



USAID | ZAMBIA

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May 25, 2012

Amendment #000001

Request for Applications (RFA) No. SOL-611-12-000006: Zambia Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Systems Strengthening (ZOVSS) Program

The following changes are made to the RFA:

1. Cover Page

Application Closing Date: June 13, 2012
Application Closing Time: 1600 hrs Zambia Time

2. Page 16, Section II AWARD INFORMATION, Paragraph 2. START DATE AND PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The period of performance anticipated herein is five (5) years. The estimated start date is on or about October 9, 2012 **for planning purposes**.

3. Page 25, Section IV APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION **ASSISTANCE SCHEDULE**

The schedule for this action is anticipated to be as follows:

Stage	Date
RFA issued	April 12, 2012
Questions due	May 17, 2012
Pre-Proposal Conference	May 10, 2012
Answers to questions disseminated	May 30, 2012
Applications due	June 13, 2012
Technical evaluation, negotiations and award documentation completed	September 21, 2012
Clearances and award of Cooperative Agreement	October 4, 2012
Debriefings begin (if required)	October 10, 2012
Implementer mobilization and post award meeting	October 31, 2012

4. Page 28, Section IV APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION, Paragraph 5. SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Applications shall be due at 1600 hours on June 13, 2012. USAID will determine whether an application that is not received by the Agreement Officer by one of the methods specified below by the time and date indicated will be late. Because making an award is critical to USG foreign policy goals, time is important and late applications may not, at the sole discretion of the Agreement Officer, be considered.

5. Pre-Proposal Conference (aka Informational Meeting for Potential Applicants)
Zambia Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Systems Strengthening (ZOVSS) Request for
Applications
U.S. Embassy, Lusaka, Zambia
USAID/Zambia
May 10, 2012

The OVC Systems Strengthening Informational Meeting for Potential Applicants, aka Pre-Proposal Conference, was held at the U.S. Embassy, on May 10, 2012, from 09:00 to 11:00 hours. The conference was attended by 53 people from different organizations in Zambia. Below is a summary of the proceedings of the Conference.

Welcoming Remarks – **Ky Lam, HIV/AIDS Multisectoral Team Leader, USAID/Zambia**

Ky Lam, the HIV/AIDS Multisectoral Team Leader welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that one of the top priorities for USAID was country ownership, which includes direct funding to local organizations. These priorities are at the forefront of the agency's agenda to ensure that there is local ownership and sustainability of programs so that activities will continue even when USAID is no longer in Zambia.

Ms. Lam explained that there were three OVC Requests for Applications (RFAs) that aim at systems strengthening to improve the quality of OVC services. She said these projects were funded by USAID through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and that two of the projects were restricted to local organizations. She then outlined the main objectives of the conference as follows:

- To share what it takes to receive funding from USAID; and
- To break down the application process so that Applicants would understand the steps involved in applying for USAID funding.

Opening Remarks - **Dr. Susan K. Brems, Mission Director, USAID/Zambia**

The USAID Mission Director, Dr. Susan K. Brems, thanked everyone for attending the conference and proceeded by giving a brief overview of USAID. She explained that USAID's job was two-fold:

- To design projects that are appropriate to the development context of the host country. To do this, USAID has to understand the health, education, agricultural, etc., context of the country.
- To ensure that USAID funding is used for the purposes it is intended for since it is the U.S. tax-payers' money.

Dr. Brems explained that prior to 2010, most funding went to U.S.-based firms, who would then sub-grant to local groups. However, upon assuming office, USAID's Administrator, Dr. Rajiv Shah, made a series of reforms to make USAID a leading, 21st century, modern, development enterprise. The USAID Administrator wants to see greater cost-effectiveness, flexibility, sustainability, and more forward looking, ensuring country ownership and sustainability of programs. The Administrator has introduced a series of reforms, with Implementation and Procurement Reform as the hallmark of the reform effort. Dr. Brems indicated that the Implementation and Procurement Reform initiative is the one under discussion and consideration at today's meeting.

Dr. Brems then explained that USAID has to ensure local organizations have the capacity to manage the projects in terms of human resources, financial systems, personnel and salary structures, etc., and encouraged organizations to use this opportunity to form alliances so they could bid collectively. Addressing the organizations that might not be successful at obtaining funding from USAID this time, she suggested that they not be discouraged but rather use this meeting as a learning experience.

Project Background - Dr. Abeje Zegeye, HIV/AIDS Food and Nutrition Advisor, USAID/Zambia

Dr. Abeje Zegeye gave an overview of the three OVC solicitations under discussion. USAID has a lot of global experience, including in Zambia, providing services and building systems for OVC. However, based on USAID reviews, these projects have had a lot of challenges related to the coordination of OVC activities and the lack of standards for OVC service provision. USAID was therefore looking at strengthening the government's capacity in the provision of OVC services. Dr. Zegeye informed the participants that the overall goal of the three projects is to improve the quality of life of OVC. He further explained that the three components are to address systems at different levels, as follows:

- Zambia Orphans and Vulnerable Children Systems Strengthening (ZOVSS): To strengthen the national OVC response through systems strengthening at the central level
- Zambia District Orphans and Vulnerable Children Systems Strengthening (DOSS): To enhance efficiency and effectiveness of OVC services at the district and community level
- Zambia Orphans and Vulnerable Children Management Information System (ZOMIS): To create a data assistant to improve monitoring and evaluation for OVC and to address data needs at various levels.

