

**ATTACHMENT
QUESTIONS/ANSWERS
NOFO# 72038623RFA00001, InREPLACE Amendment#1**

1. Is there minimum financial eligibility for the prime/lead applicant?

USAID Response: Applicant must be a responsible entity with sufficient resources to ensure achievement of the objectives described in the NOFO. Therefore, the Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA) will have to go through Pre-Award Risk Assessment as outlined in section C.3.2. of the NOFO. Additionally, “The applicant must also provide past performance/history of performance information that demonstrates experience in managing similar work of comparable subject area, size, scale, duration, nature, and complexity required to successfully, efficiently, and effectively achieve the objectives outlined in the Section A.” See pages 25 and 26 of the NOFO.

2. Are letters of support required from all leverage partners for the Concept Stage? If yes, should the letters specify partner-wise estimated leverage amount?

USAID Response: Applicants must describe leverage partnerships and estimated leverage amount in their Concept Paper for resource partners that will contribute to the Activity. Letters of commitments are only required in Phase III from the applicant who was selected for Phase II.

3. When it comes to leverage, could you provide more examples of it? Beside financial sources, what other options are considered leverage? Is the PI/Co-PI time can be considered leverage as well?

USAID Response: Leveraged Funds are up-front investments/resources from public, private and/or civil society organizations to co-fund or co-invest on common development USAID interventions (development policy, plan, program, pilot, project or activity), even if the funds are not directly transferred to the implementing partner. Leveraged funds contribute to the implementation of the activity in the achievement of the deserved results. Examples of leverage are donated facilities cost, experts time, donated equipment or technology, anything of value that helps in programmatic performance. PI/Co-PI time can be considered leverage as long as PI/Co-PI does not request to be reimbursed (request payment from USAID) for the time contributed to the Activity.

4. Does this have to be a new project, or can the USAID funding be used to leverage existing efforts?

USAID Response: Leveraged funds are up-front investments/resources that contribute to the implementation of the activity in the achievement of the deserved results. Please see the definition for what constitutes leverage as further described in Question 3 and C.2. of the NOFO. The applicant can propose an existing concept/project that fits within the objectives of the NOFO. However, existing USAID projects nor USAID funding cannot be used as leverage.

5. The NOFO requires us to arrange for ‘leverage’. Would the money brought in as leverage also need to be invested without the expectation of generating profit?

USAID Response: Please see the definition for what constitutes leverage as further described in Question 3 and C.2. of the NOFO.

6. Does the 50% leverage amount come into play after the 30 million award is exhausted for sustaining the project?

USAID Response: Leverage is required throughout the implementation of the Activity as the resources are intended to achieve the whole.

7. Could CSR funds be used for leverage?

USAID Response: The Third Party can be one or more entities providing resources like CSR funds. Please see the definition for what constitutes leverage as further described in Question 3 and C.2. of the NOFO.

8. Could plastic credits finance be used as leverage?

USAID Response: Please see the definition for what constitutes leverage as further described in Question 3 and C.2. of the NOFO to determine whether plastic credits finance would be up-front investment / resources or economic flows from the intervention.

9. Could green bonds be used as leverage?

USAID Response: Please see the definition for what constitutes leverage as further described in Question 3 and C.2. of the NOFO to determine whether green bonds would be up-front investment / resources or economic flows from the intervention.

10. Could revenues from sale of recycled material be used as leverage?

USAID Response: Please see the definition for what constitutes leverage as further described in Question 3 and C.2. of the NOFO.

11. Could EPR compliance fees be used as leverage?

USAID Response: Please see the definition for what constitutes leverage as further described in Question 3 and C.2. of the NOFO.

12. Could government or grant financing be used as leverage?

USAID Response: Please see the definition for what constitutes leverage as further described in Question 3 and C.2. of the NOFO.

13. Could user fees for waste management be used as leverage?

USAID Response: User Fees may be considered Program Income. Please refer to F.4 for definition of Program Income.

14. Is there a template for how the leverage of 50% is to be calculated and showcased? Kindly also elaborate on what information is required for showcasing the leverage e.g. would it be potential financing avenues and an estimated figure expected to be mobilized or a supporting document confirming the financing?

USAID Response: There is no template. However, some examples include: Volunteer Services. Rates for volunteer services must be consistent with those paid for similar services; Donated employee time - employee's time must be the employee's regular rate of pay; Donated supplies - donated supplies must be the fair market value of the supplies at the time of donations; and Donated equipment, building or land must be the fair market value or rental value at the time of the donation, as established by an independent appraisal. Please refer to the definition of leverage included in answer #3.

15. With respect to leverage, kindly confirm if components such as unlocking of Government Funds at National, State and ULB level, Investment from VC, Private Sector investment in the projects for implementation, CSR spending, EPR contributions can be considered as leverage?

USAID Response: Please see the definition for what constitutes leverage as further described in Question 3 and C.2. of the NOFO.

16. Will land and constructed MRF mobilized through Urban Local Body or an external donor, be considered as “Leverage”?

USAID Response: Please see the definition for what constitutes leverage as further described in Question 3 and C.2. of the NOFO. Construction of a MRF mobilized by an external party must align with and contribute to the intended objectives as described in the NOFO and must meet the definition of leverage.

