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HEALTHCOMM-CAPACITY

1. Which are the countries that we are required to implement this program and the past work that was done there if any in this regard?

RESPONSE:

There are no countries in which USAID requires this project to be implemented; areas of intervention will depend in large part upon USAID Mission buy-in to the project. For countries in which the current flagship project has worked, please see www.c-changeprogram.org.

2. Small private companies are eligible to IMPLEMENT working with the awardees of the Grant?

RESPONSE:

Yes

3. I wanted to follow-up with you and see if my organization, a public international organization, is eligible to apply for the HealthComm Capacity RFA. We're not a NGO, we're a public international organization, which means we're an intragovernmental organization."

RESPONSE:

No, US and Non-US government agencies, including intergovernmental organizations, are not eligible to apply.

4. In how many counties and where this program in intended to be implemented?

RESPONSE:

There are no countries in which USAID requires this project to be implemented; areas of intervention will depend in large part upon USAID Mission buy-in to the project. For countries in which the current flagship project has worked, please see www.c-changeprogram.org.

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5. Can a small start-up company who has technical 'know-how' could participate with the people who have resources and has expertise in Communications?

RESPONSE:

Yes.

6. Could you tell us the organizations who have done the past work and if we could participate with them for clinical support?

RESPONSE:

Please refer to Annex C of the RFA or www.c-changeprogram.org.

7. Are there any countries where "vaccination for HIV" is being researched?

RESPONSE:

This is not relevant for purposes of this project.

8. The proposal states - "the proposed project is expected to build on prior efforts to provide tailored, multi-level capacity strengthening to a range of implementers". In which countries this work was done and what efforts were done and who did it?

RESPONSE:

For information on capacity strengthening activities conducted under the current USAID health communication flagship project, please see www.c-changeprogram.org; the C-Change capacity strengthening assessment referenced on p. 7 of the RFA; and the list of tools provided on p. 58 of the RFA. For information on recent USAID-supported capacity strengthening projects not specific to health communication, please see project websites referenced on p.15-16 of the RFA.

9. Can we provide "key Personnel" to any prospective Grant awardee?

RESPONSE:

USAID strongly encourages applicants to propose creative collaborative partnerships with other U.S. and/or international organizations, NGOs, private voluntary organizations, and firms,

especially small businesses, to implement activities under this program. Also, see Section II, subsection D, Staffing and Key Personnel (page 25 of the RFA) .

10. Please clarify the font type—page 29 says Times New Roman, page 28 just says the font shall not be less than size 12.

RESPONSE:

The technical and cost applications must be Times New Roman font size 12. All Excel spread sheets must have a font size of 9 or larger.

11. Please clarify the number of pages—page 29 says 35 pages and page 33 says 40.

RESPONSE:

The technical application shall not exceed 40 pages, excluding attachments and annexes.

12. Can the *Start up and Transition Plan* be placed in an annex?

RESPONSE:

Yes.

13. Please clarify between senior core staff and senior program staff (page 33). Do senior core staff appear on the core budget or org chart and senior program staff on the roster?

RESPONSE:

The RFA requests information on three categories of personnel: 1) key personnel (Project Director, Senior Capacity Strengthening Advisor, and Research and Evaluation Director) subject to USAID approval; 2) senior program staff/senior core staff; and 3) >10 non-US-based experts who may support the project on an as-needed basis. The terms “senior core staff” and “senior program staff” refer to the same cadre of personnel, who should be reflected in both the organizational chart and the core budget.

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14. Are letters of intent required for the staff on the senior core staff/non-US-based expert roster? If so, must those letters include the intent to participate for the initial two year period? Some of those staff may be anticipated for work in the later years of the project. If letters are required, must employed staff of the proposing organizations also submit them if they are on the roster? Please clarify.

RESPONSE:

Only key personnel are required to submit letters of intent.

15. Please elaborate on the requirement for maps of activity areas and letters of support from a local government on page 34.

RESPONSE:

Section B7. has been revised as follows: Annexes: Applicant shall provide letter(s) from a partnering organization expressing their intention to engage in a partnership, or a letter from a donor making a funding commitment, as well as past performance references.