Question and Answer session

The following questions, and responses, occurred after the three presentations:

1. *Given the challenges with internet connectivity, do you have an indication of the complexity that you are looking at in terms of the data system? Secondly, some illustrative indicators talk about the importance of cascading down to the various levels, do you have an indication of training coverage, especially given the fact that this is a two year project?*

When these proposals were developed, we did not think that all the challenges would be managed, but this is a start, and we need to leverage all existing resources. The government has started most of the activities; we need to build on what the government has started.

2. *We are not seeing how the DOSS and the ZOMIS programs will interlink with the ZOVSS. Is there a potential for an amendment to those applications to inspire applicants to make time for the mentoring that the ZOVSS team will offer?*

All three RFAs do include language that states the need for collaboration among the three projects.

3. *How are youth defined? There is reference to youth and older youth, what is the age range?*

Please refer to PEPFAR's standard definition of youth. In this case, we mean below 18 years of age (0-17 years of age, who is either orphaned or made more vulnerable because of HIV and AIDS). However, the RFA gives more details of what is meant by "youth".

4. *The call for applications mentions that applicants should suggest geographic coverage; will all three projects have to cover the same areas or different geographic areas?*

All three projects do not need to cover the same geographic area. Geographic coverage will depend on the interventions. In the application, Applicants need to propose geographic coverage and also provide a rationale. After award, the target areas will be finalized based on consultation with key stakeholders.

5. *Regarding DOSS and ZOMIS programs, can an International organization be part of a consortium of the prime applicant, and is it prohibited for consortium partners who submit to ZOVSS to also work in DOSS and ZOMIS?*

We have a bias against the term consortium because we want to do our award with one partner that we hold accountable, so we talk about Prime and Subs. We would make an award to a Prime partner for the ZOVSS that is open to international organizations. For the other two applications, DOSS and ZOMIS, local organizations have to be the Prime partners.

Guidance on the Application Process - Joe McGee, Agreement Officer, USAID/Kenya; and Abdullah Akbar, Agreement Officer, USAID/Zambia

The Guidance on the Application process session was presented by Mr. Joe McGee and Mr. Abdullah Akbar, who highlighted the following:

- The United States Government (USG) is committed to getting the best value for its money through competition and transparency
- USAID for the last few years has renewed its emphasis of developing capacity of local organizations and host country governments, and that is one of the reasons why these projects have been structured the way they have
- USG tenders are done competitively, transparently and always to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest
- People are encouraged to send questions to the USG website by May 17th, and if necessary, USAID will also take the opportunity to amend the solicitations through that process. Questions will be answered and posted on the website.

Participants were referred to the three RFAs, and Mr. Akbar and Mr. McGee went through the different sections to give more guidance. It was emphasized that for these proposals, the technical application is

much more important than the cost application, and that cost analysis will be conducted to see what value we can get for funding the applications.

Question and Answer session

1. *With electronic submissions, in what versions do they need to be compatible with?*

Microsoft 2010, but we have the ability to open any version; therefore this is not a problem.

2. *Are scanned signatures accepted?*

Yes

3. *These forms are too technical for some community based organization at grassroots level, and we have not been considered for a long time. How can we be helped?*

Twenty million dollars is at stake here and we have to be accountable to the U.S. Congress and the tax payers. We are trying to make the process as easy as possible, but we have to follow the rules and regulations. Caution is also hereby given that organizations should not get into contracts they cannot manage, as they may get into trouble if they misappropriate the funding given to them.

4. *Can the full implementation plan be attached in the Annex?*

Yes

5. *In the Annex, do we have to limit ourselves only to the information you have requested or we can include other helpful information as well?*

You can include supporting documentation as well.

Financial Management Standards - Morgan Brady, Financial Controller, USAID/Zambia

Mr. Morgan Brady stated that most of what he would talk about was included in the handout in the participant folders. He reiterated the fact that it is exciting for USAID to work with new partners and that while it was hard for everyone to deal with a lot of rules and regulations, it had to be done, because USAID had to report back to U.S. tax payers. He explained that in order to navigate all the rules and regulations, there is need for organizational maturity, where an organization has sound practices that have been implemented and tested. He encouraged those who would not get funding this time to use this meeting as a learning point for next time, and also to strengthen the areas where they are deficient. Mr. Brady also highlighted the key elements of a pre-award survey as outlined in the handout mentioned above.

Closing Session of Question and Answer

1. *What is the relationship between this call for proposals and the STEPS OVC program?*

STEPS OVC is primarily a service delivery project with a systems strengthening component.