17. Would the funds spent by a partner corporate taking up a new Recycling innovation project would qualify under the 50% leverage (as prescribed in the NOFO)?

USAID Response: Please see the definition for what constitutes leverage as further described in Question 3 and C.2. of the NOFO. The “Recycling innovation project” must align with and contribute to the intended objectives as described in the NOFO and must meet the definition of leverage.

18. We understand that Leverage of USD 15 M needs to be brought in over the period of the contract and not at the initial stage. Request you to please confirm our understanding.

USAID Response: Leverage is required throughout the implementation of the Activity as the resources are intended to achieve the whole.

19. Will resources contributed as part of the Leverage be measured in financial terms only or other non-financial elements such as human resources, technology etc. could be included. If yes, how will non-financial elements be measured?

USAID Response: Elements such as human resources, supplies, etc., may constitute leverage. For example: Volunteer Services - rates for volunteer services must be consistent with those paid for similar services; Donated employee time - employee’s time must be the employee’s regular rate of pay; Donated supplies - donated supplies must be the fair market value of the supplies at the time of donations; and Donated equipment, building or land must be the fair market value or rental value at the time of the donation, as established by an independent appraisal. Please refer to the definition of leverage included in answer #3.

20. It is requested to please specify the difference between ‘leverage’ and ‘cost share’.

USAID Response:

Leveraging represents all of the non-USAID resources (excluding cost sharing) that are expected to be applied to a program. Leveraging includes resources that third-parties

bring to the program without necessarily providing them to the recipient of the USAID assistance award. These parties may include the host government, private foundations, businesses, or individuals. Please see the definition for what constitutes leverage as further described in Question 3 and C.2.

Cost sharing or matching means the portion of project costs not paid by Federal funds or contributions. It refers to the resources a recipient contributes to the total cost of an agreement and it is part of the approved award budget. The cost share must be verifiable from the recipient's records and it can be audited. It includes all cash and in-kind contributions from the recipient or third parties.

21. Can a UN agency be eligible to apply for the funding as a lead or as a consortium partner?

USAID Response: A UN Agency, as a PIO is eligible to apply and serve as primary applicant as long as they meet all the requirements. Applicants are reminded that the type of award is a Cooperative Agreement and differs from the normal PIO award.

22. Reference Page No. 1 of NOFO – “Eligibility for this award is restricted to all United States, local Indian, and International non-governmental organizations.” and Reference C.1 “Eligibility for this NOFO is unrestricted, open to all eligible and qualified U.S., local, and international non-governmental organizations.” – Request for clarification in both the statements as one is restricting and another one is unrestricting the type of organizations.

USAID Response: Both Statements allow qualified U.S., local Indian, and international non-governmental organizations to apply.

23. Does a consortium need to have a formal agreement amongst the consortium partners at the time of submitting the concept paper? In case yes, is there a prescribed format for the agreement?

USAID Response: No, no formal agreement is due at Phase I - concept paper. It is for the prime to decide how they want to lead the consortium.

24. Can you give details on roles and responsibilities of lead and subordinate organizations applying through ‘consortium’?

USAID Response: Lead organization is responsible for the success of the program and managing their sub-awardees/subordinate organizations.

25. It is requested to clarify that the credentials/technical/managerial capabilities of the lead bidder or the overall consortium will be considered for evaluation.

USAID Response: Credentials are required for lead and subordinate organizations, for expertise in an area for which the lead/subordinate organizations are proposing to implement.

26. Can USAID clarify what groups/organizations can be a partner in a consortium (i.e., UN Agencies, state and local governments, private sector etc.)?

USAID Response: It is for the prime to decide which area they need support in and which organization has that expertise. Subawards to PIOs like UN Agency and Partner Government Entities have additional requirements per ADS 303.3.21.

27. The NOFO mentions that usage of award funds for construction is disallowed. Could you clarify what is included under ‘construction’? Some more clarity on what the funds can and cannot be used for would be helpful.

USAID Response: The NOFO has been amended to allow for some types of construction. Construction, if determined necessary to achieve the objectives of the NOFO, will be considered that are only a portion of all award activities and cannot exceed the estimated cost of construction of \$500,000 at a single project site. Construction means construction, alteration, or repair (including dredging, excavating, and painting) of buildings, structures, or other real property. For purposes of this definition, the terms “buildings, structures, or other real property” include, but are not limited to, improvements of all types, such as bridges, dams, plants, highways, parkways, streets, subways, tunnels, sewers, mains, power lines, cemeteries, pumping stations, railways, airport facilities, terminals, docks, piers, wharves, ways, lighthouses, buoys, jetties, breakwaters, levees, canals, and channels.

28. On Page 29, it is mentioned that “Construction will not be authorized under this award”. Request you to please clarify on the term “Construction” and the constituent elements therein.

USAID Response: Please refer to answer to question #27.

29. The NOFO mentions construction as funding exclusion. Please clarify if development of a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) falls under this category?

USAID Response: Development of MRF “may” be considered construction if it falls within the definition of construction as defined in answer #27.

30. Can the funding be used to construct new material recovery facilities required to handle increased volumes of waste?

USAID Response: Please refer to answer to question #29.

31. Can the funding be used to invest in capex such as equipment, machinery, vehicles?

USAID Response: USAID funding can only be used to satisfy the objectives identified in A.2.4 of the NOFO.

