NFO Number: SOL-OAA-15-000106

NFO Title: Regional and Local Support for Elections and Political Transitions

Subject: Phase II- Question and Answer

1. We proposed three illustrative countries for support in the concept note: [County A, Country B, and Country C]. In the full proposal, are we required to propose all countries for possible support, or should we leave some flexibility to accommodate possible USAID requests for engagement in other countries during the course of the program?

Applicants should propose the Technical Approach they wish to implement if an award is made. The full application should identify the region and specific countries where the applicant feels best placed to undertake the activities proposed in their technical application. USAID may request engagement beyond these specific countries as needed, as part of the negotiation process prior to award, after award through utilization of a rapid response capability (if such a component is included in the technical approach), or via requests for future Associate awards.

2. Must all key personnel be proposed at 100 percent Level of Effort (LOE) from the beginning of the program, or may we propose a couple of positions--such as Finance Manager and Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist--at less than 100 percent LOE at the beginning, on the assumption that we could cost share these staff until they build up to 100 percent billable time on this program?

USAID encourages applicants to develop appropriate management structures and identify key personnel that best serve their proposed programs within these parameters. USAID recognizes that not all key personnel positions may require fulltime levels of effort.

3. Can we propose sub-grants to national non-government partner organizations in support of our program objectives?

Yes. While the application must include only one prime applicant, this organization may enter in sub-agreements or sub-contracts with partnering institutions. See p. 32 of the NFO.

4. Should the technical approach in support of our proposed objectives elaborate down to such details as the amount of meetings and trainings, number of program event participants, and so forth? Or may we provide more general details on proposed program activities and beneficiaries?

The applicant should be as specific as possible about proposed activities and expected results, as per the technical application and cost/business application formats outlined on pp. 34-40 of the NFO.

5. Is the $2.5 million meant to cover all staff costs?

The $2.5 million is meant to cover all costs related to the implementation and management of the Leader award, including staff costs. See pp. 38-40 of the NFO for a more complete description of the costs to be included in the Cost/Business application.

6. Can the cost of programme personnel be covered under administrative costs for the associate awards? Should a separate administrative budget be submitted?

At this stage, applicants should submit Cost/Business applications for costs associated with the Leader award only. Should an Associate award be requested under an eventual Leader award, the personnel and administrative costs associated with that specific activity would be included in the Cost/Business application for that specific activity.

7. What is the general frequency, length and average amount of associate awards?

The number, frequency or funding amount of Associate awards to be requested under a particular Leader award is not fixed. A total of $30 million (cumulative total under all Leader awards made) is estimated for Associate awards over the life of the agreement. Associate awards will be made based on demand from USAID Missions and offices and the regional area of expertise of the recipient(s). The length of Associate awards may vary from a few months to five years. The recipient(s) may be programming simultaneously in multiple countries. See p. 13 of the NFO and the questions and answers to this NFO previously posted on grants.gov for further information on Associate awards.

8. Can there be an administrative fee charged for the management of associate awards?

Any administrative costs associated with managing an Associate award should be charged to that particular Associate award.

9. Should recruited personnel be unable to take up/continue their posts (for example work permit/visa problems), can new staff be recruited either before or during programme implementation?

Yes. USAID will take the letters of commitment from proposed key personnel in good faith. Please note, however, that USAID's substantial involvement under the Leader award extends to approval of specified key personnel, including any changes in key personnel during the life of a potential award (p. 15 of the NFO). See pages 35-36 of the NFO for a complete list of key personnel under the Leader award.

10. Can the successful applicant win the lead award, and the applicant's field office(s) implement associate awards?

Yes. In the event that a USAID Mission requests an associate award for activities in a given country, the award would typically be implemented and managed by personnel in that country.

11. The programme team to be identified, do they need to be based at the successful applicant's headquarters or can they be located in the field (for example, where the associate award is being implemented)

There is no requirement for key personnel to be physically based in the successful applicant's headquarters, provided that the applicant's management structure, as described in the technical application, adequately demonstrates how award implementation and management will be accomplished.

12. Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement (NICRA): Since we do not have this, we will submit a Reviewed Financial Statement report and an Audited Financial Statements Report. How do these determine our rate of NICRA to be charged?

Organizations that qualify may request use of a de minimis 10% indirect rate that is authorized at 2 CFR 200.414 (f). Organizations that do not currently have a NICRA, have chosen not to use the 10% de minims rate authorized in 2 CFR 200.414(f)) and have not included indirect costs as other direct costs in the budget may use a fixed amount to cover indirect costs. This fixed amount must be shown as a separate line item in the budget as well as a schedule for payments.

13. *Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences: Funds in this agreement may not be used to finance the travel, per diem, hotel expenses, meals, conference fees or other conference costs for any member of a foreign government's delegation to an international conference sponsored by a public international organization*. What does this mean? What qualifies one to be classified as a foreign government delegate?

"Foreign government delegations to international conferences" refers to official representatives of a government other than the United State Government to an international conference sponsored by a public international organization as defined in ADS 308. For example, if an organization such as the UNDP were sponsoring an international conference on electoral system reforms, funds could not be used to finance the participation of a member of an official delegation from Country X in this conference.

14. If the issuance of [specific country's] work permits remains challenging owing to the continued tightening of work permit requirements, could the programme be physically relocated to another country [in the region]?

Yes, provided that the successful applicant continues to be headquartered in, and legally organized under, the laws of a country which is not a member of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

15. Currently our organization is considering to establish permanent headquarters in a country different from its existing registration. Provided that the new location is within the organization's region of engagement and in a country that is not a member of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, would this change affect in any way the Award decision or later cause termination of a potential Award?

No, provided that the successful applicant continues to be headquartered in, and legally organized under, the laws of a country which is not a member of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.