



USAID | SENEGAL
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

January 24, 2022

Subject: Questions and Answers (Q&A)

REF: APS#**72068522APS00001** Addendum to the Higher Education for Leadership, Innovation, and Exchange (HELIX) New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) Annual Program Statement (APS) No. **7200AA20APS00009**

Program Title: Niger Resilience and Agribusiness Master's Program (N-RAMP) Activity

Dear Prospective Applicants:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) wants to thank you for submitting questions in response to the referenced Annual Program Statement Addendum. Your questions were reviewed, and we hereby provide answers/clarifications enclosed herewith as Attachment-A.

Issuance of this Q&A does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of concept paper. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Robert Trimble
Regional Agreement Officer
USAID/Senegal

Attachment-A: USAID Responses/Clarifications

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1. -From HELIX APS:
 - a. Page 14 - the sub funding of at least 50%. Does it have to be paid as a lump sum, or can it be reimbursable expenditures?

USAID Response: If NPI modalities 2 or 4 is selected, it is expected that over the life of the award, 50% of the total award would be budgeted via subawards to local, locally established, and/or new/underutilized U.S. HEIs dependent on the NPI modality.
The payment method for sub funding is determined by the prime.

- b. Page 16 - last paragraph -- "not previously received financial assistance from USAID." Who does this apply to -- the international institution or the US institution?
USAID Response: This paragraph reads: "Therefore, USAID strongly encourages Applications from new partners, defined as organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID". This applies to any organization applying for this award.

2. From the N-RAMP Amendment #1:
 - a. Page 23: first paragraph, about concept note submission, the information is missing about what we should name the file, it just says "Insert File Name."

USAID Response: "N-RAMP-Helix APS Addendum #72068522APS0000"

- b. Page 33 - Section C - last sentence is not complete. **RAAO**

USAID Response: Please read : "Applicants may provide a 1-page letter of commitment from each proposed Partner"

3. Please describe to what extent the program has been discussed with the faculty and administration of the three universities mentioned in the N-RAMP Amendment? What about with other partners mentioned on page 16 (SHIGA, RGN etc)? **Technical**

USAID Response: Consultations and design efforts were carried out extensively with the government of Niger (the Ministry of Higher Education and the High Commission for a Presidential Initiative, Nigerien's feed Nigeriens - HC3N) and the three universities: universities of Tahoua, Tillaberi and Niamey. At this stage, we have not engaged with other implementing partners.

4. Please confirm the deadline for the N-RAMP concept notes.

USAID Response: February 28, 2022, 5:00 PM (Dakar Local Time) as mentioned in amended addendum #1.

5. Are we allowed to contact faculty and administration of the three universities mentioned in the N-RAMP Amendment? What about other partners mentioned in the N-RAMP?

USAID Response: USAID Response: In order to maintain all fairness possible, USAID requests that the faculty and administration of the three institutions, not be directly contacted on the subject of the award. If any university involved has relationships with any staff at the Nigerien institutions, we ask that all communications between them avoid the conversation of this procurement for ethical reasons and furthermore that they disclose any existing relationships with their applications.

That stated we cannot demand that any existing relationship be rescinded, but we do expect all parties to behave ethically.

Please note that although the Nigerien Universities may be involved in the selection process, they are only involved as consultants/advisors and do not have a voting role. The Universities in question will be asked to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements so as not to discuss any items outside of the Selection Committee.

All interested applicants are encouraged to attend the information session on January 27, 2022 at 08:30 am (EST). The information session will be an opportunity for applicants to hear from and ask questions to the universities. Applicants can join virtually via this link: meet.google.com/qnx-hzvs-mar.

6. Are we allowed to contact USAID mission in Niger about the N-RAMP?

USAID Response: POCs are mentioned in the addendum, all communication must be routed to them as mentioned in the addendum.

7. Please explain more about the budget allocation. If a US based university is the lead institution in this project with university and other institutional partners in Niger, as well as and in Canada and France, what are the budget allocation limitations, does 50% of the funding need to be allocated to partners in Niger, and 50% split between other non-Niger partners?

USAID Response: This assumption is correct. 50% must come from the Nigerien Partners and 50% from the non-Nigerien partners. If Modality 2 is selected, then 50 % of the award must be allocated via sub-awards to local or locally established partners, but if they choose modality 4 and the partnership includes new or underutilized U.S. HEIs, then some of the 50% can count towards the new/underutilized U.S. HEIs.