16. The Additional Documentation section 11 on page 52 seems to refer to another project. Please clarify.

RESPONSE:

This section references the HealthComm-Capacity project.

17. It is unclear whether Country impact evaluations should be included as core or field activities, or both? (Page 10 says core and on page 13 they are under IR1 which is field supported.)

RESPONSE:

Country impact evaluations will likely be funded through both core and field support funds.

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18. Please provide the address for hand delivery of the proposal.

RESPONSE:

Please refer to page 2 and 3 of the RFA for mailing and hand delivery addresses. The hand delivery address is as follows:

Mr. Terry Vann Ellis
Agreement Specialist
USAID, M/OAA/GH/POP
Federal Center Plaza/State Dept. Annex 44
301 4th Street, SW, Room 553I
Washington, DC 20024
Telephone: 202-567-5029

19. Where does USAID expect the funding for Wits to come from—core or field support?

RESPONSE:

USAID expects the Center of Excellence at the University of Witswaterand will be supported through core funds.

20. Can you please elaborate on the USAID-assisted institutions of higher learning offering graduate level programs in health communication mentioned on page 16?

RESPONSE:

Under the current health communication flagship project, USAID has provided support for activities with the following institutions: University of Witswatersrand (South Africa); Tirana University (Albania); Universidada del Valle (Guatemala); and the University of Lagos (Nigeria). C-Change also collaborated with the African Communication Network (AfriComNet), which brings together a network of higher institutions described here: http://www.africomnet.org/universities-program.html. USAID has also supported Ohio University, a partner in the C-Change project, in developing and hosting online courses in health communication. See www.c-changeprogram.org for additional information.

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21. The RFA requests that the project be budgeted at $19.8 million/year for five years. Yet it also says that core funding will be lower in year one than subsequent years, and it is our experience that field support is also generally lower in year one than in later years. Can we adjust the budget slightly to reflect this?

RESPONSE:
Yes.

22. On page 11 Section E. Project Goal, it is mentioned that there will be a second forthcoming health communication award. Can USAID kindly let us know when this award is anticipated?

RESPONSE:

USAID anticipates making another award for HealthComm-Capacity in early 2013. Please refer to the USAID Business Forecast at http://www.usaid.gov/business/business_opportunities/forecast/forecast.html , for additional information.

23. Does USAID expect that clinical outcomes will need to be measured in the impact evaluations?

RESPONSE:

At this point, USAID does not anticipate that impact evaluations described in the RFA will have clinical outcomes, although this will be determined definitively at the time of study design.

24. Does USAID anticipate providing core funds to activities under IR 1, such as the impact evaluations?

RESPONSE:

Yes.

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25. On page 25, the last paragraph of Section K (Staffing/Key Personnel) states that "(i)t is expected that field personnel will have decision-making and financial authority to manage country programs and that the management structure within HealthComm-Capacity will be flexible and adaptable to Mission requirements." Does this mean that field personnel may be required to provide financial reports to Missions other than those that would be required in 22 CFR 226.52 "Financial Reporting" for the entire award?

RESPONSE:

No.

26. On page 26, Section F., the RFA states that "Applicants will provide a draft start-up and transition plan as part of their application package." Can USAID confirm if this plan is requested for submission? If so, can this plan be included as an annex?

RESPONSE:

Plans for start-up and transition are required as part of the submission package, and may be submitted as annexes.

27. Section G. Coordination with USAID, Paragraph 2 (p. 26) states that "[a]ll aspects of travel, global research and planning must be reviewed and approved in advance by the AOR. In addition, the AOR will review and approve specified key personnel and consultants assigned to each activity…". While we understand the need for approval of the key personnel positions identified in Section II.D(b) entitled, "Key Personnel," the inclusion of consultants and all aspects of travel, global research and planning appear to go far beyond the normal parameters of substantial involvement as defined by ADS 303.3.11 and may prove difficult to implement without further clarification. Has USAID obtained OMB approval for this expanded substantial involvement? If not, we recommend this be removed.

RESPONSE:

The Substantial Involvement Section, as stated on page 27, remains unchanged as stated in the RFA.

