and Technical Partner Working Group.” Does USAID intend to have the ARRETE implementing partner organize and chair this working group?

USAID Response: The ARRETE implementing partner would not be expected to chair a donor working group but could play a leading role in organizing and assisting to make it successful. USAID remains the lead DRC donor on C-TIP.

5. Under Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning on page 14 of the NOFO, USAID indicates an “illustrative abridged AMELP is to be included in the technical application with the final version submitted to the Agreement Officer’s Representative (AOR) within 30 days of the Award.” However, there are no subsequent instructions in Section D, 5.1.2 about inclusion of an abridged AMELP plan, either as part of the technical approach or as an annex. Can USAID please confirm that an abridged AMELP plan is not required at the time of submission of our proposal? If no, can USAID please elaborate what should be included in the abridged AMELP? Is there a page limitation for the abridged AMELP? Should an

abridged AMELP be included as part of the technical approach, and will it count as part of the 20-page max limit? Or should it be included separately as an Annex?

USAID Response: Yes, an illustrative abridged AMELP must be submitted at the time with the application and the final version within the 30 days of the award. It should be included as an Annex.

6. Could USAID please confirm if the Continuous Learning and Adapting (CLA) plan is considered as part of the AMELP, or will these documents be treated as separate deliverables?

USAID Response: While both can be submitted together, the CLA plan should be sufficiently robust to stand on its own as a roadmap for adaptive management of the award in the dynamic DRC context.

7. Could USAID please provide the Mission's CLA Plan?

USAID Response: Please refer to ADS 201.

8. In Section A, IV Activity Description, under each objective, there is a list of illustrative indicators, in addition, Section B states, "the applicants must align with these program areas and include the below performance indicators" and provides another list of indicators, do all indicators listed in the NOFO need to be included in the AMELP, or just applicable indicators to proposed activities?

USAID Response: Although Standard indicators are mandatory, the applicant will integrate only the most relevant that are matched to the proposed activities.

9. Page 15 of the NOFO states that USAID will complement the learning process wherever feasible by conducting an independent mid-term or end-of-project evaluation. Should applicants budget for mid-term and end-of-project evaluations, or will these be conducted by USAID?

USAID Response: Applicants should budget for mid-term evaluation, while end-of-project evaluation will be conducted by USAID.

10. Under the Staffing and Management Plan on page 27 of the NOFO, USAID asks the Applicant to "include a rapid start-up plan for the first three months of the project and a draft Work Plan for the first six months of the project." Does USAID intend for the Rapid Start-Up Plan and Draft Work plan to be in narrative form, GANTT chart form, or a combination of both?

USAID Response: A combination of narrative and chart format.

11. Page 15 of the NOFO asks applicants to submit resumes/CVs for key personnel and for "all proposed senior professional staff." However, Section D.5 "Content of Technical Application" on page 25-27 does not indicate where applicants should provide CVs/resumes. Can applicants submit CVs as a separate Annex (that is not included in the 20-page technical approach page limits)?

USAID Response: Please submit all relevant CV/resumes in a separate annex.

12. Is there a page limit on the Past Performance Documents?

USAID Response: For past performance, please use the template provided in Annex 3 of the NOFO. Use the template (One (1) page max per project) covering 3-5 years, providing relevant projects.

13. Page 24 of the NOFO instructs applicants that “10-point font can be used for graphs and charts. Tables, however, must comply with the 12-point Calibri requirement.” Can USAID please reconsider allowing applicants use 10-point font for tables, we find that tables using 12-point font are difficult for readers? If not, can USAID please distinguish the difference between a “chart” and a “table” in this context? Finally, are applicants allowed to use fonts other than Calibri in graphs, charts, and tables?

USAID Response: Yes, Calibri 10-point font can be used for graphs, charts, and tables. All other narrative should be 12-point.

14. Under Section (h) Business (Cost) Application Format:

a) For salaries, it states that applicants must provide their established written policies on personnel compensation

And

b) Travel, Transportation, and Per Diem requests company travel policy as supporting documentation. If applicants have received and successfully implemented multiple USAID awards, will USAID please confirm that we don’t need to submit these policies at the proposal stage but will make them available for USAID's review during implementation?

USAID Response: The business/cost application should be submitted using your organization’s policies for salaries, travel, transportation, and per diem, with justification in the budget narrative. If USAID requires additional clarification, you may be asked to submit additional information at a later date.

15. Page 31, 4) Equipment and Supplies notes that the budget narrative must support that necessity of rental costs for real property. Will USAID please confirm that office rent should be budgeted under Other Direct Costs and not under equipment and supplies?

USAID Response: Yes, office rent should be budgeted under “Other Direct Costs” (ODC) and not under “Equipment and Supplies”

16. Page 32, 9) Cost Sharing state that cost share should be clearly delineated in the budget by cost category. Will USAID please confirm that cost share can be budgeted by cost category but not broken out by year as it is difficult to estimate when cost share may occur at this stage?

USAID Response: Yes, cost share should be broken into cost categories and is not required by year.

17. “The Applicant should also provide a breakdown of the cost share (financial and in-kind contributions) of all organizations involved in implementing the resulting:” Can information related to the organization or cost-share amount be included here as TBD? Can these organizations be reviewed during the inception period or implementation (Pg. 32)?

