

Answers to Questions on APS-663-11-000002- *Innovation Fund for Ethiopian Agriculture (IFEA).*

The purpose of this modification is to provide responses to questions raised by the potential applicants. Below are questions and UASID responses. The responses were provided under each question in blue font color.

1. My colleagues are interested in submitting a concept note for this call but would like to know if value chain projects have to be on staple crops or if commodity crops would also be considered?

The main crops for consideration are: maize, wheat, coffee, sesame, and livestock products. Applicants may propose projects outside of FTFS target geographic areas as well as commodities that are not listed as priorities within FTFS. However, it is essential that all projects be explicitly linked to the overall goal of the FTFS.

2. Would you show as the direction or is there any US based international NGO that can partner with us to compete for this grant?

The directions on how to apply for the APS have been provided in the APS. Establishing partnership with other organization to apply for this APS is the responsibility of the applicant and USAID/Ethiopia will not involve in the establishment of partnership of the applicants.

3. I would like to access easily Innovation Fund for Ethiopian Agriculture. Would you please put the procedure in understandable way?

The procedures for accessing the Innovation Fund for Ethiopian Agriculture is to apply and compete for the fund following the procedures laid down in the APS. There is no other easy and shortcut way except following the instructions given in the APS.

4. We have irrigation materials/equipment that can replace Ethiopia's traditional farming. Is there a way that we can partner with local NGO's that works with farmers?

The purpose of this APS is not a procurement of commodities. It is a solicitation for innovative ideas and approaches. In addition, partnering with other organization is the responsibility of the applicant and USAID/Ethiopia will not involve in the establishment of partnership of the applicants.

5. We have one question on the legal criteria of potential partners/recipients of the Fund. DOT Ethiopia's legal status in Ethiopia is a local branch of a foreign firm. We've been operating as a

business since September 2010 and recently successful re-registered. Are we eligible to receive a grant under the terms and conditions of this APS?

As indicated in the APS, this request for concept paper is unrestricted and open to any type of organization including for profit business organizations. Therefore, business organizations/private organizations are eligible to apply for this organization. Types of the assistance award-whether to be cooperative agreement or grant- will be decided after the review of concept papers and resulting full applications.

6. I got your IFEA No.APS-663-11-000002 and I have keen interest to apply for the award. My project is a collaborative research and development with international research organization based in USA and Netherlands. In order to develop the concept note I need the concept note format. Am I eligible to apply for the grant?

Other than the instructions provided in the APS regarding Concept Paper preparation, there is no specific format to be provided. Organizations which have legal entity are eligible to apply for this APS. However, please note that the purpose of this APS is not providing award to individuals.

7. I am writing from the office of the International Potato Center (CIP) in Addis Ababa. CIP is one of the 15 agricultural research institutes of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). I would be grateful if you could advise if CIP/ my organization would be eligible to submit a Concept Note under the APS-663-11-000002 Innovation Fund?

Ethiopian, U.S. and other international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Ethiopian, U.S and other international governmental and non- governmental research institutes, universities for profit and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for this APS.

8. Is there a minimum and maximum limit to the number of partners? For example, would it be acceptable if a US NGO partners with only one Ethiopian NGO?

There is no minimum or maximum limit regarding number of partnerships to apply for this APS. However, USAID strongly encourages partnership.

9. Can one local NGO be a partner for this application with more than one international NGO?

Yes, it is possible to local NGO to be a partner with more than one international NGO to submit a concept paper /apply for this APS.

10. Regarding the APS in subject, we would like to ask if our organization is eligible for the call, we are an international NGO legally based in Italy and officially recognized in Ethiopia as foreign charity (according to the new law), but we have no experience working with USAID.

Both local and international organizations, whether they have experience working with USAID or new partners, are eligible to apply for this APS.

11. Our project is centered on developing the wine industry in Ethiopia. Because wine is an alcoholic product, is a wine-related project eligible for the IFEA program?

USAID is not allowed to assist projects related to alcohol

12. Could you please clarify whether US-based, for profit organizations are eligible to compete for this award? If not, could you please clarify whether there are any limitations on lower tier sub-awards including sub-grants or sub-contracts?

