F2F NFO QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. **Question:** The NFO state, "There is no specified limit to the number of regional or thematic programs in which the Applicant may indicate interest and capacity for implementation of the F2F program." Does this mean that Applicants can submit Concept Note Part II (plus indicator table and budget) for multiple additional regions or thematic programs in Attachment 4, and, if so, can we assume this would be at 9 pages per additional region/theme? Or is it USAID's intent that Applicants can only submit Part II, indicators, and a budget for only one additional region or theme in Attachment 4?

   Response: Applicants can submit only Part II for only one additional regional or thematic program. Other options may be listed in Attachment 4, but no program description should be included.

2. **Question:** Page 31 of the NFO notes that the Cover Page should include information on Sub Organizations. If the Applicant is proposing different sub organizations for different regions/themes (e.g., one sub for concept 1 and a different sub for a secondary concept submitted in Attachment 4), how would USAID prefer that we address this on the cover page? Should we list all sub organizations and distinguish the respective region/theme?

   Response: Applicants may include information on proposed sub organizations for a second regional or thematic program on the cover page and clearly indicate which sub organizations would be involved in which program. Alternatively, Applicants may include a short description of proposed sub organizations in the Part II description of the second proposed program.

3. **Question:** The indicator table on page 23 of the NFO includes "Number of Volunteer Homestays." Given that some countries may have legal or security parameters that would prohibit homestays, could this be an optional indicator, or is it required of all programs? How does USAID define an applicable homestay?

   Response: Applicants should include this indicator in all Applications, but the proposed target may be zero. If home stays are not legal or indicated due to security or other issues, they should not be proposed. USAID has no established definition for home stay and the Applicant may provide their own definition. As with all indicators, this will be reviewed and finalized as part of the work plan process.

4. **Question:** Page 32, part 2.C (Institutional Capacity and Past Performance, for concept notes) notes that "The Applicant shall include at least three current references with valid email addresses for the Applicant's past performance…" Likewise, page 37 (Implementation and Management Capacity & Past Performance, for full proposals)

mentions Past Performance References and the past performance form in Attachment F. If the detailed Past Performance References (using the past performance form) are to be submitted with the full proposals, can USAID clarify what is expected to be included with the concept notes? If Applicants should submit past performance contact information with the concept notes, can this be included as an attachment?

Response: For the Concept Note, Applicants should provide only three current references on institutional performance but need not provide past performance form information. This may be included in Part I or alternatively may be included on a separate page as an attachment.

5. **Question:** Section IV.B (Page 34) of the NFO requires that applicants that provide information for prior federal funding including start/end dates, dollar value, funding agency, contract/agreement numbers, and agency POCs. For implementers with decades of experience, such a list would be extremely lengthy and burdensome to prepare. Rather than listing information for all federal awards, may applicants reference five of our most recent examples of large federally funded awards?

   Response: Yes.

6. **Question:** Is it acceptable for Applicants to include an Acronyms list, exclusive of the Concept Note page limitations?

   Response: No. Acronyms can be defined in the text and used judiciously.

7. **Question:** On page 11, Section I.B.3 Farmer-to-Farmer Leader Award Program Structure states, “Applicants will be expected to collaborate with an AVOP Project, if awarded, but should submit applications that are free-standing and not dependent on such additional support.” Could USAID provide clarification regarding what types of technical support services and volunteer projects are envisioned under AVOP, and in which countries AVOP will work?

   Response: Details for an AVOP project are yet to be defined, but technical support services will be relatively modest, probably with support for a website for the program and for organizing F2F Implementing Partner Meetings. AVOP volunteer projects will be similar to sub-awards under past Special Program Support Projects. Countries are yet to be determined.

8. **Question:** On page 28, Section III.B Country Eligibility Requirements states, “The prime applicant must arrange required legal presence status to operate in countries in which the F2F project is to be implemented…Applicants should describe the status of

their legal presence documentation in the countries in which they propose to work and describe the process they will follow to ensure legal recognition as required. Where possible, recognition of legal presence should be documented by a signed agreement with the host government and included in the application." a. Could USAID please clarify if this documentation should be included in the Phase I Concept Note or Phase II Full Application (or both)? Additionally, should this information be included as a separate Annex, and if so, under which Annex? b. Would USAID consider allowing applicants to provide evidence that the process of registration is underway, instead of documenting existing legal presence?

Response: This documentation should be provided in the Full Application, though it can be discussed in the Concept Note. It can be included as a separate attachment, as needed, and can be discussed in the Country Project Planning section of the Full Proposal. USAID will consider accepting evidence that the process of registration is underway, instead of documenting existing legal presence, and may include this in discussion questions.

9. **Question:** On page 15, Section I.B.3 Farmer-to-Farmer Leader Award Program Structure - Country F2F Projects states, "Most Country F2F Projects will likely be five-year activities. Some may be shorter and some may be shortened if experience so indicates. New Country F2F Projects can be initiated during the course of the five-year program." Would USAID consider forgoing the registration requirement for countries that would be phased in at a later stage of implementation?