8. If any training of students or faculty from Niger takes place in the USA (or Canada or France), is the cost of that training part of the US lead institution budget or part of the Niger sub-award?

USAID Response: Prime awardees must pass a minimum of 50 percent of the total funding of their award(s) to sub-awardees that are local, locally established, and/or new and underutilized U.S. HEIs, for capacity building of local higher education individuals, institutions, or systems.

9. Is all project implementation expected to be conducted in French?

USAID Response: Concept notes will be evaluated based on the merit review criteria outlined in the Addendum which includes “Criterion 3: Quality, Feasibility, and Sustainability of Proposed Solutions and Impact at Individual, Institutional and/or System-Level.” Applicants should consider their own institutional capacity to feasibly carry out this project in applying for this award.

10. Can you provide links to the HEICAT or OCA assessment tools mentioned in the Amendment?

USAID Response: Higher Education Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool ([HEICAT](#)) and Organizational Capacity Assessment ([OCA](#)).

11. Can USAID provide contact information for current awards managed by the USAID/Niger? [Technical](#)

USAID Response: POCs are mentioned in the addendum, all communication must be routed to them as mentioned in the addendum.

12. Are there any guidelines for budget allocations between local universities and other implementing partners?

USAID Response: Prime awardees must pass a minimum of 50 percent of the total funding of their award(s) to sub-awardees that are local, locally established, and/or new and underutilized U.S. HEIs, for capacity building of local higher education individuals, institutions, or systems.

13. Apart from the evaluation of the technical narrative in the CN, does USAID also include budget evaluation to make its final decision?

USAID Response: Yes, a cost proposal review will be done. However, note that the cost review isn't until the RFA stage. The initial preliminary budget submitted with the concept note is primarily reviewed to inform co-creation conversations.

14. What assumptions, if any, should we make about COVID-19 pandemic and conflict in Niger?

USAID Response: Even though COVID-19 contaminations are increasing, the country has been relatively spared from the disease compared to its neighbors. Early in the pandemic, the government established a curfew and closed schools, however, these restrictions have been lifted since October 2020. As of January 18, 2022 Niger has

reported 8459 confirmed cases out of 212,790 tests. Niger has registered 293 total deaths and has 720 active cases with 58 hospitalizations.

Since 2012, the security situation in Niger has become increasingly volatile, in large part because of spillover from the Boko Haram insurgency in the eastern region of Diffa, and the conflicts in the tri-border area between Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. There are increased risks of the formation of domestic community-based armed groups to fill the security gap. Violent Extremist Organizations are recruiting and expanding their presence.

15. If working with all three Nigerian universities listed to increase educational quality, is the purpose to design one Master's degree program in agribusiness for each university (three in total), or a minimum of one overall?

USAID Response: The purpose of the program is to strengthen the human and institutional capacity of the three Nigerien public universities to design and deliver academic coursework leading to a Masters Degree in Agribusiness. Applicants are expected to outline how they plan on achieving this objective and will be evaluated based on the merit review criteria outlined in the Addendum.

16. Pg. 21 states "All Implementing Partners must be legally registered entities under applicable law." Does this mean that a U.S. university applicant must be locally registered in Niger prior to the preparation of a full proposal, or can they wait until notification that they are the apparently successful applicant?

USAID Response: Must be legally registered at the time of full application submission.

17. a. Can program resources be put towards laboratory equipment and internet connectivity equipment? These have been requested by the university[ies] in our discussions.

USAID Response: Yes, however any equipment purchased will be property of the US Government for sole use on the program and program related tasks. Following the end of the program, these assets will be deposed of and the recommended recipients will be recommended by the Implementing Partner. The Agreement Officer and AOR may decide the ultimate recipient of the equipment.

This deposition may include a transfer to another USG program or to the Government of Niger as this program is co-funded.

- b. Can procurement done on behalf of the Nigerien university(ies) count on the local side of the 50% in-country subawards minimum requirement?

USAID Response:

The Nigerien partners can procure needed equipment just as readily as the non-Nigerien. Any purchases of equipment or supplies are not considered sub-awards themselves. These transactions belong in either equipment or supplies and should be listed as such in any budget narrative.