These three projects (ZOVSS, DOSS and ZOMIS) are focused on systems strengthening.

Applicants are expected to coordinate with other OVC projects, such as STEPS OVC and those funded by UNICEF or USAID's education office.

2. *How far does the pre Award assessment go, does it include the sub partners as well?*

It only involves the Prime partner. However, the prime partners will be asked about their sub partners' capacity to receive funding. The idea is that the prime will also have done their own assessment of their subs.

3. *Do you have any expectation on the detail required on the cost application per year?*

The budget should be detailed for all the years, but not by month.

4. *How is the collaboration between the DOSS and the ZOVSS programs?*

ZOVSS will provide capacity building support to DOSS and ZOMIS. We expect close collaboration among the three projects to ensure we move our mutual agenda forward.

5. *Will the three winners be enough to cover the whole country?*

With limited resources, the three projects will not be able to do it all on their own. That is why collaboration with other stakeholders, such as the GRZ or UNICEF, is important.

6. *Is there a restriction on the orphans to be included, i.e. should they be double orphans only or the single ones can also be considered?*

PEPFAR defines all children who have lost a parent as OVC, regardless of whether they are single or double. However, it is advisable for you to look at what is in the RFA.

7. *Is the cost business application not for reporting expenses?*

We are asking for the Standard Form 424 series, (SF 424, SF 424a, SF 424b), which are to be submitted along with the Cost Application, as well as the Pre-award Certifications/Representations, Assurances and Other Statements of Recipients.

8. *Please elaborate on what you mean by Branding and Marking.*

There are requirements to label everything paid for by US dollars. This will be part of the implementation process.

9. *How flexible is USAID in terms of the deadline, looking at the number of organizations to apply, especially for the smaller organizations?*

We do not normally extend deadlines except under very extraordinary circumstances; therefore we would encourage you to submit your application on time.

10. *In the DOSS application, under point number 8, would you like to see the sub total for management costs versus a sub total for technical costs? Also, in the ZOVSS request illustrative indicator for IR 1.2, who does the seconding?*

A subtotal for management cost as compared to a subtotal for technical cost is not required.

The indicators in the RFA are illustrative and thus Applicants may propose their own indicators. If the Applicant is interested in secondment, the Applicant would identify the line ministries that need human resources support and figure out the best strategy for secondment.

11. *How many awards will be made?*

The award is already split, so it may be unrealistic to expect more splitting. Three is really what you should anticipate.

12. *In the ZOVSS under Objective 2, I see one of the illustrative indicators is number of youths provided with skills training and jobs in the private sector. Is the intention through collaboration with ZPI and STEPS?*

Yes, ZOVSS should collaborate with STEPS OVC and ZPI as well as other relevant organizations.

13. *How do you count the OVC since they are already receiving services? What is the linkage between the systems strengthening and the service delivery? How do we count the numbers from the other programs?*

The three systems strengthening projects are intended to improve the quality of OVC service delivery. It is challenging to measure capacity building, but we hope that the indicator data from these projects will be able to demonstrate results from the systems strengthening interventions.

14. **Suggestion:** *Next time participants should be given time to introduce themselves and indicate whether they would be interested in possible collaboration with other organizations.*

That is a great idea that we will consider for future meetings. Please give us other ideas through the evaluations so that we can improve these meetings.

Closing Remarks - Dr. Cynthia Bowa, HIV/AIDS Multisectoral Deputy Team Leader, USAID/Zambia

In her closing remarks, Dr. Bowa thanked all the participants for attending the conference and reiterated Dr. Brems' opening remarks, in stating that USAID is committed to increasing its direct relationship with local organizations and host governments. Dr. Bowa indicated that USAID is committed to developing local capacity to deliver sustained impact over the long term. She ended her remarks by telling the participants that even if they did not win, they would be able to win later, or to participate better in upcoming solicitations.

In addition, responses are included for those questions received by the Questions due date of May 17th.

- a. *There is an overlap in the scopes of work between ZOVSS and the other two RFAs, ZOMIS and DOSS. How would you like us to deal with this, especially in the proposal? For example, the ZOVSS RFA asks that we work down to the district level to strengthen OVC systems. DOSS is also asked to "build local, regional and nations capacity to strengthen structures and networks" (pg 8 DOSS). Also, ZOVSS and ZOMIS are asked to work on an OVC MIS. What do you see as the role of ZOVSS, given these overlaps?*

All three RFAs are expected to work in close collaboration with each other at different intervention areas and levels to ensure that all the desired results are met. Depending on the circumstance and intervention, it might make sense for projects to work in the same arena. In cases where distinct roles and responsibilities are needed, the three projects are expected to have these discussions and work out an appropriate plan of action.

- b. *ZOVSS is asked to "build the capacity of local NGOs implementing ZOMIS and DOSS". Can you describe further how you anticipate these projects working together?*

Applicants are expected to propose the strategy for building the capacity of DOSS and ZOMIS prime partners to ensure effective implementation of all three OVC projects.