32. Can the funding be used to construct smaller dry waste collection facilities, sorting sheds and storage units?

USAID Response: Any proposed concept must satisfy “all” of the objectives of the NOFO. Construction, if determined necessary to achieve the objectives of the NOFO, will be considered that are only a portion of all award activities and cannot exceed the estimated cost of construction \$500,000 at a **single project site**.

33. In places where rudimentary civil infrastructure for waste collection exists, can the funds be used for renovations that may involve civil construction?

USAID Response: Please refer to answer to question #27

34. Can funds be used to construct toilets and other facilities for waste workers?

USAID Response: Please refer to answer to question #27.

35. Do all partners need to be declared at the time of applying or can they be added later?

USAID Response: Subrecipients must be identified in Concept Paper.

36. I am US-based. Can I have collaborators from Indian universities?

USAID Response: Yes, you may include collaborators from Indian universities; however, sub-awardees cannot be government entities.

37. If we make it to Phase II, Should I attend the oral presentation in person, or can my Indian collaborators present for me?

USAID Response: The Prime and any proposed consortiums (non-governmental) must be present at the oral presentation which will be in person.

38. Section D 4.1 Point G (Page 27) on Oral Presentation Instructions, it is mentioned that ‘Applicants will first share brief oral presentations with the larger group of applicants, followed by a more detailed, closed-door oral presentation for USAID to pose clarifying questions’. Please clarify the need to brief our oral presentations with other applicants before presenting to USAID.

USAID Response: The requirement to “first share brief oral presentations with the larger group of applicants” has been removed. Applicant(s) who are invited to present their concept orally will only do so behind closed-doors to USAID personnel.

39. Section D.4.1.G—Oral Presentation Instructions, on pages 26-27, states that “Applicants will first share brief oral presentations with the larger group of applicants, followed by a more detailed, closed-door oral presentation for USAID to pose clarifying questions.” Could USAID confirm how many presentations applicants invited to give an oral presentation should prepare?

USAID Response: Applicants shortlisted for oral presentation will be provided the details of oral presentations requirements via letter of invitation. Shortlisted applicants will be required to give only one oral presentation.

40. Can I have a copy of the pre-application conference if recorded, please?

USAID Response: No, a copy of the pre-application conference will not be provided.

41. **Clarification on Result 2.1:** Packaging design improved for recyclability and/or to ensure long-lasting use. **Question:** We understand that there is a great need for innovations in packaging design, however its a system change, involving Brands and packaging design manufacturers. This might also include corporates piloting on lab/R&D stage innovations. In addition to the kind of activities mentioned in NOFO (informing packaging design to downstream elements), it would be helpful if you can elaborate this result with an example. Would a policy change (let's say better labeling) by GOI in consultation with brands, IWCs and recyclers qualify this result.

USAID Response: As stated under Result 2.1 of this NOFO, "better labeling and instructions for consumers and recyclers" may be part of the solution in order to meet "Objective 2: Address lifecycle impacts of plastics and other materials by promoting a circular economy." In the concept note, applicants can propose any combination of approaches that would allow them to accomplish the two primary objectives of this activity and provide adequate justification for their intended interventions.

42. **Clarification on Result 2.2:** Recycling and reuse of single-use and other "problem plastics" enhanced, **Question:** We are finding it difficult to pin down on the nature of the activities that might fall under fulfillment of this result. Does impact investment or installation of recycling facilities qualify for this result. Can you further clarify on the "problem plastics" (or should we refer problem statement provided in NOFO- "the MLP and flexible packaging that are considered non-recyclable and sent to waste-to-energy plants")

USAID Response: As stated under Result 2.2 of this NOFO, "a range of innovative activities" are possible, including "the development and scale-up of recycling technologies that make recycling plastics more cost-effective, better data systems for tracking recyclable and recycled plastic, business models to make collection and reprocessing of various plastic products commercially viable, enabling women recyclers in particular to secure financing, and conducting evidence-based social behavior change initiatives." Therefore, investment in recycling facilities would qualify under this result in order to meet "Objective 2: Address lifecycle impacts of plastics and other materials by promoting a circular economy." In the concept note, applicants can propose any combination of approaches that would allow them to accomplish the two primary objectives of this activity and provide adequate justification for their intended interventions.

Regarding "problem plastics", as stated in the NOFO Section A: Program Description, A.2.2 Problem Statement, problem plastics can include MLP and flexible packaging that are considered non-recyclable...Addressing this significant portion of plastic waste will require large-scale investments in packaging design, reuse/refillable business models, recycling innovations, and developing alternative materials to plastic that all support a circular economy."

43. I currently have a company but will be forming another company to address the exact issues outlined by this call, but this will ultimately be a for-profit company. I plan to engage with another consortium. Can the project proposal be applied via a partner while I form my company? Is this sort of collaboration acceptable for this collaboration?

USAID Response: Organizations applying for this NOFO are applying as the lead applicant and any consortium members are considered possible Sub-awardees.

44. Is this a rolling or repeated call for seeking innovations? Will this award also be newly available next year if I cannot apply now?

USAID Response: This is not a rolling or repeated call for seeking innovations as an Annual Program Statement (APS) and will not be available next year.

45. Can USAID confirm the anticipated start date for this NOFO? It is listed as 6/30/23 in Section B.3 but listed as July 2023 in the pre-application workshop.

