



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

April 2, 2014

Reference: RFA No. RFA-OAA-14-000009; FTF Innovation Lab for Sustainable Intensification
Subject: Amendment 02

Dear Interested Applicants:

The following Amendment 02 to Request for Applications (RFA) Number RFA-OAA-14-000009 provides responses to questions submitted in response to the RFA.

Please note that the Application closing date has not been extended.

Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant; all preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense. Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment of the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

Sincerely,



Charles Jackson
Agreement Officer

Questions and Answers

1. Question: The RFA says that the ME budget must include approximately 7% (\$1,750,000) over the five-year period of the Leader Award for Knowledge-Sharing and Learning. Is this in addition to the approximately \$1 million per year for the ME, or included it in, or can this be determined by the applicant?

USAID Response: Yes, this is in addition to the ME budget. Knowledge-sharing and learning should be integrated into all components of the innovation lab to ensure information is not only transferred across activities within the lab but also effectively shared and disseminated outside of the innovation lab.

2. Question: Figure 1 on page 10 of the RFA indicates that for the Appropriate Scale Mechanization Consortium, “sub-award RFAs released within 3 months of the Leader Award.” Does this statement refer to the sub-award for the Consortium (and therefore plural “RFAs” is an error) or does it mean that once the Appropriate Scale Mechanization Consortium has been established, it will manage its own sub-award process?

USAID Response: The statement does refer to the sub-award for the Consortium and therefore the plural “RFAs” is an error.

3. Question: In Figure 1, is there a reason why the line is dotted from ME to the Appropriate Scale Mechanization Consortium?

USAID Response: The dotted line indicates that the APSM consortium will be supported by a sub-award issued by the ME.

4. Question: The regional coordinators are envisioned as full-time staff members. Do they have to work full time for the ME or can they work part time for ME and part time for one of the Consortia?

USAID Response: The regional coordinators are envisioned as having full-time commitments to the innovation lab with particular responsibilities as described in the RFA. It would be consistent with their positions to work for one of the consortia if those activities directly applied to the region to which they are assigned.

5. Question: The RFA refers to non-exclusivity of commitments (pages, 47, 49). Does this cover all types of partnerships proposed in the context of the proposal?

USAID Response: Yes, this covers all types of partnerships proposed in the context of the proposal. USAID does not require or seek commitments from proposed sub-recipients and/or contractors that are exclusive to the applicant, i.e., organizations may be proposed as sub-recipients and/or contractors in more than one application.)

6. Question: There are six annexes that are specifically called for in the technical application requirements for RFA-OAA-14-000009. Is it acceptable to include a 7th annex that contains materials that we would like to append to the technical application? If so, are there any page or other limitations?

USAID Response: No, it is not acceptable to include a 7th annex with materials to append to the technical application.

7. Question: The RFP says that we need to identify the consortium members and indicate who the lead will be. For budgeting purposes it says to indicate the amount for each member and to provide a detailed line item budget. What are the types of expenses that their budgets should include? And is there any certain format that they should be in (is there a suggested template, or is it basically free form)? Also, what all should we ask them to provide? I didn't see anything about letters of commitment or budget justifications.

USAID Response: The budget for the consortium members should include all allowable, allocable, and realistic expenses. There is no suggested template for the consortium member budget. The applicant must indicate the basis of the estimate, and/or the assumptions on which the estimate is based. The budgets shall include whatever supporting schedules and narrative budget explanations as may be necessary to adequately support and/or explain proposed costs.

8. Question: The consortiums would be considered as subcontracts, correct?

USAID Response: Collaborating partners may be contractors or sub-recipients, and applicants should be aware of the distinction between procurement contracts (acquisition) and sub-awards (assistance), as terms are defined in 22 CFR 226.2. Contracts are subject to 22 CFR 226.40-49 and the USAID standard provision entitled "USAID Eligibility Rules for Goods and Services". Sub-awards are subject to 22 CFR 226.5 and the USAID standard provision entitled "Applicability of 22 CFR Part 226." It is primarily the responsibility of the applicant to determine whether sub-tier awards are procurements or subawards in accordance with the OMB Circular A-133 guidance and their own internal procedures as verified and approved by USAID.