- c. *ZOVSS applicants are asked to propose a geographic focus (pg 13). This is not a problem for the purposes of a proposal, but we anticipate that DOSS and ZOMIS may each propose a different geographic focus. Does USAID anticipate us all working in the same pilot districts or each in our own?*

Applicants are expected to propose the geographical focus along with the rationale in the applications. After award, the final list of geographical target areas will be determined in consultation with USAID. Final decisions will be made based on discussions with key stakeholders, such as the GRZ as well as DOSS and ZOMIS primes. Where it makes sense, alignment of geographic targets areas will be prioritized.

- d. *There is a slight discrepancy between the information laid out in the Objectives and Results section of the RFA and that laid out in the Evaluation Criteria. Because of these discrepancies, we would like to ask USAID to clarify how they would prefer the technical proposal be structured so that we are being responsive.*

Applications will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria as described in Section V, which mentions that the Applicant is expected to address the desired results as described in the Program Description.

- e. *Currently, USAID is funding the STEPS OVC project which is providing OVC services in Zambia, and this project is scheduled to end in 2013. Is USAID planning on issuing a renewal or follow-on to this project? If not, who will provide OVC services on the ground apart from the government? How should ZOVSS and DOSS address OVC service delivery past 2013?*

The three OVC RFAs are focused on systems strengthening to improve the quality of service delivery and will not be providing direct services to OVC. [With regards to the OVC service delivery component, USAID is considering future strategies based on the amount of resources available and the long-term objectives of our OVC assistance.](#)

- f. *Is the M&E plan to be included in table format in technical application or as an annex?*

A narrative of the M&E plan should be included in the main body of the application, but a more detailed table or spreadsheet can be included in the annex.

- g. *On page 39 of the RFA (mid-term and final evaluation) it states that “...rigorous monitoring and evaluation of GBV activities must take place throughout the program.” While this proposal must give careful consideration to gender issues, it does not have a specific GBV focus. Please clarify the requirement for GBV monitoring.*

“GBV” should be removed from the statement, which should read: “To ensure that resources are invested wisely and result in desired outcomes, rigorous monitoring and evaluation of activities must take place throughout the program.”

- h. One of the illustrative indicators for Result 3.1 is “Number of districts utilizing OVC standards of implementation for service delivery”. Would USAID agree to place this indicator under Objective One?*

The focus of objective one is building human resource for OVC interventions whereas Result 3.1 is focusing on institutional capacity. Also note that the indicators are illustrative. Applicants are expected to propose appropriate indicators to achieve the desired results of the RFA.

- i. Could USAID please clarify the validity period for this opportunity*

The validity period is at the discretion of the applicant. The standard validity period is 60-120 days.

- j. Could USAID please clarify the Agreement Officer for this award? Different information seems to be provided on pages 18 and 42 of the RFA.*

Subject to change, the current Agreement Officers are as stated.

- k. Could USAID please indicate how applicants should demonstrate their CCR registration, as requested on page 19 of the RFA?*

Demonstration can be in the form of a copy of the registration page from the CCR website. If registration cannot be obtained by the time of submission of the application, applicant should indicate status of the registration process, i.e., registration is on-going or will be completed by date.

- l. Regarding Cost Share, on page 28, the RFA asks that Applicants submit a separate cost-share budget clearly identifying the resources they intend to contribute to the total cost of the resultant agreement. Given the diversity in allowable and qualifying cost share contributions, could USAID please clarify whether Applicants may present its proposed cost share contribution in a format other than a budget as long as it is described and quantified. If a budget format is required, please confirm that Applicants have the discretion in determining the level of detail provided in the proposed cost share budget. Please confirm that a detailed line item submission by cost category is not required as it may not be relevant to the nature of the proposed cost share.*

A detailed line item budget is not required for the cost share contribution, as long as the cost share contribution is described and quantified, and equaling 10% or more of the USAID contribution amount.

- m. Can a local organization partner with an international organization as its sub-partner in submitting a bid? If the answer is yes, what role can that international partner play...implementing partner or resource partner (partner that can't implement but just provides technical support).*

Yes, a local organization can partner with an international organization. The specific roles and responsibilities should be determined by the partners involved.

- n. *In the technical application format instructions, the RFA states that an implementation plan should be discussed (bottom p.20), but later goes on to say (middle p. 21), "if the applicant determines that a matrix or other supporting documentation is helpful.... this may be included in an annex." Can USAID confirm, then, that the implementation plan can be briefly summarized in the narrative, with the full implementation plan annexed?*

Yes, the plan can be briefly summarized in the narrative with the full implementation plan in the annex.

