

The purpose of this Amendment No. 01 is to answer questions received by the Issuing Office by Monday, January 12, 2009.

PLEASE NOTE: The closing date for this RFA remains Thursday, January 29, 2009, 3:00 p.m. Kigali Time.

Below are USAID/Rwanda clarifications for questions arising from **USAID-RWANDA-696-09-003-RFA “MCC Threshold Program - Media Strengthening Project”**

Question 1 – page 31 of the RFA states that *“overall project success will be measured by the following two targeted outcomes in addition to the MCC indicators described in this program description.”*

1. *Rwanda’s professional media associations are perceived to actively represent the interests of journalists; and*
2. *Journalists report having equal access to information*

The RFA does indicate how outcomes 1 and 2 will be measured. On page 32, however, measurements are also given for outcomes 3, 4 and 5, and below that an additional five “Other Expected Outcomes” are mentioned. It is not clear what outcomes 3, 4 and 5 are.

USAID Response: Please disregard reference to outcomes 3, 4, and 5.

Question 2 – Can USAID please clarify the total number of expected outcomes as well as provide detailed instructions as to how these outcomes should be measured?

USAID Response: There are a total of two outcomes, measured by the annual survey mentioned in the RFA. The applicant should also develop other related expected outcomes, illustrated by those listed on page 32.

Question 3 – also related to page 31 of the RFA, can USAID please provide clarification on what it sees as equitable and concrete ways for journalists to gauge their equal and relative access to information? Wide variations exist in the skills of Rwandan journalists and their understanding of the concept of access to information, which could be defined as relative to other journalists, or relative to a timeline, and would also have to allow for access to a wide variety of types of information, some more accessible than others.

Given the high priority that is being accorded to this outcome, the complexity of the topic and the notions of perception, what does USAID consider to be a realistic measurement for capturing this information?

USAID Response: This information can be ascertained from the annual survey mentioned in the RFA.

Question 4 – page 31 of the RFA also states that *“overall project success will be measured by the following two targeted outcomes in addition to the MCC indicators described in the program description.”*

Can USAID please confirm whether the MCC indicators mentioned here refer to the following on Page 21?

USAID Response: Yes. For more information on these indicators, see:
<http://www.mcc.gov/documents/mcc-fy-09-guidetotheindicators.pdf>

- Civil Liberties will be addressed by enhancing the independence of the media.
- Political Rights will be targeted by increasing the openness, transparency, and accountability of government to its constituents through an independent and sustainable media sector.
- Voice and Accountability will be addressed by enhancing: 1) the independence and quality of the media; 2) the degree to which civic groups can testify, comment on, and influence pending government policy or regulation; and 3) the degree to which citizens have access to public information.

Question 5 – as the MCC information above describes goals rather than indicators, is the implementer expected to a) use existing detailed MCC indicators to measure the success of this project, or b) develop detailed indicators that measure the above MCC goals?

USAID Response: Applicants should develop activities that will positively impact the two specific targeted outcomes listed on page 31. The two targeted outcomes are intended to positively impact the three MCC indicators referenced on page 21.

Question 6 – Does the 20% ceiling to be allocated to the establishment of 2 community radio stations refer to infrastructure costs only or is it also expected to cover staffing, training and other activities associated with the development of these stations?

USAID Response: The 20% ceiling is expected to cover infrastructure, staff, training and other activities associated with the development of these stations.

Question 7 – The RFA mentions improving the professional skills of media owners. Media owners, however, may not necessarily have any media skills. They may, for instance, be businessmen in unrelated fields who have little to do with the daily running of their media outlet, and may be resistant to involvement in activities carried out by the implementer. Can USAID please clarify the extent to which the implementer is expected to commit to demonstrating impact on media owners?

USAID Response: Applicants are expected to address these issues in their applications and should put forward creative solutions, where possible. For example, the RFA highlights a focus on creating financially sustainable media outlets, which will likely be of interest to media owners.

Question 8 – The solicitation cover letter instructs applicants to submit their applications via e-mail and also references the grants.gov submission method. In addition to the e-mail submission to the designated individuals, are applicants required to submit the applications through grants.gov as well? If grants.gov submission is optional and applicants choose email submission only, are hardcopies also required? If so, how many should be sent and to where? And is there a deadline for hardcopies to be delivered?