   Response: Yes. But past experience does indicate the advantages of rapid start up.

10. **Question:** Page 20, Section I.C.1 Program performance and impact indicators, Table 5: Standard Performance and Impact Indicators in Use in the F2F Program includes the indicator "Number of Country Innovation Dissemination events." Please provide a definition of Country Innovation Dissemination events and a description on how this indicator will be captured.

    Response: There is as yet no established definition for this indicator and the Applicant is free to propose a definition. The definition for this and other indicators will be refined and confirmed in the work plan process. Country Innovation Dissemination events are expected to be activities such as stakeholder meetings, workshops, farmer days, etc. that disseminate findings and recommendations from volunteers. This is proposed as a standard indicator but Applicants are not required to propose targets for all proposed indicators.

11. **Question:** On page 33, Section IV.B.3.c Staffing states, “A CV may be attached (optional) for the proposed Project Director.” Can USAID confirm that the CV may be included as a separate attachment that is not included in the page limit, and provide guidance on under which Annex it should be included?

    Response: Yes. This can be a separate Attachment and is not within the page limits for attachments. It can be labeled separately as a separate attachment.

12. **Question:** On page 34, Section IV.B.6 Budget includes a Concept Note budget summary table which omits the category “Other” (sometimes also labeled as “Other Direct Costs”) which is included as a standard cost category in the SF 424a. Additionally, on page 39, Section IV.C.A2 Cost Submission includes “Other Direct Costs” in the contents of the Detailed Budget. Can USAID confirm if the cost category “Other Direct Costs” should be included in the budget summary table?

    Response: - Yes, the budget categories listed on page 34 are meant to be illustrative. Organizations should respond using whichever budget line items are applicable, which includes removing or adding line items appropriately.

13. **Question:** On page 45, Section VI.D Key Personnel states that, “Key personnel for the Recipient’s F2F Program shall include: the Recipient’s F2F Program Director and the F2F Program Country Director for each core country, up to a maximum total of five key personnel. The total number of Key Personnel, up to the maximum of five individuals, will therefore depend on the number of core countries in which the Recipient proposes to implement Country F2F Projects.” On page 46, Section VI.D Key Personnel states, “Key Personnel need not be assigned full-time to the Recipient F2F Program, as cost considerations and program needs may not require full time assignment. The Recipient shall justify its proposed level-of-effort from each Key Personnel position and obtain USAID AOR approval for time allocation of any position not assigned full-time to the Recipient F2F Program.” Would USAID please confirm that Country Directors may oversee more than one core country as long as the offeror sufficiently justifies their proposed level-of-effort in each designated country?

    Response: Yes, as long as the proposed level of effort and country-specific expertise is adequate to ensure quality of program operations in each designated country.

14. **Question:** Page 11, Section B.3 of the NFO states: "The FY19-23 F2F Program is expected to consist of the suite of core Recipient F2F Programs awarded under this NFO plus a separate Agricultural Volunteer Opportunity Project (AVOP) Project that will provide program-wide technical support services for agricultural volunteer programs and

finance smaller, specialized F2F volunteer projects that bring in new implementing organizations, test new approaches, and tap new sources of volunteers." Offeror requests that USAID clarify when the solicitation for AVOP will be issued?

Response: Applicants should plan for free-standing programs. USAID will provide advice as to status of any AVOP project separately.

15. **Question:** Page 16, second paragraph, under Section B.3 Volunteer Assignments states: "Volunteer assignments for reporting purposes are defined as “international trips”, though these may involve multiple Scopes of Work and/or multiple countries." Offeror respectfully requests that USAID revise the definition of volunteer assignments for reporting purposes to state that a "Volunteer Assignment" is equivalent to the execution of one volunteer Scope of Work (SOW).

    Response: Volunteer international trips have been a standard metric for the program and should be used in for this NFO. Final standard indicator definitions will be agreed upon as part of the work plan process following award.

16. **Question:** Page 22, C.2 F2F Learning and Community of Practice, final paragraph, states: “Applicants are encouraged to budget a block amount of $50,000 for additional Community of Practice outreach activities and special studies beyond attendance in IPMs”. Offeror respectfully requests that USAID clarify if this amount should be budgeted per country.

    Response: This amount should be budgeted per Agreement.

17. **Question:** Page 32, Section IV, 1 B., 2c. Institutional Capacity and Past Performance states: “The Applicant shall include at least three current references with valid email addresses for the Applicant’s past performance and for any sub-awardee expected to receive 30 percent or more of award funding.” Offeror requests that USAID clarify whether these references are to be submitted as a separate Attachment or using the form in NOFO Attachment F. (Past Performance Reference Sheet)? If they are to be provided as a separate Attachment, please provide content specifications, title and page length.

    Response: See response to Question 4.

18. **Question:** Page 33, Section IV, B.3.c. Staffing states: “A CV may be attached (optional) for the proposed Project Director.” Offeror requests USAID to confirm that the CV may be an Attachment to the staffing section outside of page count, and provide the title and page length for this Attachment.