- o. *The RFA (p. 25, annexes) states that the technical application annex shall contain "resumes, letters of commitment, proposed teaming agreements, past performance and personnel references, letters of recommendation, awards, testimonials and any other supporting documentation requested in the RFA." Can USAID confirm that other relevant information may be annexed, in addition (and not limited to) to the types of documents listed here?*

Other supporting documentation can be included

- p. *In relation to IR 1.2 (top of p.10), one of the illustrative indicators is the "number of social workers seconded to other key ministries, such as health, education, and home affairs." However, it is not clear who is responsible of recruiting and seconding them. Is it the prime or the GRZ? Please clarify.*

The indicators in the RFA are illustrative. Applicants are expected to propose appropriate indicators to achieve the desired results of the RFA. Thus, the Applicant would need to decide if secondment is a part of its strategy and how it would be carried out.

- q. *In relation to IR 2.3 (bottom of p.11), the RFA refers to "increasing the proportion of older OVC with skills training and job placements..." Please provide a definition, including age range, of "older OVC".*

Please see question and answer #3, page 4.

- r. *In relation to Objective 4 (p. 14), the objective reads "to build the capacity of local NGOs implementing ZOMIS and DOSS. In the DOSS and ZOMIS RFAs, however, no mention is made that ZOVSS will build the capacity of the prime local NGOs. Rather, both ZOMIS and DOSS RFAs state that "ZOVSS will provide technical leadership for strengthening systems of implementation and promote joint planning and program implementation across key line ministries. ZOVSS will also promote the strengthening and utilization of the already existing structures (government and community) for effective OVC service implementation in Zambia." Please elaborate on how USAID perceives capacity building of the DOSS and ZOMIS implementing partners to be achieved, considering that ZOMIS and DOSS applicants are not aware that this intervention will take place, based on the information provided in the ZOMIS and DOSS RFAs.*

USAID is amending the DOSS and ZOMIS RFAs to make explicit reference to the capacity building that will be provided by ZOVSS. See s. and t. below.

- s. *In relation to the DOSS RFA: It has been noticed that the DOSS RFA contains no reference to the fact that the ZVOSS RFA “Objective 4: To build the capacity of local NGOs implementing ZOMIS and DOSS requires the awardees to build the capacity of the DOSS local prime implementers. This includes financial management, monitoring and evaluation, human resource management, USG and PEPFAR regulations and reporting requirements. Will USAID amend the DOSS RFA requesting applicants to allocate time in their implementation plan time for this mentoring and coaching from ZOVSS?*

Yes, USAID is amending the DOSS RFA as follows:

Under section B.2. Objectives and Results, additional language should read:

Objective 3: To collaborate with other OVC projects

Result 3.1: Internal systems strengthened through capacity building support from ZOVSS

ZOVSS will build the capacity of DOSS to successfully implement the DOSS project and meet the requirements of USAID funding. Therefore, DOSS is expected to work with ZOVSS to determine capacity building needs, an action plan, and a monitoring and evaluation plan.

Result 3.2: Coordination with other OVC projects increased

To accomplish the common objective of improved quality of OVC service delivery in Zambia, DOSS needs to partner with ZOVSS and ZOMIS as well as other OVC projects funded by the USG or other donors. Refer to the background information in Section A for potential OVC partners.

Under Section IV. Application and Submission Information, Technical Application Format, and Technical Approach as well as Section V. Evaluation Criteria and Technical Approach, the following two results should be added:

- Internal systems strengthened through capacity building support from ZOVSS; and
- Coordination with other OVC projects increased.

- t. *In relation to the ZOMIS RFA: It has been noticed that the ZOMIS RFA contains no reference to the fact that the ZOVSS RFA “Objective 4: To build the capacity of local NGOs implementing ZOMIS and DOSS requires the awardees to build the capacity of the DOSS local prime implementers. This includes financial management, monitoring and evaluation, human resource management, USG and PEPFAR regulations and reporting requirements. Will USAID amend the ZOMIS RFA requesting applicants to allocate time in their implementation plan time for this mentoring and coaching from ZVOSS?*

Yes, USAID is amending the ZOMIS RFA as follows:

Under section B.2. Objectives and Results, additional language should read:

Objective 2: To collaborate with other OVC projects

Result 2.1: Internal systems strengthened through capacity building support from ZOVSS

ZOVSS will build the capacity of ZOMIS to successfully implement the ZOMIS project and meet the requirements of USAID funding. Therefore, ZOMIS is expected to work with ZOVSS to determine capacity building needs, an action plan, and a monitoring and evaluation plan.

Result 2.2: Coordination with other OVC projects increased

To accomplish the common objective of improved quality of OVC service delivery in Zambia, ZOMIS needs to partner with ZOVSS and DOSS as well as other OVC projects funded by the USG or other donors. Refer to the background information in Section A for potential OVC partners.

Under Section IV. Application and Submission Information, Technical Application Format, and Technical Approach as well as Section V. Evaluation Criteria and Technical Approach, the following two results should be added:

- Internal systems strengthened through capacity building support from ZOVSS; and
- Coordination with other OVC projects increased.

