

SOL-OAA-15-000054: Policy, Advocacy, and Communication Enhanced for Population and Reproductive Health (PACE) APS Questions and Responses

1. On p. 25, the APS states “The concept paper must...not exceed eight pages (not including the cover sheet, summary budget, or attachments)...” However, the Cover Application Instructions below on p.25 list cover page at 1 page, technical approach at maximum four pages, staffing and management at 1.5 pages, organizational capability at .5 page, budget at one page, and annexes (not counted in page limit). If the cover sheet and summary budget are excluded, can applicants add two additional pages to the technical approach to reach eight pages?

The APS has now been amended to be consistent with the language on page 25 that states, “The concept paper must...not exceed eight pages (not including the cover sheet, summary budget, or attachments.” The Technical Approach has a revised page limit of no more than five (5) pages, the Staffing and Management has a revised page limit of no more than two (2) pages, and the Organization Capability has a revised page limit of no more than one (1) page. Please note that the Cover Page should still not exceed one (1) page, the Budget should still not exceed one (1) page, and the Annexes and Reference Materials, excluding Past Performance information, should not exceed ten (10) pages. Please see this language on page 25-27 of the amended APS.

2. Are there any file size submission limits via email?

Yes, the USAID email server cannot handle more than 25 MBs of attachments per email. If the applicant must divide the concept paper submission into more than one email, please number the emails in the subject line (i.e. Email 1 of 3). Please see this language on page 27 of the amended APS.

3. On p. 25, the APS notes, “Annexes will not be counted in the page limit and must be restricted to the information requested below.” The APS then lists the annexes on p.26 as CV for proposed key personnel, brief descriptions of qualifications for non-key personnel, and relevant past performance information. However, on p. 28 the APS notes that applicants can also provide brochures and/or other previously prepared material that describes the applicant’s organization and proposed partners, operating history, etc. It notes that “The reference materials and annexes must not exceed five pages and are not considered as part of the concept paper page count of eight pages.” Should applicants assume then that there are no page limits for the required CVs, descriptions and past performance, and a five page limit for additional reference materials?

The APS has been amended to be consistent regarding page limits on Annexes and Reference Materials. On page 26, the revised APS states that Reference Materials and Annexes have a ten (10) page limit total for Curriculum vitae(s) for proposed key personnel (CVs); Brief description of qualifications for non-key personnel; and any other additional reference materials. This is consistent with changes made to page 25 and pages 28-29. Additionally, while there is not a page limit on Past Performance as it needs to include a list of all its cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs during the past three years, please do not include more than what is requested on page 27 in the amended APS, and below in the response to Question 4.

4. Is there a maximum number of past performance references that applicants should include? What is the timeframe (furthest back in years) that applicants should feature past performance?

The applicant must provide a list of all its cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs during the past three years. The reference information for these awards must include the performance location, award number (if available), a brief description of the work performed, and a point of contact list with current telephone numbers. The desired format for the past performance references is a table or a matrix in Microsoft Excel. Please see this language on page 27 of the amended APS.

5. On p. 25, the technical approach instructions state that applicants should include “b. Project Activities and Outcomes” and “d. Illustrative Results.” How does USAID differentiate between the Outcomes identified in letter b and Illustrative Results listed in letter d?

Activities are undertaken by the implementer, which produce outputs. Outputs contribute to the project’s outcomes. Results are necessary to achieve the intended outcomes.

6. The eligibility requirements suggest that bidders must be both: 1) US organizations or non-US organizations registered and working in USAID-assisted countries; AND 2) academic organizations, or research institutes, professional societies or similar organizations that are directly associated with research activities. Is this a correct interpretation, or should the conjunction read “OR” instead of “AND”?

This language has been revised in the amended APS to state: “**Eligibility Criteria:** To qualify for funding, organizations must be: 1. US organizations or non-US organizations registered and working in USAID-assisted countries; or 2. US or non-US academic institutions (universities, professional schools, or two- or four-year colleges, including community colleges), or research institutes, professional societies or similar organizations” (page 22). An organization is eligible if it meets either criterion listed above.