Response: See response to Question 11.

19. **Question:** Page 34, Section IV, B.6. Attachment 3. i, requires the Offeror to identify which agency has issued a NICRA to the Offeror. Please confirm that the actual NICRA shall not be attached to the one page budget attachment.

    Response: - The NICRA does not need to be submitted at the concept paper stage, however if an organization is asked to submit a full application, the NICRA will be required if your organization has one.

20. **Question:** Page 34, Section IV, B.6. Attachment 3. iii, requires identification of contract/agreements for previously received Federal Funds within the one page budget attachment. For the purposes of supporting the prior receipt of Federal Funds, the Offeror requests USAID limit the reference to a single current Federal award.

    Response: Please provide ***up to*** three references and indicate if you have had more previous awards without providing the detail.

21. **Question:** Page 37, Section IV, C.A.1, 5b Implementation Capacity and Past Performance states that the proposal must include past performance references using the form in Attachment F. Offeror requests that USAID clarify how many past performance references are required for the proposed prime implementer and partners, and the conditions determining whether past performance references are required for partners (e.g., those receiving at least 30% of the award funding, as in the Concept Note)?

    Response: Applicants should provide at least three past performance references and three for each proposed sub-partner receiving at least 30% of the award funding.

22. **Question:** Page 37, Section IV, C.A.1, 5b Implementation Capacity and Past Performance states that the proposal must include "full CV (3 page maximum) for the proposed F2F Program Director/Coordinator, to be placed in annex; CVs (3 page maximum) for each proposed F2F Country Director to be placed in annex.; at least three past performance references (to be listed in an attachment to application) for each individual proposed for a Key Personnel position…" Offeror requests that USAID clarify a) how many annexes are requested for CVs. E.g., one per CV or all CVs in one annex, b) what number and title is to be used for CV Annex(es), c) how many attachments are requested for proposed Key Personnel past performances references. E.g., one per each Key Personnel or all Key Personnel references in one attachment, d) what number and

title is to be used for CV Attachment(s), and e) all required Annexes and attachments for the Full Proposal with titles and page limits in list form.

Response: Applicants may organize Full Application annexes as appropriate to conform to NFO requirements and providing for clarity and easy of understanding. The following organization may be used:

1) Annex 1: Work Plan for Year 1 with attached summary LOP Work Plan
2) Annex 2: Illustrative Draft Country project Description
3) Annex 3: CVs for Key Personnel
4) Annex 4: Reference contact information for Applicant and proposed key personnel

23. **Question:** Page 39, Section Application Instruction, subsection C.A.2 Cost Submission, Detailed Budget Contents, includes section 5. Supplies. Please confirm that the Offeror may follow its approved organizational cost structure instead of this requirement as defined and exclude the supplies category per the internal cost policies and disclosures statements as required in CAS 401 – Consistency in Estimating, Accumulating, and Reporting Costs.

    Response: Organizations may exclude any cost category as they see fit, however if the organization wishes to charge the agency for supplies (or any other cost category), the cost category must be included and discussed in detail via the budget spreadsheet and cost narrative. Please note that this is for the full application stage.

24. **Question:** Page 39, Section Application Instruction, subsection C.A.2 Cost Submission, Detailed Budget Contents, includes section 6. Contractual. Please confirm that the Offeror may follow its approved organizational cost structure instead of this requirement as defined and exclude the contractual category per the internal cost policies and disclosures statements as required in CAS 401 – Consistency in Estimating, Accumulating, and Reporting Costs.

    Response: See question 23.

25. **Question:** Page 39, Section IV, Phase II, C.A.2, under 7. Other Direct Cost states: “The budget shall identify the following but is not limited to: communications, report preparation costs, passports, visas, medical exams and inoculations, insurance (other than insurance included in the Applicant’s fringe benefits). The narrative shall support and provide a breakdown for all other direct costs.” Please confirm that the Offeror may

follow its approved organizational cost structure instead of this requirement as defined and exclude the supplies category per the internal cost policies and disclosures statements as required in CAS 401 – Consistency in Estimating, Accumulating, and Reporting Costs.

Response: See question 23.

26. **Question:** Will USAID allow F2F volunteer assignments that support projects or activities funded by other donors?

    Response: Yes, providing the proposed activities align with objectives for the Farmer-to-Farmer Program.

27. **Question:** Home stays appear as a new indicator, and are mentioned on pages 20, 23, and 33 of the NOFO. However, no clarification is provided as to why this is a new indicator, what constitutes a home stay, and what is the motivating factor behind them. Please define what constitutes a home stay for this indicator and what the objective is for encouraging and measuring home stays.

    Response: See response to Question 3. Home stays may be an indication of substantive cross-cultural exchange and of host support to the activity. They may not be appropriate in some countries.