USAID Response: USAID plans to award this activity by the end of July 2023.

46. Section D.4.1.G—Oral Presentation Instructions, on pages 26-27, state that “The applicant’s concept paper author(s) and lead technical backstops must be part of the presentation team.” Additionally, it says that “Selected applicants are highly encouraged to also include participants from proposed consortium members (if applicable),” and that “Selected applicants are limited to five participants and must be present for the presentation on the date and time specified in the invitation.” Could USAID clarify if the “five participants” refers only to the number of presenters and that applicants can have additional attendees to help with technology, materials, and notes?

USAID Response: The total number of participants are restricted to “five” only. No additional attendees will be allowed.

47. Would USAID consider allowing the oral presentation to be held virtually?

USAID Response: No. Oral presentations will be held in-person. However, USAID may consider hosting hybrid (in-person and video conferencing) oral presentations if necessary.

48. Would USAID consider allowing co-creation to be held virtually?

USAID Response: No. Co-creation will be held in-person.

49. Section D.3.1, page 21, states, regarding Phase II, that “The applicant whose concept paper was accepted will be invited to submit a draft Program Description and participate in a co-creation workshop...The purpose of the co-creation workshop is to design a mutually sustainable Program Description using a participatory process...” Could USAID clarify if applicants are required to submit a draft Program Description prior to the co-creation workshop?

USAID Response: Yes, as stated in D.3.1, Phase II, the successful applicant whose concept paper is determined acceptable, will move to Phase II and be required to submit a draft program description prior to the co-creation workshop, per the details of the Invitation Letter.

50. Section D.4, page 23 states that a “10-point font can be used for graphs, charts, and tables.” Could USAID confirm that this instruction applies to text boxes as well?

USAID Response: Yes, this instruction applies to the text boxes as well.

51. Section D.4.1.F requests an annex titled “Organizational Structure/Management plan” but provides no instruction on what should be included in it. Could USAID clarify that this should include the organizational chart?

USAID Response: Yes, organizational chart is to be included.

52. Section D.4.1.D, page 25, states that “Additionally the application should identify three to five key personnel positions that would be critical to accomplishing the outcomes outlines in the Concept Technical Approach and describe the qualifications for each role and why the role is critical to successful implementation of the project.” Can USAID confirm that Offerors should not name candidates for the five key personnel positions during the concept note phase?

USAID Response: The applicant may provide the candidate's name with the key personnel position.

53. Section D.4.1.C on page 25 states that as a part of the technical approach, applicants should include “A proposed timeline, i.e., duration or time needed to complete the proposed interventions. This duration should not exceed 5 years. The timeline should be provided in the Annex.” However, Section D.4.1.F on page 26 does not include a timeline annex. Would USAID please consider adjusting this instruction so that the full timeline/work plan for 5 years be included in the full request for full application instead of the concept note?

USAID Response: Proposed timeline Annex is hereby added to “D.4.1.F, page 26”

54. Section D.4.1 Concept Paper Format, C. Concept Technical Approach. On page 25, USAID requests a proposed timeline for proposal interventions for the 5-year program to be included in an annex. The list of annexes on page 26 does not include reference to a

timeline. Can you USAID please confirm that this should be an additional annex and if there is any page limitation to the timeline?

USAID Response: Yes, this is an additional Annex. Please refer to the answer above.

55. Does the project have to span for the period of five years? The background is - the project is not going to fund the for profit part of the project. As our concept needs funding for the initial pilot projects, can we seek funding only for that amount and duration, until we are profitable? I need some more clarity on the disbursement.

USAID Response: Yes, the duration of the project is 5-years. Income (Profit) earned in implementing this activity will be considered “Program Income.” If the successful applicant is a non-profit organization, any program income generated under the award will be added to USAID funding (and any cost-sharing that may be provided, if applicable), and used for program purposes. However, pursuant to 2 CFR 200.307 Program Income, if the successful Applicant is a for-profit or commercial organization, any program income generated under the award will be deducted from the U.S. Government share of this award to determine the amount of USAID funding.

Program income will be subject to 2 CFR 200.307 for U.S. NGOs or the standard provision entitled Program Income for non-U.S. NGOs. Hence, any income earned during the 5-year period will be treated as Program Income.

56. Section D.4.1.C, page 24, states that “Concept papers must address...A plan for leveraging funds and private sector engagement in helping achieve the objectives of the activity.” Can USAID confirm if offerors may submit their plans for leveraging funds as a 1-page annex?

USAID Response: Yes, offerors may submit their plan for leveraging funds as a 1-page annex.

57. Would USAID increase the page limit to 8 pages to allow the offerors sufficient space to address the 8 evaluation criteria and 12 evaluation criteria listed in D.4.1.C?

USAID Response: The concept paper can be no more than a maximum of Ten (10) pages, with up to 6 pages for the Concept Technical Approach. We expect a clear and succinct articulation of the plastic pollution challenge in India, the Applicant’s approach and how their proposed activities will achieve the objectives and result areas presented in Section A.

58. Section B.2, page 14 states that “The recipient should also conduct several periodic analyses to better understand certain aspects and issues within the award’s domain.” Can USAID provide clarity on the type and scope of the expected analyses described above so that Offerors may incorporate it into their technical and cost proposals?