7. Are organizations permitted to be on more than one bid?

Yes, an organization is permitted to be on more than one concept paper because it can be proposed as a sub-awardee on multiple concept papers. However, an organization can only be the prime awardee on one concept paper per Round. Please see this language on page 25 in the amended APS.

8. Are the concept papers/applications supposed to be country-specific or global?

Concept papers can be global or regional. The organization(s) must have the capacity to work simultaneously in multiple countries. This language is on page 22 in the amended APS.

9. What is the priority of addressing domestic resource mobilization within the scope of ensuring, "sustainable, predictable, long-term and adequate financing for services, systems and supplies?"

Domestic resources mobilization is critical to achieving sustainable, long-term, and adequate financing for services and supplies.

10. The APS mentions the Family Planning 2020 partnership and USAID's leadership role both in the background and section on Result 1. Would there be a formal relationship with FP2020 and the award recipients? Many of the activities and proposed results seem to align with those of the Country Engagement Working Group (CEWG). To what extent would the award recipient have capacity to work directly with and/or through the CEWG to advance country-level objectives?

All of USAID's FP/RH -funded activities are intended to contribute to the goals of FP 2020. However, at this time, no formal relationship with FP2020 and the award recipient(s) is planned.

11. What is the intended relationship of the Global Financing Facility to the opportunity outlined in this APS? Would the award recipient engage or collaborate as a USG partner?

The award recipient(s) would work closely with USAID staff to determine how best to align work plan activities with advancing the goals and objectives of the Global Financing Facility (GFF). Ensuring that family planning remains on the GFF agenda at the global and country level is a top priority for USAID.

12. On the audience for PACE, could you indicate the relative level of interest in policymakers in U.S. compared to policymakers in the priority countries? Are policymakers in other donor countries, INGOs and U.S. based NGOs, and global and U.S. foundations also an audience? Are leaders and key stakeholders in the United States also target audiences?

Policy makers in USAID FP/RH priority countries are the priority for this APS. Policy makers in other donor countries, INGOS and U.S.-based NGOs, and global and U.S. foundations are not a primary audience, but this group should not be excluded entirely.

13. What is the distinction (from USAID's perspective) between advocacy, policy communications, and negotiations? How is the role of advocacy defined in the context of U.S. government funding? Are there restrictions on the level of advocacy? Do "negotiations" include international policy processes such the post-2015 agenda and the climate Conference of Parties?

Under these awards, advocacy is an action directed at changing the policies, positions, or programs in any type of institution. Policy communication refers to the development of materials and other tools to provide information to influence policymakers and those that influence policymakers. For this project, negotiation is mainly seen as a capacity building activity: teaching stakeholders within countries how to negotiate in order to further political and financial commitment for FP/RH programs. In negotiating, as in other activities under these

projects, the implementer(s) cannot engage in inherently governmental activities. Activities must be consistent with the purpose of the award(s) and the applicable standard provisions.

14. In thinking about fellowships, does this APS allow for senior level fellowships for shorter duration (say 3 months) of senior fellows or media fellows who could become FP-RH champions? Are or will there be guidelines provided before the full concept note describing the Fellow process? Is there an amount recommended to include in the applicant's budget if this opportunity is pursued?

USAID is open to all ideas about establishing new fellowships and continuing existing fellowship opportunities. No additional guidelines will be provided. No amount is recommended to include in the applicants' budgets at this time.

15. How much is USAID interested in participation and involvement in the international fora upcoming in the next 5 years, including family planning conferences? Specifically, what is the level of interest in engaging with international fora on climate, food, livelihoods, poverty, etc.?

Participation in any fora must be relevant to achieving the project purpose and results.

16. Under result 3, is the APS open to innovative transmedia and new media formats as a way of reaching new stakeholders and engaging emerging leaders in the broader development and environment communities?

Yes.