- u. *The ZOMIS RFA states that “The Applicant is expected to work with the relevant GRZ ministries and departments, ZOVSS and DOSS to assist GRZ in defining OVC”. This implies that the definition of OVC will change throughout the life of ZOVSS and it may well have impact on the resources and results proposed under the ZOVSS I.R 2.3. At that point, will USAID allow budget reviews and, if needed, avail additional funds?*

USAID does not intend to change the total estimated cost of the project. If modifications to the agreement are needed, then the implementing partner should submit a formal request, to the Agreement Officer.

- v. *Page 25 of the RFA provides an assistance schedule for this bid. It states that questions are due May 17th and answers will be disseminated May 24th which is only a week before the proposal is due. Because of this short turnaround period and the requirement of both electronic and hard copy delivery, will USAID consider extending the deadline for this proposal?*

See cover page

- w. *Page 20 of the RFA states that the page limit for the body of the technical application is 15 pages. In order to adequately address all the required technical sections would USAID consider extending the page limit to 20 pages*

No

- x. *Please confirm which versions of Microsoft Word and Excel the technical and cost should be in.*

Microsoft Version 2010, or earlier.

- y. *For documents requiring signatures, would USAID accept scanned copies as opposed to originals?*

Yes

- z. *Please clarify the PPR requirements. Page 23 of the RFA states that “the Applicant shall identify its three (3) most recent and fully completed contracts or agreements...” then states that “in addition, the Applicant may identify up to five (5) additional contracts or agreements” for the Prime and “up to three (3) for each proposed sub-contractor”.*

The identification of the applicant’s three most recent contracts or agreements in a report format is required, if available, the information pertaining to an additional 5 contracts/agreements for the prime and up to 3 for the subs may be submitted.

- aa. *Page 26 - Under “Other Direct Costs” listed “equipment (procurement plan for commodities)”. Could USAID confirm that the procurement plan for commodities means as the completion of 5 – Procurement Information (part a through g) of the Certifications, Assurances and Other Statements of Recipient.*

The equipment items and cost requested on page 26, under Other Direct Cost, should align with the procurement information for equipment described under section 5, subparagraphs a through g of the Certifications, Assurances and Other Statements of Recipient.

- bb. *Point 8 on page 27 of RFA states “As written above, the proposed budget should provide separate cost estimates for the management of the program (including program monitoring).” Could USAID confirm if costs under each line item of budget should be segregated/allocated between 2 categories – “Management” and “Technical”?*

There is no need to segregate/allocate cost by management and technical.

- cc. *Are the letters of commitment of partners to be included in the budget annex as well as the technical application annex?*

Only in the Technical application annex.

- dd. *In the case the partners (sub-recipients) have relevant ongoing projects, that are not yet completed, is it allowable to include these also in the Past Performance section and annex?*

If you cannot report on fully completed projects, on-going relevant projects may be reported, describing the projects in detail, including the period of performance.

- ee. *USAID indicates on page 25 of the RFA that “All budgets shall include...separate sheets for each of the five program years.” If the applicant’s budget clearly lays out costs by year in separate columns, is it necessary to provide separate sheets for each program year?*

The five program year budget displayed on one sheet in separate columns is acceptable.

- ff. *Pages 21 and 25 of the RFA state that “other supporting documentation” may be included in the technical application annex. Is this true of M&E related supporting documentation? Can a matrix or other supporting document related to M&E be included in an annex?*

See question and answer #f, on page 8.

gg. *Based on feedback from USAID at the Bidders' Conference, it is our understanding that this RFA is solely focused on systems strengthening. Given that, can we assume that the indicators we develop for Result 2.3 under Objective 2 regarding "economic opportunities and job skills for OVC increased through partnerships with the private sector and NGOs" should focus on measures of improved systems strengthening as opposed to direct implementation results such as number of youth provided with skills training or job placements in the private sector?*

The RFA is focused on systems strengthening. The indicators that the Applicants propose for Result 2.3 should be able to convey that the result has been achieved.

hh. *The RFA states that "At the mid-term and the end of the project, USAID/Zambia shall undertake an independent performance and impact evaluation of the program using primary and/or secondary data through qualitative and/or quantitative methods." Should the applicant, therefore, assume that the cost for mid-term and endline evaluation need not be included in our budget?*

Applicants do not need to include the evaluation costs for the mid-term and end-of-project evaluations.

ii. *Can USAID provide the GRZ indicators referenced on page 34 of the RFA?*

There is no one reference guide for GRZ indicators. The Applicant should review various indicator guides from the National AIDS Council and other GRZ institutions involved in OVC.

jj. *How can we obtain the SF-424 series of forms*

See link on the Attachment page of the RFA's, or go to www.epa.gov/ogd/AppKit/form/SF424.pdf

kk. *Page 16, Point e). What are DUNS Number and CCR Registration?*

Please see Section VIII and the Pre-Award Certifications, Assurances and Other Statement of Recipient attachment.

ll. *Lastly, we are asking for the documents mentioned on page 12.*

The documents can be found at the website addresses listed.

mm. *Is Arial Narrow 12 an acceptable font?*

Yes, the RFA specifies a 12 point font.

nn. *On pg 8 of the RFA, the last paragraph under Objective 1 states, "...the Applicant should demonstrate capability to decrease OVC household vulnerability through demonstrable linkages*

to income-generating activities and skills building, which are demand driven and in line with the SNDP." May we address this topic under Result 2.3 rather than Objective 1, keeping in mind the many links between all ZOVSS objectives?

