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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Date: December 12, 2022

Subject: NOFO Amendment 1

The purpose of this amendment is to respond to the following questions received in Answer to **NOFO: RFA72067423RFA00001 for ACCELERATE 2**

1. Can USAID confirm that the program title on page 1 should be “Accelerate Tuberculosis Elimination and Program Resilience Activity (ACCELERATE 2 - Low Burden Areas)”.

USAID RESPONSE: There was a typo on the released NOFO. The correct program title should read “**Accelerate Tuberculosis Elimination and Program Resilience Activity (ACCELERATE 2 - Low Burden Areas)**” instead of high burden areas.

2. Can USAID confirm the funding streams for this Activity?

USAID RESPONSE: ACCELERATE 2 will be funded through non-PEPFAR bilateral TB funds.

3. On page 11, the NOFO states that “The Activity will support the National TB program to conduct a laboratory diagnostic network assessment to identify and remediate bottlenecks in the diagnostic network and improve early diagnosis and linkages within the healthcare system.” Given that ACCELERATE 1 is tasked with national-level TA, can USAID clarify if this activity is intended to focus only on the ACCELERATE 2 target provinces and districts?

USAID RESPONSE: ACCELERATE 2 will not implement activities at the National level, but will provide technical support at provincial, district, facility and community levels to scale up activities supported by USAID at the national TB program.

4. On Page 11, USAID references “support to the National TB Program to conduct a laboratory diagnostic network assessment” in South Africa. Could USAID share details about this activity such as the scope of work and timeline for analysis?

USAID RESPONSE: ACCELERATE 2 will not implement activities at the National level, but will provide technical support at provincial, district, facility and community levels to scale up activities supported by USAID at the national TB program. ACCELERATE 2 will support implementation of recommendations from the TB laboratory diagnostic network assessment.

Q&A-ACCELERATE 2

5. Nkangala District in Mpumalanga is currently a PEPFAR-supported district. As both ACCELERATE 2 and ongoing PEPFAR care and treatment programs have activities and targets related to TB/HIV co-infection as well as prevention of TB in PLHIV, can USAID clarify the expected level of engagement of ACCELERATE 2 in Nkangala District? If the scopes overlap, would USAID please provide guidance on how this will affect reporting on TB/HIV indicators?

USAID RESPONSE: ACCELERATE 2 will provide comprehensive TB program support for drug susceptible and drug resistant TB and the scope will not overlap with the PEPFAR TB/HIV program.

6. On page 16, the NOFO states “The Activity will work at national, provincial and district level to improve the use of data, such as disease burden, population size, access to services and health barriers of TB vulnerable populations, to inform the deployment of services and public health policy.” Can USAID confirm that ACCELERATE 2 is expected to work only at the provincial and district levels?

USAID RESPONSE: Please see response to Question #3.

7. On page 17, the NOFO states “The Activity will provide technical assistance to the National TB Program to update the 2015 TB IPC guidelines in line with the latest WHO recommendations.” Can USAID confirm that national-level TA is to be provided by ACCELERATE 1 and not ACCELERATE 2?

USAID RESPONSE: Please see response to Question #3.

8. Similarly, on page 17, the NOFO indicates that ACCELERATE 2 is responsible for “developing a national dashboard to monitor facility performance on IPC.” Can USAID confirm that this dashboard would be in the scope for ACCELERATE 1 and not ACCELERATE 2?

USAID RESPONSE: Please see response to Question #3.

9. On page 20, the NOFO indicates that the ACCELERATE 2 Activity should target “public health managers at national and sub-national levels.’ Can USAID clarify the expected level of engagement of ACCELERATE 2 at the national level?

USAID RESPONSE: Please see response to Question #3.

10. On page 29, Annex A of the proposal (Draft Year 1 work plan) is required to include “national, provincial, district and facility activities.” Can USAID clarify if national activities are within the scope of ACCELERATE 2?

USAID RESPONSE: Please see response to Question #3.

11. Page 45 of the NOFO states: “USAID will also evaluate the appropriateness of the proposed approach to ... policy support and technical assistance at the national level” [emphasis added],

Q&A-ACCELERATE 2

whereas the program description on p. 4 states that ACCELERATE 2 “targets technical support and interventions at the provincial, district, facility and community level.” Could USAID clarify the evaluation criterion regarding national-level policy support and technical assistance?

USAID RESPONSE: Please see response to Question #3.

12. Page 49 of the NOFO requires that “All indicators below should be included in the Applicant’s MEL plan to be submitted with the application.” Annex B (the MEL plan) is limited to 3 pages, so replicating the list of indicators in the application would leave about only 2 pages to present the MEL plan. Could USAID consider deleting the requirement for including the list of indicators?

USAID RESPONSE: USAID will not delete the requirement to include the list of indicators as this list of indicators is required for the MEL plan. As stated on page 29 (NOFO) *Annex B – Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan* (up to 3 pages): “This section will include a draft five-year Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan. A table format is acceptable. Please note that the MEL Plan will be finalized within 30 days after the effective date of the anticipated award.”

13. USAID presents the required standard indicators on pages 49-50. Are applicants also requested/required to propose custom indicators?

USAID RESPONSE: The Applicant may propose custom indicators.

14. There was an emphasis in the title as Accelerate 2- High Burden Areas but in the summary page for and in the technical approach there is a reference to low burden districts. Please clarify if the emphasis is on both high and low burden in Accelerate 2 versus just High Burden in Accelerate 1.