USAID Response: For the concept paper, Phase I, applicants are to follow the instructions in Section D and submit the required information accordingly.

59. Is there a preference for a targeted intervention in a select/single geography or for multiple types of interventions across multiple geographies in India?

USAID Response: Applicants can propose any combination of context-specific interventions and geographies (regions, locations, scales) that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal and two primary objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate justification for their intended interventions and geographies. Please refer to Section A.2.5 Proposed Geographic Focus Areas.

60. Does the entire intervention need to focus on marine environments or could parts of the project be focused near other water bodies, rivers etc.?

USAID Response: Plastic waste that enters various types of water bodies can ultimately find its way into the marine environment. Applicants can therefore propose any combination of context-specific interventions and geographies (regions, locations, scales) that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal to reduce plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, through the two primary objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate justification for their intended interventions and geographies.

61. Is there a preference for eco-sensitive land-bound regions?

USAID Response: Applicants can propose any combination of context-specific interventions and geographies (regions, locations, scales) that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal and two primary objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate justification for their intended interventions and geographies. Please refer to Section A.2.5 Proposed Geographic Focus Areas.

62. Does USAID prefer coastal communities to be targeted for this project?

USAID Response: Applicants can propose any combination of context-specific interventions and geographies (regions, locations, scales) that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal and two primary objectives of this activity. Applicants

must provide adequate justification for their intended interventions and geographies. Please refer to Section A.2.5 Proposed Geographic Focus Areas.

63. Different regions in India e.g. rural/urban/semi-urban require different intervention approaches to waste management. Thus, should the concept note propose a single approach or suggest multiple approaches keeping in mind different types of regions?

USAID Response: Applicants can propose any combination of context-specific interventions and geographies (regions, locations, scales) that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal and two primary objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate justification for their intended interventions and geographies. Please refer to Section A.2.5 Proposed Geographic Focus Areas.

64. Can the proposed intervention activities be differentiated across multiple regions e.g. ULB professionalization approach in one location, leveraging informal sector in another location, or do all solutions need to be implemented in each identified location?

USAID Response: Applicants can propose any combination of context-specific interventions and geographies (regions, locations, scales) that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal and two primary objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate justification for their intended interventions and geographies. Please refer to Section A.2.5 Proposed Geographic Focus Areas.

65. Do innovation interventions (reduce, refill, packaging redesign) need to be connected to or executed in the same project location as waste management interventions or could they be running as separate parallel tracks?

USAID Response: Applicants can propose any combination of context-specific interventions and geographies (regions, locations, scales) that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal and two primary objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate justification for their intended interventions and geographies. Please refer to Section A.2.5 Proposed Geographic Focus Areas.

66. Clarification is sought on the geographical coverage in terms of the number of States and Cities. Also, are Coastal States and cities on the riverbanks of major rivers included in the implementation? Do we need to identify States and Cities at the concept paper submission stage? Is it required to have letters of support from States and Cities for implementation of the project during the concept paper stage?

USAID Response: Applicants can propose any combination of context-specific interventions and geographies (regions, locations, scales) that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal and two primary objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate justification for their intended interventions and geographies. Potential States and cities should be identified in the concept paper, but letters of support are not required at the concept paper stage. Specific geographies will be agreed upon during the co-creation phase.

67. What is the expectation regarding the type/ form or level in which government engagement is to be considered while creating proposals w.r.t local, state and national governments?

USAID Response: Potential States and cities should be identified in the concept paper, but letters of support are not required at the concept paper stage. Specific geographies will be agreed upon during the co-creation phase.

68. What is the support that is envisaged from government agencies / local bodies (for geography coverage) in terms of documents / letters that needs to be provided as part of the proposal?

USAID Response: Letters of support from government agencies/local bodies are not required at the concept paper stage. Specific geographies will be agreed upon during the co-creation phase.

69. Section D.4.1 Concept Paper Format, E. Institutional Capacity and History of Performance. The NOFO states partner past performance information should be provided as an annex. Would USAID also allow the Applicant’s past performance information for up to five (5) relevant awards be included as an annex to supplement the two-page institutional capacity statement? If yes, please advise on page limitation for the applicant's past performance information annex.

USAID Response: NOFO is amended to this effect and language amended with “Past performance information/**History of performance** for each partner organization should be provided as an Annex, no longer than one page per organization. The applicant is strongly encouraged to provide specific examples of significant impact of their past projects and how cooperation in prio partnerships/consortia contributed to that impact. The ability of each consortium member to work with each other, focused on a common purpose, will also be evaluated.”

70. Could USAID confirm that the “past performance information requested in section D.4.1.E should be included in the “History of Performance” annex requested in section D.4.1.F?

USAID Response: Yes, Past Performance information is to be included in the History of Performance Annex.

71. The instructions for the Institutional Capacity and History of Performance are similar to the instructions for the Organizational Structure and Management. Specifically, in section D.4.1.E, page 25, USAID has requested that the applicant “must clearly describe a comprehensive management strategy and plan that highlights approaches for mobilizing staff and cost control, minimizes management costs, and reserves the highest possible level of funding for implementing this program. This may include leveraging of private sector resources and expertise,” yet the evaluation criteria do not reflect the instructions. Would USAID revise the instructions to remove this requirement from the Institutional Capacity and History section?