Applicants should address the topic under Objective 1 and may mention it again under Result 2.3.

oo. Can the M&E plan be submitted as an Annex rather than as part of the 15-page Technical Proposal?

See question and answer #f, on page 8.

pp. If the candidate for COP possesses all of the other requisite qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience to successfully lead a program of the scale and complexity of ZOVSS but holds a Bachelor's rather than Master's Degree, will that candidate still be acceptable, or would this lead to a lower score for the applicant against this criteria?

The COP must possess all of the required qualifications.

qq. Can an international NGO be a subrecipient to a local NGO on DOSS or ZOMIS?

Please see question and answer #5, page 4 and #m, page 9.

rr. Do the requirements for Past Performance References of projects with an annual value of over \$1m apply to the DOSS and ZOMIS RFAs, given that these are only for local Zambian NGOs?

Yes, the requirements still apply.

ss. Should the applicant budget for any costs related to the mid-term and final evaluations?

Applicants do not need to include the evaluation costs for the mid-term and end-of-project evaluations.

tt. Can an institutional capacity statement be submitted as an annex?

Institutional capacity should be apparent in the body of the application. Additional information can be provided in the annex.

All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

/s/

Abdullah Akbar
Agreement Officer



Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Systems Strengthening INFORMATIONAL MEETING FOR POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

PROJECT BACKGROUND

USAID/Zambia's Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Systems Strengthen program will strengthen the existing systems that support Zambia's orphans and other vulnerable children. The overall goal is to improve the quality of life for OVC by strengthening the policy framework for coordination, planning, and implementation; and monitoring and evaluation of support services. The program will consist of three components, each addressing systems at different levels and from different perspectives.

1. Zambia Orphans and Vulnerable Children System Strengthening (ZOVSS), SOL-611-12-000006, Pages: 6-13

The objective of the ZOVSS project is to strengthen the national OVC response through systems strengthening at the central level. Areas of focus include: promoting coordinated planning and implementation of OVC services in key ministries; strengthening existing government and community OVC structures; bolstering social welfare human resources; and enhancing the policy and regulatory environment for OVC.

The specific objectives of ZOVSS are to:

- Improve delivery of services through strengthened human resources and coordination among social welfare workers;
- Coordinate the fragmented efforts of OVC interventions through harmonized planning and implementation, inter-ministerial collaboration and coordination;
- Provide technical leadership for strengthening systems and utilization of the already existing structures (government and community);
- Build financial management capacity among NGOs implementing DOSS and ZOMIS.

2. District Orphans and Vulnerable Children System Strengthening (DOSS): SOL-611-12-000007, Pages: 6-13

The objective of the DOSS project is to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of OVC services at the district and community level. Communities and local government structures throughout Zambia have been providing services to support OVC. However, many of these services are not coordinated and either overlap or at times provide services outside formal coordination structures.



The specific objectives of DOSS are:

- Strengthen and improve efficiency of OVC service delivery systems at the district and community level;
- Improve existing community structures, such as the OVC committees, public welfare assistance committees, community welfare assistance committees, resident development committees, and neighborhood health committees;
- Promote integration, linkages, and collaboration among the different committees; and improve referrals between them.

3. Zambia Orphans and Vulnerable Children Management Information System (ZOMIS): SOL-611-12-000008, Pages: 6-10

ZOMIS aims to strengthen and improve systems for registering OVC, tracking their needs and the services provided to them. The project will support the OVC response at all levels by providing data collection tools, data management and a standardized tracking system.

The specific objectives of ZOMIS are:

- Strengthen and improve the monitoring and evaluation system for OVC;
- Address the data needs at the community, district, provincial as well as national levels;
- Provide the database for OVC programming as well as the data collecting tools at various levels of OVC service delivery.



Orphans and Vulnerable Children Systems Strengthening INFORMATIONAL MEETING FOR POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

APPLICATION GUIDANCE

USG is committed to transparency and obtaining best value for our taxpayers. Full and open competition on a level playing field is how this is usually accomplished.

USAID is also committed to developing capacity of local NGOs and Governments to manage their own national development.

There will only be three winners, but even unsuccessful offerors may learn from competing for one of these awards. USAID will provide post-award debriefs to unsuccessful offerors who request a debrief.

Different donors have different terms and procedures, but most of the basic concepts are the same, namely awards are made competitively and steps are taken to avoid even the appearance of conflicts of interest.

The RFAs contain all the rules which will be followed. Therefore, this informational meeting is intended to explain the RFA, but not change it in any way. Offerors and USAID MUST adhere strictly to the RFA.