28. **Question:** The F2F Program has had an active and useful F2F Implementing Partners Community of Practice in which all implementing partners collaborate to share lessons learned and promote volunteerism. The Community of Practice collaborates in: an annual Implementing Partners Meeting (IPM) to review F2F Program progress, issues and best practice. Recipients should plan to participate in these. The initial IPM is expected to be in early 2018 in the US for one week to review Program good practice, procedures, and reporting and M&E systems. Key home office management and recruiting staff and one staff member (presumably the Country F2F Director) from each core country should participate. Please confirm that "early 2018," before the issuance of this award, is an error and should read "early 2019."

    Response: Correct. This should be "early 2019."

29. **Question:** On page 28 of the amended solicitation, USAID indicates that where possible, recognition of legal presence should be documented by a signed agreement with the host government and included in the application. Should applicants include this information in an annex to the concept note? Should the applicant provide documentation for any country proposed, both core countries and substitution countries?

Response: This can be stated in the Concept Note. Documentation can be attached to Full Application as requested.

30. **Question:** Please confirm that all eligible counties are listed in Table 4 of the NOFO Amendment 1 on page 17. Several countries (e.g., Botswana, Lesotho, Central African Republic) are listed in Table 4 on page 17 but not in Attachment B.

    Response: Yes. Eligible countries are listed in Table 4.

31. **Question:** Please confirm that applicants do not need to be a PVO registered with USAID if they meet one of the other criterion listed on page ix under the "Eligible Applicants" section of the NFO.

    Response: That is correct. Please also see question # 103.

32. **Question:** Per Section IV, B. Phase I – Concept Note Instructions which states that applications shall be "12-point font using fixed pitch spacing per inch," please specify which font type USAID would prefer.

    Response: Any readable font is allowable.

33. **Question:** Can the Applicant provide a Table of Contents page that is not counted against page limitations?

    Response: Yes.

34. **Question:** Can the Applicant provide a List of Acronyms and Abbreviations that is not counted against page limitations? Technical 5. Should applicants submit only one "Attachment 2: Illustrative Country F2F Project Description" of 8- 10 pages per each country proposed under each competitive regional submission? For example, if an Applicant had three countries, would we submit three Country F2F Project Descriptions or one?

    Response: See response to Question 6.

35. **Question:** Should applicants submit only one "Attachment 2: Illustrative Country F2F Project Description" of 8-10 pages per each country proposed under each competitive regional submission? For example, if an Applicant had three countries, would we submit three Country F2F Project Descriptions or one?

Response: Applicants should submit only one Illustrative Country F2F Project Description for one of the countries proposed in the program in Part II of the Concept Note.

36. **Question:** What is the required page limit for the optional CV that may be attached for the proposed Project Director?

    Response: No page limit is given. Conciseness is valued.

37. **Question:** Can Applicants also include relevant institutional capacity and past performance information for proposed sub-awardees who are not expected to receive 30 percent or more of award funding?

    Response: Yes, within the established page limitations.

38. **Question:** Can Applicants include an optional volunteer matrix as an additional attachment that is not subject to the page limitations?

    Response: No. This should be within established page limits.

39. **Question:** Can Applicants include an optional organizational chart as an attachment that is not subject to the page limitations?

    Response: No. This should be within established page limits.

40. **Question:** On page 28 of the NFO, it states that "Applicants should describe the status of their legal presence documentation in the countries in which they propose to work and describe the process they will follow to ensure legal recognition as required." Is this required as part of the Phase I – Concept Note submission? If so, in which section is this required?

    Response: See response to Question 8.

41. **Question:** Can Applicants include host country letters of support (such as letters of support from local resource partners) as an additional attachment separate from letters of support from host governments for documented legal presence, that is not subject to the page limitations?

    Response: No, but these may be noted in the text of the Application.

42. **Question:** Page 32, Section 3. b. "Results Planning" of the NFO states that the application must include “an Attachment projection of estimated life-of-project targets

for the Recipient F2F Program for all Standard F2F Performance and Impact Indicators." However, the Attachment 1 table provided on page 33 of the NFO does not seem to include all standard F2F Performance and Impact indicators as shown in Table 5, page 20 of the NFO, or in the "Definitions for the Standard F2F Indicators" document referenced on page 19 of the NFO. Could USAID please confirm that the applicant should follow the Attachment 1 table provided on page 33 of the NFO for the Phase I – Concept Note stage?

Response: Yes. Applicants may submit target estimates for the shortened list of illustrative indicators as listed on page 33. Additional indicators may be included but are not required.

43. **Question:** On page 42 of the NFO, part of the evaluation criteria of the Results Planning section is "the ability to formulate sound and useful key indicators for Country F2F Projects using Standard or custom indicators." Could USAID please confirm that Applicants can add and/or remove custom indicators to the Attachment 1 table provided on page 33 of the NFO for the Phase I – Concept Note stage?

    Response: Yes. Applicants may add custom indicators. There is no need to delete any shown, but they can reflect zero target.

44. **Question:** On page 34 of the NFO regarding Instructions for Attachment 3: Budget, does the "Total USAID Contribution" line item in the budget breakdown table refer to the Total Federal Cost consisting of both USAID Washington funding plus Mission buy-ins, or only to the USAID Washington funding?