USAID Response: The NOFO has been amended to remove the requirement to “describe the technical, managerial, and financial capacity to carry out the proposed intervention,” along with the “comprehensive management strategy and plan”, as this is already required in “Section D: Organizational Structure and Management” of the concept note.

72. What are the key metrics on which proposals will be assessed. Is it the quantity of plastic waste removal or comprehensiveness of the solution?

USAID Response: See Section E.2.1 Merit Review for a description of the evaluation criteria for concept papers and oral presentations.

73. Could you provide an indication/range of the volume of plastic recovery that is being targeted under this NOFO?

USAID Response: Applicants should propose achievable targets to accomplish the goal of the two objectives described in the NOFO and provide adequate justification.

74. Are there any specific targets with respect to % waste collection, % reduction, % recycling etc. expected to be achieved within project boundaries?

USAID Response: Applicants should propose achievable targets to accomplish the goal and two objectives described in the NOFO and provide adequate justification. Please see Section B.2, Anticipated Results and Indicators (p14) for potential indicators.

75. Are interventions preferred for only low-value or ‘problem plastics; or a mix of all types of plastics?

USAID Response: Result 2.2 refers to “recycling and reuse of single-use and other problem plastics,” which may include plastics of different values.

76. Could you provide recommendations for how the funds should be split between waste reduction, innovation and waste management initiatives ? Is there a specific investment range to be considered for each of these intervention types?

USAID Response: Both objectives related to waste management and waste reduction/innovations are equally important and required. It is up to the Applicant to propose a concept that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal and two primary objectives of the activity.

77. The NOFO mentions investments in packaging design, reuse/refillable models, recycling innovations. Is there a funding range prescribed for such innovations that should be considered?

USAID Response: No, there is not a funding range prescribed for individual innovations. It is up to the Applicant to propose a concept that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal and two equally important primary objectives of the activity.

78. Could you describe how ‘innovations’ for plastic waste reduction/management/redesign would be assessed? e.g. Does the USAID want to see prototypes, ready products, amount invested in such innovations, or the scale up of innovations over a baseline level? Some guidelines would be helpful.

USAID Response: See Section E.2.1 Merit Review for a description of the evaluation criteria for concept papers and oral presentations. It is up to the Applicant to propose innovations that would allow them to most effectively accomplish Objective 2 of the activity.

79. Is a monitoring and evaluation plan and CLA plan to be submitted as part of the concept paper or for the final submission?

USAID Response: No, monitoring and evaluation plan and/or CLA plan will not be part of the concept paper nor the final Application.

80. Will the award winner receive support from MOEFCC and GOI to collaborate with government bodies in the chosen project locations where expansion and intervention is needed? What kind of support would be provided?

USAID Response: USAID and the selected partner will engage with relevant GOI stakeholders such as MOEFCC, MOHUA, etc., as appropriate, during the co-creation and implementation. USAID cannot guarantee GOI and local government support on specific intervention approaches. As appropriate, USAID will help facilitate coordination between the successful Applicant and GOI and other government bodies in chosen project locations to enable successful implementation of interventions.

81. Is there an expectation to set up a program office and will USAID/MOEFCC assist in setting up relevant government level mandates to engage with proposed states?

USAID Response: The successful Applicant will be expected to set up a program office. USAID and the selected Applicant will engage with relevant GOI stakeholders such as MOEFCC, MOHUA, etc., as appropriate, during the co-creation and implementation.

82. Would there be regular discussion forums enabled with Government personnel to develop and implement policy changes?

USAID Response: USAID and the selected Applicant will engage with relevant GOI stakeholders such as MOEFCC, MOHUA, etc., as appropriate, during the co-creation and implementation.

83. Would GOI and local government support be extended to further formalization efforts for informal sector workers especially in areas where such recognition does not exist (e.g. issuance of govt ID cards)?

USAID Response: While USAID cannot guarantee GOI and local government support on specific intervention approaches, USAID and the selected Applicant will engage with relevant GOI stakeholders such as MOEFCC, MOHUA, and other local government bodies in chosen project locations, as appropriate, during the co-creation and implementation to enable support for agreed-upon intervention approaches.

84. Kindly clarify, whether the project will be implemented in the selected cities in partnership with Urban Local Bodies?

USAID Response: USAID and the selected Applicant will engage with relevant GOI stakeholders such as MOEFCC, MOHUA, and other local government bodies in chosen

project locations, as appropriate, during the co-creation and implementation to enable successful partnerships.

85. With reference to involvement of Government departments, kindly clarify, if the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India and their relevant departments at State and ULB level would be engaged in this project for implementation?

USAID Response: USAID and the selected Applicant will engage with relevant GOI stakeholders such as MOEFCC, MOHUA, and other local government bodies in chosen project locations, as appropriate, during the co-creation and implementation.

86. We understand that both MoEFCC and MoHUA will be involved in the project. We request you to kindly clarify on their roles during both concept and implementation stage.

USAID Response: USAID and the selected Applicant will engage with relevant GOI stakeholders such as MOEFCC, MOHUA, etc., as appropriate, during the co-creation and implementation.

87. We are seeking letters of support from state and city governments for the project. Can USAID confirm that they would not change these states/ cities at the co-design stage? In case USAID and MoEF&CC modifies the states/ cities, would USAID procure the letters of commitment from them on behalf of the applicant?