Section II. 3. Type of Award

A Cooperative Agreement is a type of grant (not a contract) with limited involvement by USAID. A grant is a gift intended to stimulate an on-going activity(ies) that support a public purpose. There is no fee or profit associated with a grant.

Section III. Eligibility

RFA No. SOL-611-12-000006 is open to all. There is a requirement for cost share equal to at least 10% of USAID's contribution.

RFA No. SOL-611-12-000007 is open to local organizations. Cost share is encouraged but not required.

RFA No. SOL-611-12-000008 is open to local organizations. Cost share is encouraged but not required.



Section IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Points of Contact
2. Required Forms
3. “Reps and Certs” (see also ATTACHMENTS)
4. Application Format. Applicants **MUST** follow this guidance carefully!
 - a. Technical Application
 - i. If your organization has no past performance, indicate that. Leaving that section blank could be interpreted as “non-responsive”.
 - b. Cost/Business Application
 - i. Use the SF-425 budget lines
 - ii. Submit separate budgets for all major subawards
 - iii. Budget notes should address all the line item costs (see IV.4.B.5)
5. Submission Deadlines: Late submissions will **NOT** be considered (probably).
6. Funding Restrictions/Pre-Award Costs
7. General Instructions: There are 3 ways to submit an application:
 - a. Via e-mail. This is preferred.
 - b. Via grants.gov.
 - c. Hard copy.
8. Branding and Marking

Section V. Application Review Information (This section explains how the winner is selected.)

The USAID Agreement Officer will make a decision based on a “best value determination”.

Technical is more important than cost; but cost will be considered.

There will be a Technical Evaluation Committee. Members will not be announced to prevent any undue influence being brought to bear on them.

Each Technical Evaluation Criterion will be scored as a

Strength = acceptable as proposed

Weakness = acceptable as proposed, but could be better

Significant Weakness = not acceptable;

Deficient

If no proposal is acceptable for award as submitted, the Agreement Officer may enter into negotiations with those applicant(s) who are determined to have the greatest chance for award.

Section VI and Section VIII contain information and provisions that will be made part of the award.



Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Systems Strengthening INFORMATIONAL MEETING FOR POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

Financial Management Standards

Overview of Basic Financial Standards

1. Accountability: control over all funds, property and other assets
2. Audit trail: for all fund sources and application of funds
3. Budgets: routinely compared to disbursements
4. Costs: must be determined *reasonable, allocable* and *allowable*
5. Disclosure of all financial transactions: accurate, current and complete
6. Documentation: must be *original* and support all transactions

Accounting Records (illustrative)

- Chart of Accounts and account codes;
- General journal;
- General ledger;
- Subsidiary records

Internal Controls (illustrative)

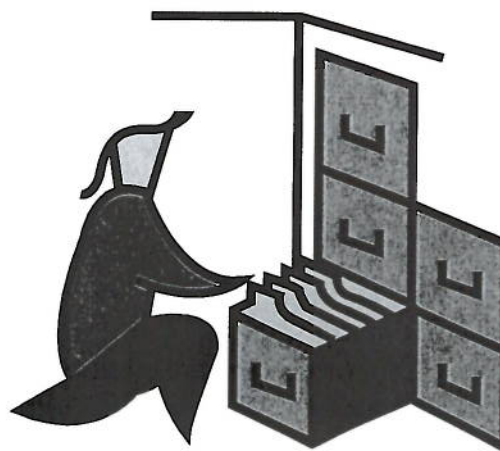
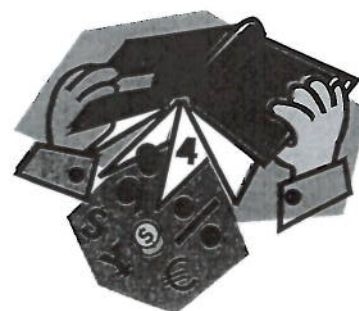
- Design & use forms (pre-numbered receipts, timesheets, etc.)
- Inventory access to assets & records
- Routine reconciliations
- Segregation of duties
- Usage reports for high-risk assets
- Utilize and document supervisory authorizations and approvals

Organizational Files (illustrative)

- Audit files;
- Budgets, modifications, and expenditures;
- Invoice, Voucher and/or payment documents;
- Original Agreement(s) and amendments;
- Payroll, supported by time sheets;
- Personnel files;
- Policies and procedures for:
 - ✓ Personnel
 - ✓ Financial Management
 - ✓ Procurement
- Purchase orders and procurement files;
- Routine financial reports

Pre-award Survey

1. Independence
2. Internal Controls
3. Legal standing
4. Operational Proficiency
5. Organizational Structure and Leadership
6. Transparency



Zambia Orphans and Vulnerable Children Systems Strengthening (ZVOSS)
RFA Pre-Proposal Conference
Thursday, May 10, 2012
MPR Conference Room

Attendance List

	Name	Organization	Contact Details	Signature
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