    Response: The budget should reflect the full amount including the ceiling for the potential Mission buy-in. The Applicant should assume that the buy in is for the same type of volunteer activities as the core F2F funding.

45. **Question:** Per page vii. of the NFO it is stated that, "Within each total Leader Award ceiling, $1.0 million will be a ceiling for Mission Buy-ins to the Leader Award and will be dependent on Mission interest and funding availability for buy-ins." Should there be any reference to Mission buy-ins in our Phase I – Concept Note budget?

    Response: Applicants should describe a project including the potential buy-in funding, assuming that it is for the same types of volunteer activities as the core F2F funding.

46. **Question:** On page 34 of the NFO, question 6.a.iii states, "Have you received Federal Funds in the past? (Y/N)" For Applicants that answer "Yes", what is the maximum number of awards we should submit?

Response: At least three and no more than six.

47. **Question:** On page 34 of the NFO regarding Instructions for Attachment 3: Budget; can the Applicant add "Other Direct Costs" as a Direct Cost category in their budget breakdown table?

    Response: Yes.

48. **Question:** Can USAID confirm that the daily Volunteer Expert (VE) leverage rate is $470/day?

    Response: Applicants may use a standard rate of $522.

49. **Question:** Please confirm that table 5 on p. 20 is the preferred and complete list of standard F2F indicators. It is different than the previous/current list being used. It is also different than the list of indicators provided on p.33.

    Response: The list of indicators on page 33 should be used. Additional indicators can be added at the Applicants discretion.

50. **Question:** Please advise whether Applicants should include indicators not relevant to their specific proposal designs.

    Response: The list of indicators on page 33 should be used. Additional indicators can be added at the Applicant's discretion. Those not relevant can be shown with target of zero.

51. **Question:** Would USAID please define the following indicators? "Number of country innovation dissemination events" – Please clarify whether this is State-side? Also, please define what "innovation" means in this context.

    Response: See response to Question 10. This is overseas only.

52. **Question:** "Area under improved management" - Please clarify whether this is inclusive of indirect beneficiaries.

    Response: This may include indirect beneficiaries if the Applicant can monitor and report on this.

53. **Question:** "Number of public outreach activities"? – Please clarify whether this includes outreach events both incountry and in the U.S.

Response: This should be U. S. outreach activities.

54. **Question:** For #2 of General Requirements for the Applications (page 31): "12-point font using fixed pitch spacing per inch" - Does the font need to be a fixed pitch (monospace) typeface? Or is this "fixed pitch spacing per inch" not referring to font spacing & instead referring to the need for spacing between words to be consistent throughout the document?

    Response: "Fixed pitch spacing per inch" was included in this NFO in error. Please use a 12 point font with standard one inch margins.

55. **Question:** Are illustrative graphics or flowcharts able to use smaller fonts (readable) or only tables?

    Response: Smaller fonts maybe used in such charts and tables, but any text in fonts that are unreadable will not be considered by evaluators.

56. **Question:** Please confirm whether an Acronym page is allowed and, if so, please confirm that this will not count against the overall page limitation.

    Response: No. See response to Question 6.

57. **Question:** Attachment 2 – Could USAID please share evaluation criteria (if any) for Attachment No. 2: "Illustrative Project Descriptions"?

    Response: Evaluation criteria are provided on pages 41 and 42. The Attachment 2 will be relevant mainly to Country F2F projects design.

58. **Question:** Attachment 2 – Could USAID please confirm the structure of the outline for Attachment 2? Should implementers follow the guidance in the box on pg. 14, or the structure of the linked documents on pg. 33?

    Response: Applicants should follow the guidance in Box 3 page 14.

59. **Question:** Could USAID consider providing an FSN scale for countries specified in the RFA?

    Response: No. Not at this stage.

60. **Question:** Could USAID please confirm that we are allotted more than 1 page for the budget section for the question, "Have you received Federal Funds in the past", along with the required details?

Response: Please keep the response within the one page requirement. A more detailed performance history will be requested at the full application stage.

61. **Question:** Would USAID please consider allowing the $1.4M start up cap to be raised for projects over $8.25M?

    Response: This may be considered at the Full Application stage.

62. **Question:** For the Budget Categories, we noted that the Other Direct Costs category is not listed in the Summary Budget template, which is a change from current budgeting practices. Could USAID please consider including ODCs as a cost category?

    Response: Organizations may add ODC's as a budget category, and any other line items as needed.

63. **Question:** Page 46 states a Country Director's minimum qualifications must include a university degree. Is there an equivalent amount of experience that could be substituted for this degree, particularly for a candidate that has significant experience as a F2F country director?

    Response: USAID will consider relaxing this requirement based on sound justification from Applicants.

64. **Question:** Given that the Associate Awards may run for up to five years from date of award and may extend beyond the period for the Leader Award, Would the project be under the Leader Award budget or the Associate Award Budget?

    Response: Associate Awards will be independent, free-standing projects with their own budgets.