USAID Response: While potential States and cities should be identified in the concept paper, letters of support are not required at the concept paper stage. Specific geographies will be agreed upon during the co-creation phase. USAID and the selected Applicant will engage with relevant GOI stakeholders such as MOEFCC, MOHUA, and other local government bodies in chosen project locations, as appropriate, during the co-creation and implementation to enable successful partnerships.

88. Would capital provided or committed by the private sector needed to be used in conjunction with the USAID grant money or post exhaustion of the 30 million grant beyond the 5 year mark?

USAID Response: USAID cannot restrict the timing of the use of capital provided by the private sector to implementing partners. However, the portion of capital used as leverage must be spent alongside USAID funds over the 5 years of the activity.

89. Does the entire sum of 30 million need to be utilized within 5 years?

AND

How would the finance flow work? Would USAID transfer funds to the primary applicant who will then need to distribute it among different consortium members or would USAID have separate contracts with each consortium member?

USAID Response: USAID will award a Cooperative Agreement up the ceiling of \$30 million for the 5 year project to the prime applicant. Based on the pre-award survey, award payments will either be through advances or reimbursements to prime for allowable, allocable and reasonable cost up to the obligated amount in the award. The prime will be solely responsible for performance, leverage and reimbursement to their sub-awardees.

90. Considering the range and scope of the project, a considerable financial/program management fee is required. Is this considered within the scope of the NOFO?

AND

Reference Page No. 1 of NOFO – "Eligibility for this award is restricted to all United States, local Indian, and International non-governmental organizations. USAID encourages the participation, to the maximum extent possible, of all local and international organizations." – Please clarify that private sector profit making consultancy organizations are considered qualified entities to lead and participate in this bid.

AND

As per the NOFO, USAID is looking for a leading NGO with consortium partner(s) to apply for this opportunity. But it also mentions that in case the consortium is for profit then profit will be subsidized from the US Govt. share/ fund. It is requested to clarify that is there any preference to an NGO leading the Project? Also, is there any preference for an International or National NGO implementing this project? Kindly clarify?

USAID Response: No, pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400(g), and as per section C.1 of the NOFO profit under assistance instruments is not payable to any organization.

91. Can a for-profit organization be a principal applicant or are non-profit organizations preferred?

USAID Response: NOFO is unrestrictive hence both for profit and non-profit organizations can apply as prime applicants.

92. Are there any restrictions on the different budget heads for which we can seek funding under the proposal?

USAID Response: Please refer to the definition of leverage and the associated possible leverage resources described in Answer #3. Also, for Grants budget heads please refer to form SF 424A.

93. Is there any sort of commercial/cost proposal needed to be submitted at the concept paper stage?

USAID Response: No, a cost proposal is not required to be submitted with the concept paper. Please refer to Section D for requirements.

94. Could you elaborate a bit more on how you would expect the project to engage with the private sector?

USAID Response: Please see the NOFO Section A: Program Description, which provides several illustrative activities and examples of engaging with the private sector under each objective and result area.

95. Under the program, would tenders be expected to be run for activities like waste collection operations or do the applicant/consortia get to decide on the partners/vendors for each implementation activity?

USAID Response: The consortium partners/sub-awardees are the responsibility of prime, they should have only those they need and can easily manage. Lead organization is responsible for the success of the program and managing their sub-awardees/subordinate organizations. Subawards are required for their expertise in an area where the prime/led organization are not strong.

96. The NOFO mentions ‘sub-awardees’. Are the different consortium members considered as ‘sub-awardees’?

USAID Response: Yes, your consortium members will be considered a sub-awardee.

97. Is there a need to mention all the types of sub-vendors, external agencies, onground organizations in the concept paper that may be potentially contracted in the future for project execution? Are all such stakeholders expected to be included in the consortium?

USAID Response: Only sub-awardees are to be mentioned in the Concept Paper.

98. Will there be any documentation requirements showcasing the working arrangement for the members in the consortium to be submitted in the concept paper stage?

USAID Response: No

99. Can international organizations (non-Indian) be consortium members?

USAID Response: Yes

100. Would SAM registration or other USG forms/documentation need to be carried out for consortium members other than the prime applicant. If yes, what is the expected timeline for undertaking the same?

AND

Is it necessary for all partners in the consortium to individually have a SAM registration and a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), or only the Lead Partner is required to have?

USAID Response: Only the prime applicant needs a SAM registration for which a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is required. Consortium members or sub recipients only need a UEI, SAM is not required for them.

101. Who will have the ownership if any Capex items are bought under this program and the initiatives mentioned in the next question?

USAID Response: Ownership of equipment, supplies, and other tangible property purchased with funds under the Cooperative Agreement will vest in the recipient during the life of the agreement.

102. As discussed in the 6th Jan Webinar, could you please share the response to the queries asked there and also covered by co-participants.

USAID Response: USAID is responding to all the questions that were submitted in writing, through amendment#1 to this NOFO.

103. Kindly clarify is there any limit on the number of consortium partners for application?

USAID Response: There is no limit but since success of the project and managing the consortium partners/sub-awardees is the responsibility of prime, they should have only those they need and can easily manage.

