

QUESTION RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO APS OAA-15-000002
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH IN POPULATION REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

1. Are the USAID priority countries referred to under the first eligibility criteria the same as the high need countries outlined in the last paragraph of page 5? Is Zimbabwe one of the eligible countries?

Response: Countries referred to under the first eligibility criteria are the same countries as the high need countries listed in the last paragraph of page 5. Therefore, Zimbabwe is not one of the eligible countries.

2. Section II, page 4 of the APS states that one cooperative agreement will be awarded to achieve APS objective. Can USAID please confirm if this will be a single award for all APS objectives, or a single award for each APS objective?

Response: A single award will be made under this APS to achieve the objective described in the APS.

3. Can USAID please confirm that there are no overhead constraints for budgetary purposes?

Response: There are no overhead constraints but the overhead rate proposed must be supported by a negotiated indirect rate agreement (NICRA) from an agency of the Federal Government or by an independent auditing firm.

4. Section II, page 5 of the APS lists countries in high need of reproductive health and family planning services where the Population and Reproductive Health Office focuses its efforts. It states that the awardee will complete FP/PH work in these countries. Can USAID clarify if successful applicants should anticipate working all countries listed or a subset of these countries?

Response: The awardee is not required to work in all countries listed.

5. Section IV, Part B , Concept Paper Instructions states that narrative should include a summary of the characteristics and details of target population(s) and site(s) selected for research. As this award includes work in multiple countries and regions, should applicants regard this section as an illustrative example of beneficiary population and site selection?

Response: Applicants should provide information on beneficiary populations and site selection so that the information best represents the proposed work. It is up to the

applicant to determine how best to accomplish that. Illustrative populations and countries are acceptable.

6. Can USAID clarify if IRB approval is required?

Response: Existing requirements for IRB approval for research would apply to research conducted as part of the APS

7. Section I: Funding Opportunity Description, Statement of Purpose, Page 3.

“The key objective of this award is to address a broad range of social and normative issues, at scale, to achieve family planning and reproductive health outcomes such as increasing use of modern contraception and improving health timing and spacing of pregnancies”. Given the APS’s key objective, is USAID prioritizing interventions that will enable the target populations to be linked with and access contraception and family planning services – e.g., newly-married couples and older adolescents, as opposed to very young adolescents?

Response: It is up to the applicant to determine and describe the proposed activities and to provide the rationale to explain why and how the activities will contribute to the APS’s key objective

8. Does USAID intend that applicants work with all of the target populations – e.g., newly-married couples, very young adolescents, older adolescents and other key populations?

Response: The applicant should determine the target population(s) for the proposed activities. The applicant should provide rationale for the proposed activities, including rationale for the selection of the target population(s) that are proposed.

9. Would USAID consider funding a single comprehensive approach in one country or prefer that applicants work in more than one country?

Response: This project is designed to contribute to global knowledge and, therefore, must support activities in more than one country. Given the availability of funds and the objective of the APS, the applicant should determine, describe, and provide rationale for the proposed approach(es).

10. Is USAID prioritizing countries and regions where the “prevalence of behaviors of interest are the highest”?

Response: Based on their proposed activities and target population(s), it is up to the applicant to determine, describe, and provide the rationale for their particular approach(es) and the particular locations in which they propose to work - within the countries listed in the last paragraph of Page 5 of the APS.

11. Definitions of adolescents and youth vary across the listed APS countries. Can USAID confirm the following definitions for the purposes of the APS: very young adolescents - 10-14 years, older adolescents - 15-19 years, and youth - under 25 years?

Response: Applicants should define the target population(s) they propose to include in the proposed activities. Applicants are encouraged to provide the rationale for the proposed target population(s), including rationale for the description/definition of the target population(s) that they will use to implement their proposed activities.

12. Does USAID have a preference between qualitative, quantitative and/or mixed methods?

Response: This is a comprehensive research and technical assistance program, which means that no single methodology will be adequate to achieve the objective of the APS.

13. Section II: Award Information, Background and Program Description

A Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) will evaluate the concept paper for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in this APS". Can USAID provide any further information on how concept papers will be scored? Will specific scoring be assigned to each section of the concept paper sections?

Response: No further information will be provided about how the concept papers will be scored.

14. Will USAID fund interventions to address social and normative issues affecting FP/RH health service delivery amongst providers?

Response: The applicant is expected to determine and to describe their proposed approach(es) and how the proposed activities are expected to achieve the objective of the APS.

15. On page 6, USAID references five projects as "... precursors to this APS". Are these projects cited as examples of the type of project that applicants might submit under this APS? Or, is it intended that applicants specifically build on the evidence generated by these projects?

Response: These are examples of programs that might be considered for replication or scale-up, depending on the results of the research on these projects. Other approaches will also be considered.

16. We are assuming the \$30 million budget is USAID/W funding and this initiative does not necessitate field support. Is this correct?

Response: The award ceiling, which is not to exceed \$30 million, is expected to be a combination of USAID/W funding and field support.

17. Can an organization submit a bid as a prime and be included as a sub on another organization's bid?

Response: Yes.

18. To what extent is this project expected to dovetail with other global USAID-funded projects focusing on FP/RH, research, and gender and women's issues? For example, are the project locations, target populations, interventions, and outcomes expected to be similar/overlapping or completely different?

Response: USAID encourages coordination, collaboration and leveraging of activities that are funded by USAID, as well as those funded by other donors.

19. Are concept notes for multi-country interventions acceptable (page 5)?

Response: The award will be a single award for activities implemented in more than one country.

20. Are concept notes expected to address full range of target populations and topics as mentioned on page 3?

Response: The applicant should determine and describe the proposed approach(es), including type of activities and target population(s), and should provide the rationale, the expected outcomes, and how the proposed approach(es) are expected to achieve the objective of the APS.

21. Would USAID allow an organization to be proposed as a partner on more than one concept note?

Response: Yes.