17. The APS refers to tools in multiple sections. By tools, does USAID mean tools that can be manipulated by the user (e.g., an interactive database, a mapping platform, a toolkit) or does this refer more generally to any kind of communication product?

They are separate types of tools. Applicants are expected to employ both.

18. Is it required that USAID approve the membership of advisory committees? Does this apply to existing advisory committees?

No, it is not required that USAID approves the membership of advisory committees. Existing advisory committees under current USAID awards are subject to the terms and conditions of that/those award(s). For this APS, and any award(s) under it, as stated on page 6 of the APS, there needs to be "Agency and Recipient Collaboration or Joint Participation ...[in the] involvement in selection of advisory committee members, if the program will establish an advisory committee that provides advice to the recipient. USAID will participate as a member of this committee as well. Advisory committees must only deal with programmatic or technical issues and not routine administrative matters."

19. What process will be used to engage USAID Missions or other field support sources to get their buy-in? What about Missions outside of priority countries?

If an award(s) is/are made as a result of this APS, and applications received, the award(s) will be announced internally within the Bureau of Global Health at USAID, which will then be sent onto USAID missions, including those in non-FP/RH priority countries, and other relevant bureaus. The award(s) will support specific needs; if a USAID Mission needs this type of program, they will contact the AOR. No USAID Mission will be required or forced to buy-in to this/these award(s).

20. From experience with past federal awards, training/workshops were not part of the grant, but this APS seems to clearly indicate that training activities are allowable and expected. Is this correct?

Training/workshops are allowable and expected under this APS; however, they are subject to the Required as Applicable provision “Exchange Visitors and Participant Training (June 2012)” (listed in both the Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations - ADS 303maa - and the Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations - ADS303mab). Additionally, any award(s) made under this APS will be subject to 2 CFR 226, which includes 2 CFR 226.27 Allowable Costs, and all costs must comply with this federal regulation. Lastly, as mentioned on page 6 of the APS, all Implementation Plans must be approved by the AOR, and all proposed trainings/workshops must be included in these plans.

21. On p 18, illustrative activities under result 1 include “relevant communities of practices on FP/RH issues offered support” – does this imply primarily technical support and not financial support per se?

Support can be either technical or financial, or both.

22. Is there a budget template that we should use for Round 1 submission or are we flexible to use any template? Also, would budget justification be required in this Round or later?

For Round 1 submissions of concept papers, the only requirements are to keep the budget information (as described on pages 26 and 28 of the APS) to no more than one (1) page. A budget justification/narrative would not be submitted until concept papers are evaluated and successful applicants are requested to submit a full application.

23. Page 26 describes qualifications for the project director and key technical personnel positions. If the applicant includes a third “key personnel” as mentioned at the bottom of Page 25, what would be the qualifications for this position? Could a third key personnel position (in addition to two key technical positions) be a key administrative position?

If a concept paper proposed a third “key personnel,” the bulleted list of “Qualifications for Key Technical Personnel” on page 26 would apply. No, there cannot be a third key personnel position that is a key administrative position. Please see page 26 for revised language in the amended APS.

24. Must the proposed Project Director and/or other key technical personnel enumerated in the APS serve in a certain percentage of FTE throughout the project?

No. However, the percentage of time of key personnel must be in proportion to their roles and responsibilities under the award.

25. You note that the APS will be open from March 13, 2015 – March 12, 2020, but we are assuming that the award will go from Sept 30, 2015 – September 29, 2020?

For Round 1 of concept papers for this APS, USAID anticipates awarding at least one cooperative agreement by September 30, 2015 with a five-year period of performance. Activities proposed should be for no more or no less than five years. However, the actual award(s) on or about September 30, 2015 is contingent on quality of timely and compliant concept papers (and later applications) received. USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications eventually received in Round 1.

26. If organizations must be an academic or research institute in order to be the prime awardee, may nonacademic and research institutes join consortiums as sub awardees?

The prime awardee does not need to be an academic or research institute (please see response to question 6 above). Nevertheless, non-academic and research institutes may join consortiums as sub-awardees.