For more information on this guidance or determining if a partner would be considered a contractor or subrecipient, please reference "Profit Under USAID Assistance Instruments" <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303sai.pdf>

9. Question: I noticed that we need to name the Director and provide their CV in the proposal. Can this person be changed after we receive an award?

USAID Response: Yes, it is possible to change the Director after award; however, in accordance with substantial involvement, USAID will approve Specified Key Personnel and

any changes to the Key Personnel, which includes the Lab Director and Three Regional Coordinators.

10. Question: Is it allowable to have more than one director from the Management Entity who can share responsibility of the directorship?

USAID Response: The Management Entity should identify one director as described in the RFA.

11. Question: Is it necessary or expected that the Geospatial Consortium is physically located within the lead (university) institution?

USAID Response: It is not necessary nor expected that the Geospatial and Farming Systems Research Consortium be physically located within the institution of the ME. Nor is it necessary that the GFSR Consortium be physically located within the institution leading the consortium. Institutional arrangements should be described, to the extent possible, in the application.

12. Question: The more I read it [the RFA], the more I (so far) conclude that you may have determined the labor categories the USAID requires for the project. But it seems to me that such a project will need a nutritionist, a socio-economist, and most definitely an agriculturalist of international standing as well as a procurement specialist. Has the labor categories been firmly decided?

USAID Response: USAID has not determined all the labor categories for the project and inclusion of experts, in addition to those identified in the RFA, who will help achieve the innovation lab's objectives will be necessary.

13. Question: The regions chosen are West Africa, East and Southern Africa and South Asia. Do we understand you to mean that all these regions should be covered in this project, using one country in each region? Even if one covers only one country in a region and if the research is to be adequately and solidly accomplished, it will take a lot more time. Don't you think that a more solid work could be done if (let's say) in West Africa Liberia is covered and in East and southern Africa, Zambia or South Africa is covered? Even that is a lot for five years. The climatic zones in these countries are not identical. When it is winter in South Africa, it is 'spring' in Zambia and 'dry' season in Liberia.

USAID Response: The countries in which the innovation lab will be active in each region are limited to those identified in Section I.B.2 "Geographic Focus" on page 11 of the RFA (the country of South Africa is not included). The Sustainable Intensification Innovation Lab should have a physical presence in at least one country in each of the three regions (West Africa, East and Southern Africa, and South Asia).

14. Question: Most (all?) of the “new” Innovation Labs that have been announced have a different management model than the previous CRSPs, i.e., there is not a ME to manage the project and make sub-awards. This announcement seems to be a “hybrid” of the past and the model for the new/2013 Innovation Labs. Will you explain the reason this RFA is different than the management model of the Innovation Labs announced in 2013?

USAID Response: This innovation lab has a broad geographic and thematic scope. It is unlikely that any applicant possesses sufficient information and presence on the ground in all three regions to know the full extent of activities it will need to support at the beginning of the program. This management model is intended to give the ME the necessary time and flexibility to achieve the desired impacts. The ME can directly implement activities within its capacity or identify other entities with greater capacity for the particular activity or location through competitive sub-awards.

15. Question: What is the relative mix of skills USAID anticipates would be provided by the Geospatial and Farming Systems Research Consortium? In other words, what is the role of other disciplines and types of analyses other than GIS within the Consortium? In some places, the RFA discusses mapping, while in others it discusses a broad range of skills they would like to see represented by the Consortium, but it is not clear how the funding allocated to the Consortium should be divided across different types of skills/activities for consistency with USAID expectations. It would be helpful to have some additional insights on the relative importance of Geospatial analyses vs. Farming Systems Research related analyses.

USAID Response: The relative importance of geospatial vs farming systems analyses might depend on the particular region, topic, or scale under consideration or even how far the innovation lab is into implementation. For example, in the first year, extensive geospatial analyses might be required to identify broad regional trends and practices that will subsequently inform farming systems analyses and research activities at smaller spatial scales. There is no set recommendation for how to allocate funds between geospatial analyses and farming systems research and it is possible that the relative importance will shift over time. It is hoped, however, that the consortium model will encourage individuals with different skill sets to work together more closely over the life of the innovation lab.

16. Question: It was mentioned in the webinar that Regional Directors must be paid directly by the managing entity. Does the status of the RD have to be an employee of the ME or can s/he be a consultant?

USAID Response: Yes, the regional directors may be consultants.

End of Amendment 02