Please see responses to Question No. 5 and 7 above.

There is no lower tier sub-award limitation.

13. Are there Limitation(s) on the geographic area (s) of Ethiopia where the grant can be implemented? Single site or multiple locations? Urban or Rural?

Please refer to the FTFS strategy and implementation plan at:

http://www.feedthefuture.gov/documents/FTF_2010_Implementation_Plan_Ethiopia.pdf.

Applicants should consider the geographic area outlined in USAID/Ethiopia's FTFS as well as the targeted value chains. Applicants may submit proposals that cover more than one geographic location and value chain if the goal across locations and product lines are complimentary. Applicants may propose projects outside of FTFS target geographic areas as well as commodities that are not listed as priorities within FTFS. However, it is essential that all projects be explicitly linked to the overall goal of the FTFS.

14. Is the current Ethiopian Government Administration, (the national and regional levels) an advocate and/or supportive of US Aid and corresponding grantee strategies and implementation policies and practices?

Yes, Ethiopian government is supportive of economic development projects.

15. Will any "Official" on-the-ground assistance be available in any of the following areas :

- a. The leasing of land for the duration of our proposal (min. 5 year.)
 - i. Directly from the government (National, Regional, Local)
 - ii. Private sources. (previously leased but unused land or farms)
- b. If yes, what is the time frame for this assistance to be on the ground and ready to deploy?

(NOTE: My research showed the Ethiopian government has a program set up for leasing land. Will grantees have access to that program and time frames)

USAID will not provide any assistance suggested in this question.

16. Will the Ethiopian National Government provide a direct point of contact to assist with:
- c. Visa's for trainers and professional advisers?
 - i. If yes, how much time should be allotted for Visa's to be in place? Is there an expedited process, if needed?
 - d. Introductions to local officials and applicable "special" licensing regulations?
 - i. If yes, what is a reasonable time frame to expect meetings to be set up and documents obtained?
 - ii. Will targeted population be accessible via local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and/or government entities or will grantees do outreach to recruit interested participants?

Winning organizations are responsible for securing all required permits and following all Ethiopian laws and regulations. Applicants should be able to or have existing contacts with relevant Ethiopian officials. In some cases USAID may facilitate introductions to government officials if needed but meeting licensing and other government of Ethiopia requirements is the sole responsibility of the applicant.

17. Access for permits to secure and protect livestock from potential predators on outlying pilot farms

Winning organizations are responsible for securing all required permits and following all Ethiopian laws and regulations.

18. Is there a list of Ethiopian NGO's that might be interested in partnering on aspects of our grant proposal (the areas of staffing, local accounting, Quality and Assurance and Local Procurement functions?

No, we don't have list of Ethiopian NGOs that might be interested in partnering to apply for this APS.

19. Information on which taxes grantees would be exempt from paying? (i.e. VAT, Import, Wage)

USAID/Ethiopia partners implementing USAID funded projects in Ethiopia are exempt from all host government taxes.

20. Will seed stock and livestock be allowed to be imported into Ethiopia?

- e. If yes, what is the process/timeframe for importing livestock?
- f. If no, how will seed and/or livestock be accessed?

Importing seed and livestock is regulated by the Ethiopian government and not USAID. USAID has no control over the time it takes to import goods. If a project requires the importation of seed or livestock that individual project is required to understand and apply all Ethiopian regulations.

21. Is the competition open to Ethiopian based business to apply as a prime?

Please see answer to question no. 5 above.

22. Can a US based NGO partner with an Ethiopian based business?

Yes.

23. Can we apply for a two phase project, implement a pilot project during phase I (first year) and scale it up during phase II (second year)?

Yes, a two phase project may be proposed. However, the project must be completed within the timeframe shown in the announcement.

24. Does the ten-page Concept Paper include the Budget? Or the Budget can be sent in additional pages? In the instruction at page 9 they do specify about the cover page saying "The ten-page maximum does not include the cover page", but there is no information on the budget.