1. Approval of recipient's annual work plans, reports, monitoring and evaluation plans, and all modifications that describe the specific activities to be carried out under the Cooperative Agreement;

2. Approval of and any changes to specified key personnel;
3. Agency and recipient collaboration or joint participation (collaborative involvement in selection of advisory committee members, concurrence on selection of sub-award recipients, and/or the substantive provisions of the sub-awards).
4. Agency Authority to Immediately Halt a Construction Activity: The Agreement Officer may immediately halt a construction activity if identified specifications are not met.

No. 2, states "Approval of and any changes to specified key personnel", not consultants. Please disregard consultants in Section G on page 26.

Please note, the travel, global research and planning aspects are listed under G. Coordination with USAID, on page 26 and not a part of the substantial involvement. However, all three aspects fall under the annual work plans, which must be approved.

28. The RFA states that the PMP is not counted in the 35 page limit. It is also not included in the Annexes list on page 34. However, can we include it as an annex?

RESPONSE:

Yes, it may be included as an annex. Also, the page limit is 40 pages.

29. Can USAID confirm that a Table of Contents and Acronyms list will not be counted in the 35 page limit?

RESPONSE:

Yes. Also, the page limit is 40 pages.

30. On page 29, the RFA mentions that the Results Framework is not included in the page limit. USAID has already provided a Results Framework on page 13 of the RFA, and we will be providing a PMP in response to the Results Framework. Can USAID clarify what is expected from applicants in terms of a response to this request for a Results Framework not being included in the page limit? Would USAID like us to include the Framework as is provided on page 13 back into the proposal as an annex?

RESPONSE:

It can be included in the annex.

31. On page 32 in the Management Approach section there is mention of an organizational chart. Can this be included as an annex?

RESPONSE:

Yes.

32. On page 33 there is reference to a 40 page limit which conflicts with the 35 page limit stated on page 29. Is this an error?

RESPONSE:

The limit of the technical application is 40 pages excluding attachments and annexes.

33. On page 34 in Section B7. Annexes, there is mention of "Maps of the Activity Areas." Can USAID explain what this is and what information should be included in or issues that should be addressed by the maps?

RESPONSE:

This section has been revised as follows: Annex: Letter(s) from a partnering organization expressing their intention to engage in a partnership, or a letter from a donor making a funding commitment, as well as past performance references.

34. On page 34 in Section B7. Annexes, the RFA is requesting a "letter from a donor making a funding commitment." Does USAID define donor as a partner organization or other funding agency (i.e., multi-lateral and/or other foreign government funding agency)? Or are these letters from a cost share partner?

RESPONSE:

The application should include commitment letters from Donors/Cost Share partners, who intend to provide cost share to support the project.

35. Can USAID confirm if the Environmental Capability Statement is to be included in our proposal? If so, can this be included as annex in the Technical Volume?

RESPONSE:

Yes, the applicant shall provide an environment capability statement with their application demonstrating their approach to achieving environmental compliance. The response is limited to ½ - 1 page and shall be included in the technical application.

36. On page 25, Section E. Financial Plan, the RFA states that "Core funds in the first year of the project are likely to be somewhat lower than in subsequent years." Could USAID provide the amount applicants should budget for Core funds in Year 1?

RESPONSE:

It is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of core funding for Year 1 of the project.

37. On Page 47, Section III, C. Cost/Business Application, 4th paragraph, the RFA states, "Information regarding the proposed cost-share should be included in the SF 424 and the Cost Matrix as indicated on those documents". Please confirm if only an SF 424 form is required, or if we should also submit an SF 424A and SF 424B.

RESPONSE:

The SF424, SF424A and SF424B are required to be submitted with your application.

38. Please confirm whether or not applicants are to submit their cost proposals with costs broken down by Core and Field Funds. If this is required, then at what level of detail does USAID wish to see? Summary format only or also detailed budget breakdown?

RESPONSE:

No distinction needs to be made between core and field support funding. However, applicants shall submit a summary of all costs and a detailed budget with breakdown of all costs, including a detail narrative explaining how they arrived at those costs. Subcontractors and partners shall also submit detailed budget information and their cost should be included in the overall summary from the applicant.