USAID Response: Only e-mails (with attachments) or Compact Disk submissions are adequate and preferred. Hard copies are NOT required or desired.

Question 9 – . Page 6 of the RFA discusses the need to describe the relationship between proposed personnel and the organization, and says the cost application shall include "a certification as to whether the individual is a full-time employee, intermittent employee, or a consultant". What does USAID prefer for this certification? Is a statement from the applicant organization enough to be considered a certification or are other documents required?

USAID Response: A statement signed by an authorized representative of the offeror is sufficient.

Question 10 – a) Is it correct that annexes related to the Technical Application are NOT included in the 32-page limit?

USAID Response: Yes

- b) In addition to the Past Performance References and the letters of intent and/or memoranda of understanding on public-private partnerships that are mentioned, are any other specific attachments related to the Technical Application desired, such as resumes and letter of commitment for Key Personnel?

USAID Response: Yes

Question 11 – Page 19, paragraph 2 says the technical evaluation criteria are listed below on the page "in descending order of relative importance" and that "Key personnel is the second most important factor ..." However, in the criteria listed below, Key Personnel is #3, with 'Partnerships, Participation and Adaptive Management" as #2. Would it be possible to clarify the order of importance of the technical evaluation criteria?

USAID Response: The second paragraph in Section B on page 19 is not correct. It should read as follows.

"The technical applications will be evaluated in accordance with the Technical Evaluation Criteria set forth below. The technical evaluation criteria is listed in descending order of relative importance. "Technical Approach" is the most important factor. "Partnerships, Participation and Adaptive Management" is the second most important factor and so on."

Question 12 - How does one confirm the complete application has been received electronically?

USAID Response: Applicants will receive a confirmation notice by e-mail from USAID.

Question 13 -. The proposal seeks to strengthen the capacity of private media but makes frequent references to supporting and building public and private partnerships. Does this mean partnering with publicly-funded institutions in Rwanda?

USAID Response: The successful applicant, as the implementer of a publicly-funded USAID project, will be expected to pursue partnerships with private sector partners who may also have an interest in media strengthening in Rwanda, as well as with other publicly-funded entities, both in Rwanda and outside of Rwanda.

Question 14 – Does "public stakeholders in the media sector" refer to ORINFOR, HCM, the Ministry of Information and the National University of Rwanda?

USAID Response: "Public stakeholders" in this context refers to all Government of Rwanda entities involved in the media sector.

Question 15 – Although there are provisions for an Apparently Successful Applicant to describe their branding, positioning, communications and marketing strategies in detail, how much of the applicant's plans for these activities should be included in the original application?

USAID Response: Only the one Apparently Successful Applicant will later be requested to submit the Marketing Plan and Branding Strategy.

Question 16 – The technical evaluation criteria asks for the qualifications and experience of proposed key personnel and other professional staff, but only specifically asks for the proposed Chief of Party. How many other team members can or should be added to the application?

USAID Response: The COP is the only "key personnel" position listed in the RFA; applicants should propose overall staffing needed to successfully complete the project.

Question 17 – Does the proposed Chief of Party have to be based in-country for the life of the project or is it understood that a country coordinator position would be one of the key personnel positions?

USAID Response: The proposed Chief of Party does not have to be based in Rwanda for the life of the award. Applicants should propose staffing plans that make the most sense for achieving the project goal and objectives.

Question 18 – Given the high degree of consultation in planning the placement of the community radio stations as well as coordination of training and programming, how much detail about the proposed activities of the community radio stations should the application go into?

USAID Response: Applicants should provide the detail necessary to adequately describe all activities (including the establishment of community radio stations) within the overall page limit.

Question 19 – When does USAID anticipate making a decision about the Apparently Successful Applicant?

USAID Response: After the evaluation of all applications is finalized the Agreement Officer makes the final decision.

Question 20 – As a matter of policy, does USAID expect to accept one of the bids intact, or could it revise the process and ask two or more of the applicants to join forces?

USAID Response: USAID expects to make only one award under this solicitation.

Question 21 – When would the successful applicant be expected to begin implementing the project?

USAID Response: Within 30 days of the date the award is signed by both parties.