65. **Question:** In the course of the registration or project implementation, can the NGO implementing the project be changed, renamed or transferred?

    Response: The name of the NGO can be changed or renamed, which may mean that the organization has to go through a novation with the agency. An award cannot be transferred to another organization unless by sale or purchase of another organization.

66. **Question:** What are the reporting requirements, frequency, and depth for the F2F project?

Response: See NFO Section VI.

67. **Question:** How many concurrent similar F2F programs can be in place in the same country?

    Response: There is no definitive answer to this question. Typically there will be one core F2F program activity in a country. In some circumstances, there have been two programs active and there may be special program activities in countries with core F2F programs. USAID will assist implementing partners to coordinate activities when there are more than two programs active in a country and efforts will be made to avoid this when possible.

68. **Question:** Are there financial requirements or commitments, expected from the NGO implementing the F2F program?

    Response: See NFO Section III.C “Leverage & Cost Share”.

69. **Question:** Is government backing a requirement?

    Response: No.

70. **Question:** The NFO (p. Vii, Executive Summary) refers to $1 million ceiling within each total Leader Award Ceiling for Mission buy-ins. Will there be any other vehicles for Mission buy-ins under the FY19-23 Farmer-to-Farmer program cycle?

    Response: Not under this NFO.

71. **Question:** Section B.3 of the NFO states that “technical support services for agricultural volunteer programs” is expected to be provided by AVOP. Can you provide additional detail about the specific technical support services expected under AVOP? Does this include supporting the F2F Communities of Practice?
    Response: See response to Question 7.

72. **Question:** Section B.3 of the NFO refers to a separate Agricultural Volunteer Opportunity Project (AVOP). When does USAID anticipate releasing the solicitation for AVOP? Can you confirm that AVOP will be a separate cooperative agreement? Will AVOP be an LWA?

    Response: This is a separate procurement action. No further information is available at this time.

73. Question: The NFO makes no reference to knowledge management. Will knowledge management for the F2F core awards be included under AVOP?

Response: Knowledge management is expected to be a part of the F2F Community of Practice as has been the case in the past.

74. Question: Does the five-year budget consist of the request amount of support to spread over five years? Or is the total request amount granted every year for five years? (For example, $3M request over 5 years or is it $3m per year for five years?)

Response: See Section II. A. (p. 25). Applicants should propose a budget for the full five years.

75. Question: In the budget for salaries, shall we include in the budget compensation for the Agreement Officer, Contracting Officer, Chief of Party, Deputy Chief and Chief Technical Officer Educators, trainers, Inspectors, Project Engineers and Consultants?

Response: Applicants should budget for salaries for proposed personnel to be employed by the Applicant under the award.

76. Question: Shall the budget reflect the number of projected clients served per state or region?

Response: No. The budget should be consistent with the technical program described and expected targets for performance and impact indicators.

77. Question: Does the grant allow us to conduct volunteer recruitment through all media and marketing genres available such as radio, television, social media and internet? Will the project have full permission to freely recruit volunteers in each projected state we intend to provide services?

Response: The NFO does not restrict or define methods of volunteer recruitment or areas for recruitment. The Applicant should demonstrate a viable approach to recruitment to meet the objectives of the program. Recruitment of volunteers is only restricted to U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

78. Question: What is the allowable administrative fee for this award?

Response: See Section III. A. (p. 28): For profit businesses must waive profits and/or fees to be eligible to submit a Concept Note. See also Section IV. C. A2. Detailed Budget Contents, 8. Indirect Costs (p. 39).

79. Question: What is considered administrative salaries?

Response: Organizations must directly charge the government for salaries unless those salaries are covered by indirect costs in accordance with the organizations policy or a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement.

80. Question: In the NOA there is a ten percent indirect cost for a rate agreement stated on page 40 section A2. What does the indirect cost rate agreement below include? Does this fee compensate for the salaries for Key Personnel listed above? 2 AO, Chief Deputy. Assistant Chief, etc.

If an applicant does not have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, it must be able to provide the previous three years of audited financial statements to the Agreement Officer. (This will be requested separately). In the alternate, if the applicant has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, applicant may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs as per 2 CFR 200.414(f). If the prospective applicant chooses the de minimis rate, the AO must incorporate the 10% indirect cost rate in the award budget and the recipient must follow the requirements in 2 CFR 200.414(f).

Response: Salary and Wages is a separate budget category. The deminimus indirect rate of 10% is an indirect rate that can be applied in the event an organization does not currently have a NICRA. This is not a replacement of key personnel costs. Salaries are included in the base. Essentially the 10% rate can be applied on all direct costs. Please read the referenced section of 2 CFR 200 for more information.

81. Question: Are the volunteers stipend for any their services through this grant or another funding source? If so, through whom or shall we incorporate this line item for their service/s?