USAID RESPONSE: ACCELERATE 2 will be implemented in high burden facilities within low burden districts.

15. Page 8 emphasis that “current practice not yet in South Africa” will be implemented through operational research. Then, is there an expectation the application can propose and budget for operational research in new drugs, therapeutics and diagnostics under implementation science?

USAID RESPONSE: The Applicant can include Operational research if it’s necessary and applicable in the budget and provide strong justification of each budgeted item in the budget narrative.

16. All IRs focus on TB but there is language in the narrative sections promoting the mitigation of COVID-19 ongoing impact. Is there an expectation that there would be both targets/results expected in key provinces implementing the recovery plan? Should these TB recovery plan indicators form part of the Accelerate 2 reporting plan?

USAID RESPONSE: TB recovery plan indicators are not part of Accelerate 2 reporting requirements.

17. Please clarify if diagnostic equipment as in digital X Ray mobile units, new to market point-of-care innovations, etc. are allowable budgeted costs in this application or will these equipment procurements move forward under other funds (Global Fund) in these provinces?

a. If yes, is the expectation for a USAID –funded mobile unit to be allocated to each district?

USAID RESPONSE: The Applicant may propose relevant diagnostic tools and equipment based on their understanding of the context and results to be achieved. If these items are needed, the Applicant should include in the budget and provide strong justification of each budgeted item in the budget narrative.

18. Could support under SANAC for community outreach and other national community-focused TA activities fall under Accelerate 2 or would these be covered under Accelerate 1 National Activities?

USAID RESPONSE: The Applicant should propose support for community TB activities relevant for the provinces and districts.

19. Should only Provincial/District/Community level activities in the listed 4 provinces 7 districts should be proposed under Accelerate 2? One example is the lab diagnostics assessment activity around new diagnostic entry listed on page 11. - across the country nationally or just in 4 provinces Free State, W Cape, Mpumalanga and Limpopo?

USAID RESPONSE: Please see response to Question #3.

20. To confirm that NO national TA or activities are required because the text has two contradictory sentences in the NOFO on page 8 versus on page 10:

USAID RESPONSE: Please see response to Question #3.

21. Can USAID confirm that the Cover Page, Table of Contents, and Acronym List do not count towards the 25-page limit for the technical application?

USAID RESPONSE: The Cover Page, Table of Contents and Acronym list will count towards the 25-page limit for the technical application?

22. Is the 25-page limit including the cover page, tables of contents and acronym list A-G page 28 or? Or does the 25 page start at the Executive Summary and cover D-G page 28?

USAID RESPONSE: Please see response to Question #22.

23. Can USAID confirm that the requirement for the names and contact information of three professional references for each key personnel candidate should be provided in addition to the resumes/CVs and that this information does not count towards the stated page limit for each CV?

USAID RESPONSE: The professional references for each key personnel candidate will not count towards the stated page limit for each cv.

24. Can USAID indicate the relative weighting of the three evaluation criteria listed on page 43?

USAID RESPONSE: The relative weighting of the three evaluation criteria listed on page 43 states that the criteria are in descending order of importance.

25. On page 46, E.3.4 Business Review, the NOFO states: “While cost is not weighed, the cost applications of the apparently successful technical applications will be evaluated for cost effectiveness.” Could USAID provide additional details as to how USAID will conduct the cost effectiveness review?

USAID RESPONSE: The cost effectiveness review will be done in accordance with the standards set in 2 CFR 200. USAID will review the explanations provided in the budget narrative when reviewing the budget to determine whether the proposed costs fit in the cost principles of allowability (2 CFR 200.403), allocability (2CFR 200.405) and reasonability (CFR 200.404). Therefore, it is important for Applicants to justify and provide clear assumptions and explanations for all proposed budget line items.

26. Would USAID please confirm whether there is a file size limit for transmittal emails?

USAID RESPONSE: There is no size limit.

27. Would USAID please clarify whether the Certificate of Compliance referenced on page 31 is required from subrecipients?

USAID RESPONSE: The Certificate of Compliance referenced on page 31 is required from the primary applicant only.

28. In Annex 1, the NOFO states that “A template is included to facilitate budget preparation.”, yet no template is included. Could USAID please provide the referenced template?

USAID RESPONSE: There was an omission when the NOFO was released, the referenced budget template will be provided with this amendment.

29. Is there an expectation for implementation research component on the budget?

USAID RESPONSE: All costs that are deemed allowable, allocable, and reasonable and required for program implementation should be budgeted

30. Will USAID support budget for implementation evaluations studies under Accelerate 2 including fixed FTE for an implementation research staff?

USAID RESPONSE: Please see response to Question 29.

31. Are letters of commitment from provinces advised? If so, how do they add into the page limit?

USAID RESPONSE: Commitment letters from the provinces are not required.

32. How should references appear- as part of the 25-page limit or as an Annex?

USAID RESPONSE: As stated in page 29 of the NOFO, under Section H Technical Annexes – it states: “The only annexes to be evaluated are listed hereunder and do not count towards the Technical Application 25-page limit.).” Hence the Annexes are not part of the 25-page limit.

33. Can you please clarify the process to which USAID confirms receipts of applications prior to deadline?

USAID RESPONSE: USAID will acknowledge all applications.

All other terms and conditions of the NOFO remain unchanged and in full force and effect.

Regards

Simone Cho
Agreement Officer