USAID Response: In the application budget, the cost-share amount should be determined and in the budget narrative, the applicant can provide the explanation of financial or in-kind. The total cost share amount must be 10% or more.

18. Will USAID please consider removing or reducing the cost share percentage? Many aspects of the project will be working directly to build the capacity of the government and often the private sector does not prefer providing this kind of support.

USAID Response: As stated above, the cost share requirement is 10%. In-kind donations of office space, conference/training areas or some other resources can all be considered cost share possibilities provided by the DRC government.

19. How shall one interpret the minimum of 10% cost-sharing? In particular, should the applicant have an issue in identifying the 10% cost share, will the funding amount be decreased proportionally (Pg. 22)?

USAID Response: Please refer to ADS 303.3.10.3, Meeting Cost Share Requirements which states:

“The AO has the authority to reduce the amount of USAID incremental funding in the following funding period or to reduce the amount of the agreement by the difference between the expended amount and what the recipient agreed to provide.”

20. Will USAID please provide the current local compensation plan for the Democratic Republic of Congo?

USAID Response: The Local Compensation Plan was developed for local staff of the U.S. Embassy and the requirements are different than staff working on project implementation within DRC.

21. For purposes of filling in form SF 424A, please clarify how applicants are to translate Annex 1, Summary Budget Template into form SF-424A:

- Allowances- should these be included under a. Personnel or h. Other on form SF-424A?

USAID Response: Please include them in the Other category.

- Equipment and Supplies are lumped together in the budget summary template but are separate class categories. Please confirm for form SF-424A “Equipment” category that those with a unit value greater than \$5,000 are to be included?

USAID Response: For Equipment, please use d. For Supplies, please use e.

- Please clarify under which class category the opportunity fund should be entered into form SF-424A?

USAID Response: For this form, the Opportunity fund would go under f. Contractual/grant.

22. Will USAID please confirm that Key Personnel presented do not have to be exclusive?

USAID Response: Key Personnel presented to USAID should be 100% dedicated to the ARRETE activity.

23. Does USAID expect offerors to propose programming at the intervention/activity level? If so, where in the technical approach should activities be presented?

USAID Response: The Applicant should submit programming both at the operational (intervention/activity) and strategic (outcome) levels in the technical approach application.

24. Under Section 5.1.2. Organization of Technical Application (P.26) - The NOFO states "The Applicant is expected to develop an inception period methodology and activities designed based on an extensive review of lessons learned from previous GBV programming in DRC, relevant public policy documents, consultations with the Ministry of Gender and Social Affairs, and/or stakeholder workshops." Given that the activities would be developed during the inception period, would USAID confirm that it is looking for illustrative activities at this stage?

USAID Response: Yes, illustrative activities would be considered responsive. However, USAID would expect the Applicant to refine the proposed interventions in GBV in the inception period. The inception period is specific to the SGBV component and should not slow down the broader C-TIP activities.

25. On Page 27, under Staffing and Management Plan - The NOFO states "The extent to which the Applicant proposes an institutional organization and staffing plan that demonstrates the skills and tools needed to achieve the expected results and program outcomes outlined in the NOFO." Will USAID consider revising "institutional organization" to instead read "organizational structure"?

USAID Response: Yes.

26. On page 27, under Staffing and Management Plan- Would USAID please confirm that applicants may include the draft work plan as an annex?

USAID Response: Yes, a draft work plan for the first six months.

27. On page 34 Branding Strategy & Marketing Plan and Security Plan (P.33) - Can USAID please confirm that the Branding and Marketing Plan and the Security Plan will be asked of only successful Applicants?

USAID Response: A drafted Branding & Marketing Plan and drafted Security Plan must be submitted with your application.

28. Required Certifications and Assurances (P.29) - Will USAID consider removing the requirement in the cost application of Required Certifications and Assurances if the offeror's information is accurate and timely on SAM.gov?

USAID Response: You must still provide a signed copy of the documents listed under this section with you application.

(1) "Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient" ADS 303mav document found at <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/303mav>

(2) Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)

(3) Certificate of Compliance: Please submit a copy of your Certificate of Compliance if your organization's systems have been certified by USAID/Washington's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA).

29. The six-month inception period is for objective 4 only, or for the program (pg. 12)?

USAID Response: Only for the SGBV component (Objective 4).

30. Please confirm if there is no restriction in eligibility, in other words, are Public International Organizations (PIOs) not excluded (pg.22)?

USAID Response: This Notice of Funding Opportunity is full and open competition and PIOs are not excluded from applying.

31. In cases where the applicant is a Public International Organization and the application of ADS 308, appreciate confirming that such certifications are not required and the information contained in the SAM system is sufficient (Pgs. 22 and 29).

USAID Response: PIO applicants will follow the ADS 308 and are not required to submit the SF-424 but must follow the other requirements.

32. “The Applicant must submit information for all subawards that it wishes to have approved at the time of award.” Can the organizations included here be reviewed during the inception period or implementation (pg.32)?

USAID Response: The Applicant is encouraged to work with local organizations to build their capacity and professional skills. USAID anticipates that there will be some subawards during inception and additional ones throughout the implementation. All subawards need to be registered in SAM and obtain a UEI number.

33. If the proposed sub-awardees do not have all the documents listed at the time of application, will they be disqualified, or can they complete them once selected (pg.32)?

USAID Response: As stated above, USAID anticipates multiple subawards to be approved at various stages of this activity.