Response: Volunteer travel and transportation costs, including Per Diem, should be included in the proposed budget. Volunteers should not receive payments or stipends for volunteer service, beyond the costs for their expenses incurred

82. Question: Does the Agricultural Education and Training (AET) also cover farm inputs such as approved seedings, fertilizers herbicides? Does it cover Farmer certifications and farmland certifications, irrigation machinery, industrial equipment, trucks as needed for farmland certification?

Response: F2F Program funding is limited to only volunteer services.

83. **Question:** While the NFO states that it is expected that no Recipient will be awarded more than one LWA Cooperative Agreement, there does not seem to be a clear limit on the number of Concept Notes each applicant can submit. For example, can an applicant submit two concept papers each with a primary region and a secondary region, for a total of four proposed regions even though they could potentially be awarded only one?

    Response: See response to Question 1.

84. **Question:** On page 34 of the NFO, it states that the limit for "Attachment 4: Application F2F Project Options" is 1 Page. However, further bullet points below - specifically 7.b. – say that a second region can be proposed and if that region is proposed, included in Attachment 4 of the original Concept Note is an additional 6 page Concept Note Part II, a 1 page LOP indicator document, a 1 page budget, and a list of options for the second region.

    We are assuming that the 1 page limit for Attachment 4 is only if you do not intend to propose a full second region. And if you propose a second region, the page limit for Attachment 4 is 10 pages total (1 page of F2F Options for Primary Region, 6 pages of an additional Part II for Secondary Region, 1 page of results for Secondary Region, 1 page budget for Secondary Region, 1 page of F2F Options for Secondary Region). But please confirm or clarify.

    Response: See response to Question 1. Attachment 4 has a 1 page limit.

85. **Question:** A number of regions listed include eligible countries that do not have USAID Missions and/or do not receive large amounts of USG assistance. Does USAID give preference in the Concept Notes to selecting countries that have USAID Missions and/or receive larger amounts of USG assistance?

    Response: See Section V: Application Review Information (p. 41). No preference is given to Concept Notes that select countries with USAID Missions and/or receive larger amounts of USG assistance.

86. Question: As a newly established 501(c) (3), our company does not have 2 years of program experience. However, we have individually, decades of experience in designing, planning, managing (grants and contracts), monitoring, and reporting on international agricultural development programs, and F2F programs. Most of our team members have also been volunteers for many years. Does USAID take into account our team's collective international experience and our many years of USAID F2F program participation as Country Directors, Regional Directors, and volunteers?

Response: See Section V: Application Review Information (p. 41).

87. Question: If "USAID strongly encourages applications from new US Partners," how will USAID factor this into its evaluation criteria (ex. past performance may be stronger for an implementer already in country. Existing IPs may have more existing networks and systems).

Response: See Section V: Application Review Information (p. 41).

88. Question: (p. 2): If USAID is "placing increased emphasis on economic impact and obtaining measurable results," how will it factor in the tradeoffs between working with larger and smaller, more underserved hosts and partners? Each of these will yield a different level of results, and success may not be readily captured by numbers.

Response: The F2F Program, by its nature, involves a number of fundamental trade-offs that must be balanced in implementation. These present challenges in planning and implementing an F2F award so as to maximize impact and respond to the multiple demands on the program. See NFO Attachment A.

89. Question: (p. 3): With USAID's "increasing emphasis on economic impact" and focus on agribusiness, how does the agency envision a F2F project addressing the "improved nutrition" and "well-nourished population," that is a core focus on the Global Food Security Strategy and the USAID Feed the Future. Nutrition is also not mentioned in the list of F2F objectives on p. 9.

Response: F2F program activities are varied and focused on agricultural development. While nutrition is not a key F2F objective, it does fall within the larger scope and goals of the program.

90. Question: (p.10): "working with higher value crops... where American volunteers are more likely to have a comparative advantage," seems to be at odds with some USAID

CDCS strategy and Feed the Future crops such as grains and staple crops (not high value).

Response: Countries present diverse situations and strategies and balance and complementarity of efforts may be considerations. F2F activities can provide support across a wide range of strategic approaches.

91. **Question:** (p.11): Please describe in more detail what is meant by: “plus a separate Agricultural Volunteer Opportunity Project (AVOP)”? Is this similar to the existing Special Projects program (SPSS)? Will core recipient IPs have the opportunity to also design and implement “smaller, specialized volunteer projects,” if during implementation (post-award) a core IP comes across such as project that could be piloted.

    Response: See response to Question 7.

92. **Question:** (p.12): USAID recommends 2-3 staff plus an additional technical staff. Does USAID therefore mean to suggest 2-4 staff?

    Response: Country staffing will differ by country for various reasons. Country staffing numbers discussed on page 12 are from past F2F program experience. Applicants should plan for staffing adequate to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed program.

93. **Question:** (p. 17): Related to high risk security countries; how will USAID balance need and opportunity and risk. The countries are also not apples to apples; and success is therefore relative (ex. West Africa and Caucuses countries have different levels of poverty, seasons and climates, crops, needs).

    Response: See Section I. B4: Geographic Focus (p. 16).