Technical and cost information/concepts should be addressed within 10 page limit. Please limit your concept paper to 10 pages. The page limit exception is only for the cover page.

25. Does the partnership with Ethiopian NGO and Ethiopian University have to be certified by official documents or just by e-mails letters or this kind of proof/document are not necessary at this stage of concept paper?

Proof or documentation of Partnership is not required at the concept paper submission stage. Simply explaining the partnership in the concept paper is enough.

26. In the development of the concept paper, what relationships is USAID looking for? i.e. how much added value will be given to proposals based on their on-the-ground relationships with the Government (i.e. Ministry of Agriculture), as well as partner organizations such as universities and local based NGO's.

Each proposal is judged on its technical merits. USAID encourages organizations to work with and partner with other entities (government, NGO, private firms). However, it is not a requirement of this APS. No preference is given to or for new partners or applicants. All applications are to be judged on their technical merits as outlined in the announcement. USAID encourages new partners and applicants to apply and for existing partners to seek and form new relationships.

27. If we hold relationships with local Ethiopian based NGO's → will it add greater support, especially in terms of ensuring the sustainability of the "innovative" project. If the Ethiopian NGO has been a recipient of USAID funding, will it add value, especially if the proposed project falls within the spectrum of innovation and agriculture?

Each proposal is judged on its technical merits. USAID encourages organizations to work with and partner with other entities (government, NGO, private firms). However, it is not a requirement of this APS. No preference is given to or for new partners or applicants. All applications are to be judged on their technical merits as outlined in the announcement. USAID encourages new partners and applicants to apply and for existing partners to seek and form new relationships.

28. How much will cost-sharing assist the proposal, on the award of the grant? a. If cost-sharing is provided by a US technology company – i.e. in terms of developing the new venture and initiative, how much added value will be given to the project concept and proposal. b. Can cost sharing be provided by a local Ethiopian based company?

Cost sharing is not required under this APS, though it is encouraged.

Cost sharing is an important element of the USAID-recipient relationship. In addition to USAID funds, applicants are encouraged to contribute resources from own, private or local sources for the implementation of this program. Cost sharing is defined at 22 CFR 226.23. Cost sharing may consist of cash or in-kind contributions but, by definition, may not include USG funds or USG-funded in-kind contributions. Cost sharing must be used for the accomplishment of program objectives, and must consist of allowable costs under the applicable USG cost principles (see OMB Circular A-110 and 22 CFR 226.23 for discussion of allowable in-kind contributions). Information regarding the proposed cost share, if any, should be included in the budget.

This APS further encourages applicants to leverage additional resources from the private sector in this program. USAID is looking for innovative, practical approaches to using these resources while promoting the program objectives. In accordance with ADS 303.3.10.2, leveraging represents all of the non-USAID resources that are expected to be applied to a project. It may include cost sharing, but may also include resources that third parties bring to the program without necessarily providing them to the recipient. Thus, the recipient is not responsible for any leveraging in excess of the agreed-upon cost share.

29. If the innovation has two components i.e. addressing agriculture sector production and markets and those dealing with nutrition, would this benefit the concept paper?

Applicants should address how their planned intervention will address the cross-cutting issues either directly or indirectly. As such an innovation that demonstrably impacts cross-cutting issues would be viewed more favorably than a project that demonstrates no impact on cross-cutting issues.

30. How does USAID address issues of risk on the ground?

Issues of risk need to be identified by the applicants as well as addressed (how the risk will be mitigated) by the applicant in their application.

31. The APS mentions the encouragement of applications from new partners. How much added values will there be for new partners and new applicants for USAID grants?

No preference is given to or for new partners or applicants. All applications are to be judged on their technical merits as outlined in the announcement. USAID encourages new partners and applicants to apply and for existing partners to seek and form new relationships.

32. The project indicates that it has to be innovative in its approach→ what criteria are you looking at? We have developed a unique approach to addressing the agricultural value chain, however we are keen to know what USAID determines as innovative?