104. Section E.2 Phase 1, mentions that the applicant understands the requirement and will be successful in performing with no government intervention. Clarification is sought on this clause, as it is understood that we might need to work with National / State or City governments. Please clarify.

USAID Response: Section E.2 Phase 1 of the NOFO states a concept paper is determined to be acceptable if it proposes a sound approach and USAID has Strong Confidence that the applicant understands the requirement and will be successful in performing with no government intervention (implementer is capable of fulfilling the requirement on its on). It does not preclude working with the government.

105. The following points are requested to be clarified with respect to the three-phased selection process as the NOFO:

- I. Can we add partners to the consortium partners post Phase-I or Phase -II, if there is a requirement during/post the Co-Creation stage, kindly clarify?
- II. Do we need to show our strategy for leveraging in the concept paper itself or this will be decided during the co-creation stage?

USAID Response: Yes, partners can be added to the consortium during Phase - I and II and their full details to be provided in the concept paper. Yes, you need to provide full details of your leveraging strategy in the concept paper itself.

106. The eligibility/qualification criteria for the lead bidder and consortium partners are not specified in the NOFO. It is requested to kindly clarify if there is any minimum turnover or any other eligibility/qualification requirement for prime bidder and consortium partners?

AND

Is there minimum financial eligibility for the prime/ lead applicant?

USAID Response: Please see answer to question #1 above.

107. Request for extending the late date of submission of concept paper by another 3 weeks for enabling applicants to submit the best of proposal.

USAID Response: The closing date (date for applications) has been extended to March 2, 2023. Please refer to Amendment # 1.

108. Given the FCRA restrictions, can USAID please confirm whether international sub-grantees can be paid/reimbursed directly by USAID?

USAID Response: No. The prime will be solely responsible for reimbursement to their sub-awardees.

109. Section D.3.1, page 21 states that “USAID reserves the right to accept a concept paper that fully meets the requirements of the NOFO, not hold oral presentations, and proceed directly to Phase 3 - Co-creation.” We believe that “Phase 3 – Co-creation” is a typographical error and should be either “Phase 2 – Co-creation” or “Phase 3 – Full Application”. We request USAID to please clarify.

USAID Response: This section has been corrected via this Amendment #1.

110. Apart from landfill - are there any other plastic waste management end destinations that are not preferred? What is the USAID’s stance on co-processing of ‘low-value plastics’ in cement kilns?

USAID Response: USAID does not prescribe or preclude specific approaches at this time. Applicants are free to propose any approaches that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal through the two equally important objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate rationale for their intended intervention(s).

111. Could USAID please confirm if the inREPLACE SOW allows for implementers to work with stakeholders and find pathways to remove, treat, and recycle existing ocean plastic waste?

USAID Response: USAID does not prescribe or preclude specific approaches at this time. Applicants are free to propose any approaches that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal through the two equally important objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate rationale for their intended intervention(s).

112. For the Townships/Societies and Industries as well - we are thinking of coming up as Transformational ideas like No (Plastic) Discharge Policy like No (contaminated) Water Discharge policy is already there in place for many years and very successful and hence Water Treatment Plants (WTP) are in every plant and society, similarly for the Plastics we have planned to come with Zero Plastic Discharge approach. Our query is as follows -

Would these kinds of initiatives which require initial grants and funding to Private parties like RWAs and Private partners would qualify under this Program?

USAID Response: USAID does not prescribe or preclude specific approaches or initiatives at this time. Applicants are free to propose any approaches that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal through the two equally important objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate rationale for their intended intervention(s). Funding is limited to the two objectives described in Section A.

113. Can the funding be used for providing additional socio-economic benefits and safeguards for workers?

USAID Response: USAID does not prescribe or preclude specific approaches at this time. Applicants are free to propose any approaches that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal through the two equally important objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate rationale for their intended intervention(s). Funding is limited to the two objectives described in Section A.

114. Would the funding support to startups (Grant) can be taken up under this program?

USAID Response: USAID does not prescribe or preclude specific approaches at this time. Applicants are free to propose any approaches that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal through the two equally important objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate rationale for their intended intervention(s). Funding is limited to the two objectives described in Section A.

115. Would a Direct Benefit Scheme to Wastepickers for Difficult to Recycle Plastic be okay under this initiative? (As for the last many years and even after so much of effort at Govt and private level the Wastepickers are not picking up the difficult to recycling plastics) and we feel that a solution shall need to be designed so that at the grass -root level the initial movement happens and then it goes into self-sustainable manner.

USAID Response: USAID does not prescribe or preclude specific approaches at this time. Applicants are free to propose any approaches that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal through the two equally important objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate rationale for their intended intervention(s). Funding is limited to the two objectives described in Section A.

116. Would the funds spend by a partner Academia like MIT/ IITs in to Applied Research for the following areas:

1. Recycling innovations

2. Product development innovations
3. Digital Innovation in building systems like Block-chain based traceability etc.
4. Design and Application innovations so that Furniture etc can be made qualify for under this program?

USAID Response: USAID does not prescribe or preclude specific approaches at this time. Applicants are free to propose any approaches that would allow them to most effectively accomplish the goal to reduce plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, through the two equally important objectives of this activity. Applicants must provide adequate rationale for their intended intervention(s). Funding is limited to the two objectives described in Section A.