94. **Question:** (p.18): Is it allowable for an IP to work with a USAID Mission outside its country of implementation when there is another F2F IP in country?

    Response: See response to Question 67.

95. **Question:** If annual allocated budget funds are not spent, can these funds be carried over into the next year’s budget?

    Response: Yes.

96. **Question:** At what point do we need to fulfill the Legal Presence requirement in core countries?

    Response: See response to Question 8.

97. **Question:** Local subcontractors can't have a DUNS or SAM. What other documents should they provide?

    Response: Any entity can have a DUNS and register in the System for Award Management and are required to do both, unless they meet the requirements of 2 CFR 25.110.

98. **Question:** (p. 26): What is meant by "not to issue an award in one or more, or in any, of the competitive groups"; what is "competitive group?"

    Response: The competitive groups are the Regional Award Categories listed on page 26: East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa, Caribbean Basin, Other.

99. **Question:** We have a financial specialist on our team with many years of audit experience, however, as a newly formed NGO; we do not have an audited history. Is this acceptable?

    Response: It is acceptable; however you cannot use an individual's audit experience to take the place of an organization's experience. That being said your organization can still apply for funding as long as the organization meets the eligibility requirements of the solicitation.

100. **Question:** The answer to clarification question 2 states that, "There is no specified limit to the number of regional or thematic programs in which the Applicant may indicate interest and capacity for implementation of the F2F program.", but the answer to Question 3 states, "Applicants may submit only one application, which may include descriptions of programs for two regional or thematic programs." If an applicant would like to indicate interest in three regional programs, are we correct to assume that the first region should be specified in Part II of the application, the second region should be detailed in Attachment 4, and the third should be included as an item in the list of other regional or thematic programs in which the Applicant would be interested and able to work in Attachment 4?

     Response: Yes. See response to Question 1.

101. Question: The NFO states on page vii that "It is expected that no Recipient will be awarded more than one LWA Cooperative Agreement". Does USAID have similar expectations around sub-recipient organizations facing limitations to the number of successful LWA Cooperative Agreements they are named on?
Response: No.

102. Question: Page 28 states "Documented Legal Presence: The prime applicant must arrange required legal presence status to operate in countries in which the F2F project is to be implemented. Countries for implementation will not be confirmed until work plans are developed with inputs from USAID country missions after the award of the Agreement. Applicants should describe the status of their legal presence documentation in the countries in which they propose to work and describe the process they will follow to ensure legal recognition as required. Where possible, recognition of legal presence should be documented by a signed agreement with the host government and included in the application. Letters of support from the Ministry of Agriculture, or a legal document recognizing a local partner may not be submitted in lieu of the PVO/NGO agreement with the local government." Can a prime Recipient who does not and will not have Documented Legal Presence in one of the countries of the LWA work through a sub Recipient organization who does have documented legal presence there?

Response: Yes, if allowable under local law.

103. Question: With regard to page 9, which states: "The F2F Cooperative Agreements will be fully competed among eligible organizations. Eligible applicants must be either: a US Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) registered with USAID (a PVO may be in the registration process during the NFO Phase I Concept Note stage, however must be fully registered before NFO Phase II Full Application stage); a U.S. nonprofit agricultural organization; a US agricultural cooperative; a private U.S. agribusiness or agriculturally-related business or consulting firm; private organization (including grassroots organizations with an established and demonstrated capacity to carry out such a bilateral exchange program), private corporation, or a college, university or foundation maintained by a college or university. Moreover, applicants must have within the past five (5) years a minimum of two (2) years' experience in planning, managing, monitoring and reporting on international agricultural development programs. For profit businesses must waive profits and/or fees to be eligible to submit a Concept Note." Can USAID verify that PVO registration is required, despite the notice on USAID.gov which contains the below notice:

"Overview of Changes to PVO Registration

Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) no longer need to register with USAID before participating in most programs. PVO registration is still legislatively required for the following two USAID programs as a condition of eligibility: The Limited Excess Property Program and The Ocean Freight Reimbursement Program. For these two programs USAID will use a simplified self-certification form as part of the registration process.

USAID is changing its registration processes for Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs). Going forward, PVOs will only be required to register for the Limited Excess Property Program (LEPP) and the Ocean Freight Reimbursement (OFR) Program. This will be accomplished through a more streamlined process involving completion of a self-certification form as part of the application process for these programs.

PVOs can now apply for any grant program in the Agency, aside from LEPP and OFR, without going through an annual registration process. PVOs will still be required to meet any conditions USAID deems necessary for the award of grants or cooperative agreements, which may include the completion of a financial audit.

To implement these changes, USAID will propose the rescission of 22 CFR 203 of the Code of Federal Regulations. There will be a thirty-day open comment period when the general public can express their views on this proposed change.

USAID greatly values the role PVOs play in international development and in achieving our Agency's development objectives. The goal of these changes is to simplify our processes, reduce the administrative burden on PVOs, and make it easier to do business with the USAID. "

Response: This is not a Limited Excess Property program; therefore PVOs do not need to register. The NFO will be amended to remove this requirement.