Innovation is defined as: the introduction of something new- a new idea, method, or device

33. What determines substantial involvement by USAID?

USAID anticipates that a grant(s) or cooperative agreement(s) will be awarded as a result of this APS. Depending on the application(s) that is/are received and selected, USAID may decide to be “substantially involved” in the implementation of the program, and therefore award a cooperative agreement(s) instead of a grant(s). Cooperative agreements are identical to grants except that in a cooperative agreement, USAID may be substantially involved in one or more of the following areas:

1. USAID approval of the recipient’s implementation plans (limited to not more frequently than annually);
 2. USAID approval of specified key personnel (limited to 5 positions or 5% of the recipient’s total team size, whichever is greater);
 3. USAID and recipient collaboration or joint participation, which includes one or more of the following:
 - a. Collaborative involvement in selection of advisory committee members (USAID may also choose to become a member), if applicable;
 - b. USAID concurrence on the selection of sub-award recipients and/or review of technical/programmatic content of sub-awards;
 - c. USAID approval of a program monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan (to the extent that such information is not included in the application);
 - d. USAID authority to immediately halt a construction activity, if applicable.
- Depending on the application(s) that is/are received and selected, USAID may decide to award a fixed obligation grant (FOG) instead of a grant to all eligible organizations.
For more details, refer to ADS 303.2.25 at:
<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>.

34. Is it possible for you to provide me with a sample / example of a concept paper previously submitted to you which received an award for another agricultural project in Ethiopia?

Other than the instructions provided in the APS regarding Concept Paper preparation, there is no specific format or sample to be provided.

35. Must I first register my company with AID or with the US Govt., in order to submit my paper? If yes, please include the link that takes me to the registration site.

Registration with USAID is not required to apply for this APS.

36. Please explain what does the following mean:

“Pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the award program and are in accordance with

applicable cost standards (22 CFR 226, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organizations, OMB Circular A-21 for universities, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) part 31 for profit organization), may be paid under the award(s) issued under this APS.”

The award resulting from this APS may be either cooperative agreement or grant on which profit will not be paid. USAID will not pay profit under assistance instruments such as cooperative agreement and grant. Issuing contract under which profit or fee is paid is not the intention of this APS.

37. Can proponents submit more than one IFEA concept paper?

Yes.

38. Must IFEA concept papers propose a holistic (e.g. ‘end-to end’ value chain initiative as suggested in section 5, or is a focus on innovation to resolve blockages and barrier at selected points along value chain (e.g post-harvest storage) acceptable?

Concepts may focus on specific barriers within a value chain but should demonstrate how the intervention will benefit the entire chain.

39. Do proponents need to ensure that their IFEA concept paper avoid duplication of topics in relation to USAID existing FTFS grantee (e.g. post-harvest crop storage)? If so, are the specific plans of these grantees publicly accessible for scrutiny?

Not necessary.

40. Section 5.1.2 evaluation criteria require explicit linkage to “... nutrition and /or climate change..” but the wording of 5 2nd paragraph, last sentence “... propose projects that promote a holistic approach to agri-business development and/or nutrition and climate change adaptation” suggests that such linkage is optional. Please confirm that such linkage is required.

Linkage is preferred as interventions should directly or indirectly address cross-cutting issues outlined in the FTFS. Applicants should be able to link interventions to cross-cutting issues either directly or indirectly.

41. By "partnering", is the mission referring broadly to collaboration with local NGOs, or specifically referring to having local NGOs as sub-awardees?

Concepts should consider where possible partnering with local entities as collaborators as well as if possible look for opportunities to create sub-awards with local entities.

42. By “partnering” , is the mission stating a preference for US and other international applicants to partner for sustainability with local NGOs versus other local entities such as universities or local private sector companies?

There is no preference given to the type of “partner”

43. To prepare our timeline, it would be useful to know approximately when you anticipate making final decisions after the March 30, 2012 deadline for submitting full-fledged proposals. In addition, please also advise us as to when you anticipate funds would be first made available to those receiving awards.

Concepts should contain a generic timeline independent of any funding decisions by USAID.

44. Shall we only follow the direction given in the APS to submit concept paper or could you guide us the way how we could come up with the concept paper?

Please follow the instructions provided in the APS.

===== END =====