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Regional Office of Acquisition and Assistance

AMENDMENT NO. 01 to
The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) No. RFA-674-16-000004
Botswana Comprehensive Care and Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children

March 10, 2016

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The subject amendment is being issued to:

(1) Extend the NFO closing date from March 18, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. (Pretoria time) to March 30, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. (Pretoria time); and

(2) Provide answers to the questions that were received before the deadline of March 03, 2016 at noon (Pretoria time).

All other terms and conditions of the NFO remain unchanged.

Sincerely,

JRFaber

Jessica R. Faber
Agreement Officer

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1) **The NFO notes the anticipation of lower unit costs than in previous programming (pg 14), please detail the previous unit costs and/or the target unit costs for the project.**

Answer: For COP 15, unit expenditure (UE) for OVC was $260. For COP16, it will be $220. Both UEs were informed by the results of the annual expenditure analysis that is done within PEPFAR programs.

Please clarify the acceptable age range for OVC in general and each of the prioritized target populations: adolescent girls and young women; children and adolescents living with HIV; and HIV exposed infants.

Answer: The acceptable age range for OVC is 0-17 years. However, the OVC main indicator OVC_SERV is "*Number of active beneficiaries served by PEPFAR OVC programs for* ***children and families affected by HIV/AIDS***".

For the adolescent girls and young women, the age range is 15-24 years. They are considered to be at high risk of HIV infection; hence, are considered a priority group for HIV prevention, care and treatment activities.

Children and adolescents living with HIV: 0-17 years.

HIV exposed infants: Infants of HIV positive mother. These are children whose mothers may have participated in the PMTCT program but have not taken their infants back to the health facility to receive their test result or children whose HIV positive mothers did not participate in the PMTCT program during pregnancy.

On page 22, one of the illustrative activities is responding to the findings of the national situation analysis on OVC - please share this document.

Answer: The report will not be available most probably until 2017. USAID is providing financial and technical support to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development through the Department of Social Protection to conduct the analysis.

2) **Please clarify if the submission of the technical proposal and financial proposal are required in separate emails, or if the preference is for them to be attached to the same email.**

   Answer: Yes, the technical application and the cost application must be sent in separate emails.

3) **The RFA uses Finance Director and Finance and Administration Manager interchangeably, please clarify the level required for this position.**

   Answer: The NFO should read Finance and Administration Manager. Everything else in the NFO under this position remains the same.

4) **Table 7 on page 14 indicates the project targets by fiscal year and provides a "cumulative total". Please clarify if the targets represented in each year represent new beneficiaries or if the targets are a total minimum number of total beneficiaries each year. This question is based on the assumption that the majority of OVC will require services over multiple years.**

   Answer: The targets represent a total minimum number of total beneficiaries each year. USAID is aware that some beneficiaries may require services over multiple years and that some of the beneficiaries will be carried over as they may need ongoing assistance. To meet the constantly evolving PEPFAR requirements, USAID may at some point request the partner to share numbers of new beneficiaries per given time frame as and when needed.

5) **We request confirmation that tables providing detailed information relating to the implementation plan and the monitoring and evaluation plan (indicator table) may be included as annexes, rather than within the technical application body.**

   Answer: Yes, the implementation plan and the monitoring and evaluation plan may be included in the annexes.

6) **We request that USAID consider extending the application submission deadline to allow applicants to fully incorporate information released in the answers to questions.**

Answer: The deadline for application submission is extended to March 30, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. (Pretoria time).

7) **Can USAID provide the FSN Salary scale for Botswana?**

Answer: It is attached.

8) **For the targets, our assumption is that the annual target of 11, 538 (p.14) is a unique cohort of children (some of whom will be carried-over to subsequent years), so the cumulative total of 57,408 does not represent unique children served. Please confirm.**

Answer: Yes. The targets take into account beneficiaries that would be carried from previous years if they are not ready to transition from assistance.

9) **Page 23 of the RFA states that a third party will conduct a bi-annual survey, which includes the baseline. Does that mean that applicants should not budget for a baseline assessment, since it will be conducted by a third party?**

Answer: Yes. The applicants should not budget for a baseline assessment.