39. Is the applicant expected to present its budget by Intermediate Results (IRs)? If so, can this be at an overall summary level only, or does it need to be detailed?

RESPONSE:

Applicants shall submit a summary of all costs and a detailed budget with breakdown of all costs, including a detail narrative explaining how they arrived at those costs. Subcontractors and partners shall also submit detailed budget information and their cost should be included in the overall summary from the applicant.

40. On page 48 of the RFA, in the Contractual budget line item description, can USAID please clarify what is meant by contract mechanism? Does USAID mean subcontractor, sub-recipient, or grantee and not any sort of vendor agreement (that would fall under ODCs, supplies or equipment)?

RESPONSE:

The contract mechanism line item would include subcontracts and consultants.

41. With regard to the cost-sharing requirement, for a for-profit firm, does foregoing a normally charged profit count as a cost share component?

RESPONSE:

No. The cost share contributions, including cash and third party-in-kind, will be accepted as part of the applicant's cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all of the criteria found at CFR 226.23

42. As part of the expected results in IR1, the RFA asks for technical and financial assistance to the University of Witwatersrand. For those groups that do not have access to the details of the current incumbents work with Witwatersrand, and do not have information on the level of financial support, could USAID provide all bidders details of the on-going support, including budget level in order to insure more open competition.

RESPONSE:

No, this information is proprietary and cannot be shared.

43. In the cover letter and in section II.B. Eligibility Criteria, USAID notes eligible institutions include "non-US Nongovernmental international organizations." This appears to include IPVOs, as noted in ADS 303.3.6.2. Direct participation by such locally-

registered organizations with international experience would seem to align with the HealthComm-Capacity strategic objective. Does USAID confirm that IPVOs are eligible?

RESPONSE:

Pursuant to ADS 303.3.6.2, both U.S and international private voluntary organizations (PVO) are eligible for assistance as long as are registered with USAID as required by 22 CFR 203 prior to submitting an application for assistance.

44. On page 21, the Project Director and other key personnel are expected to travel "overseas" for 10-40 percent of the time. In the same section, USAID notes: "It is expected that by the end of the second year of the project, at least 55% of the HealthComm-Capacity staff will be located in developing countries and by the end of the third year, 75% of the staff will be located overseas." While the current wording implies that all key personnel would be located in the United States, it seems that USAID's goals may be well served by having some of the key personnel located closer to the overseas locations as well. Would USAID be open to these more flexible staffing scenarios for key personnel, with some key personnel located in DC for close USAID collaboration and others located in-country for oversight and hands-on efforts?

RESPONSE:

Yes.

45. Page 23 notes that SIEE is required. Does USAID require a submission for each country for which a mission requests support or will two copies of the report be required upon award and annually thereafter? Annex F seems to note that a blanket determination post-award would be sufficient. Can USAID confirm?

RESPONSE:

A SIEE must be submitted in the application package and annually thereafter upon receipt of the award.

46. Please clarify whether the AOR will be within the Office of Population RH in GH/PRH (page 26, item G) or within the Policy, Evaluation and Communication Division (PEC) in GH/PRF (page 24, item C). Which component will manage the agreement?

RESPONSE:

The project will be managed by the Policy, Evaluation and Communication Division (PEC) within the Bureau for Global Health (GH/PRH).

47. Page 24—Eligibility Criteria—does the restriction on profit apply to partners/subs of the prime? If so, can the prime request a waiver of this policy? It seems that in the RFA, USAID is encouraging the involvement of private sector organizations to provide specialized capacity building yet this policy discourages such involvement.

RESPONSE:

Pursuant to 22 CFR § 226.81 and ADS 303, it is USAID's policy not to award fees nor profit under assistance instruments. However, other reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the agreement program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (22 CFR 226, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organizations, OMB Circular A-21 for universities and the Federal Acquisition Regulation Part 31 for for-profit organizations) may be paid under the agreement. While profit is not allowed for subawards, the prohibition does not apply when the recipient acquires goods and services in accordance with 22 CFR 226.40 to 48.