10) **Does USAID expect applicants to submit standard Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of the Recipient with the application? If so, please include copies of the required certifications.**

Answer: As stated on page 44 of the NFO, the Certifications, Assurances, Other Statements of the Recipient will be requested only from the apparently successful applicant.

11) **Under IR1, Sub IR 1.1, the RFA states that applicants should ensure "*vulnerable households/families access government social protection programs and/or other economic strengthening interventions*" (page 18). May USAID clarify whether applicants may propose social protection interventions, such as the establishment of community savings and loans groups, or are applicants only to facilitate linkages with government-led programs.**

Answer: Yes, applicants may propose social protection interventions. They are not limited to facilitating linkages with government-led programs only.

12) **May USAID advise whether scholarships or block grants are acceptable interventions to support school completion and achievement for priority populations (such as adolescent girls for secondary school), under IR1, Sub IR 1.2 (page 18).**

Answer: School fees are very minimal in Botswana and registered OVC are exempt from paying school fees. The Botswana PEPFAR OVC program does not prioritize scholarships and block grants.

13) **Given the clause of the Volunteers for Prosperity program, might USAID either:**

i) **Advise on current preferred program(s) applicants should employ in order to satisfy the criteria on page 48, of the RFA under Criterion 2: Management and Staffing "*The extent to which the management and staffing plan demonstrates the use of highly skilled U.S. volunteers including the level of effort, the specific roles that U.S. volunteers can play and any constraints affecting the use of U.S. volunteers [ADS 303; Executive Order 13317 - Volunteers for Prosperity]*"**

or

ii) **Consider reducing the cost share requirement from the current 15%.**

Answer: We do not see the relationship between the two.

i) The Executive Order 13317 requires that an applicant's use of highly-skilled U.S. volunteers be a review factor in the selection of applications for assistance activities to be implemented abroad under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Applicants will be rated for meeting/not meeting this requirement.

ii) The Applicant will not be scored, but will be determined to be non-responsive to the NFO if they do not meet the 15% cost sharing requirement. This amount will not be reduced.

14) In Section D: Application and Submission Information under 3.Technical Application Format the RFA states that if the "*Applicant determines that a lengthy chart or other supporting documentation is helpful, this supporting documentation may be included in the Annex*" (page 34). May USAID confirm that the M&E plan and detailed table illustrating the staffing plan narrative will be considered supporting documentation and may be included in the annex.

Answer: Yes, the M&E plan and the staffing plan may be included in the annexes.

15) May USAID confirm the preferred title for the lead finance and administration position. Under Staffing, the RFA refers to "*Qualifications for the Finance and Administration Manager*" however later in that paragraph, the position is referred to as the "*Finance Director*" (page 37).

Answer: Please see the answer to Question No. 5.

16) In Section D: Application and Submission Information under 2.Content and Form of Application Submission, the RFA states "*Applicants may also send an Adobe Acrobat portable document format (.pdf) for electronic submission (except for the documents as specified below)*" (page 31). May USAID specify which documents should not be submitted electronically in Adobe Acrobat portable document format (.pdf).

Answer: On page 40 of the NFO, under the Section 4. "Cost Application Format", we specified that the budget narratives must be in Microsoft Word with text accessible and the budget broken down by program years is in unlocked Excel format with formulas visible.

17) **In Section D: Application and Submission Information under Past Performance, the RFA states that past performance references should be included for "*three (3) most recent and fully completed contracts or agreements*" and that applicants may identify "*up to five (5) additional contracts or agreements*" (page 39). Could USAID:**

i) Confirm prime applicants may submit a total of eight (8) past performance references.

ii) Advise whether three of the past performance references should be for completed projects or whether projects in their final year or two of implementation might also be considered.

Answer: The prime applicants must identify three most recent and fully completed projects involving some of the NFO activities. Should the applicants want to include any additional projects (not essentially recent or fully completed), they may do so but cannot exceed the number of five. In other words, the prime applicants may submit up to a total of eight past performance examples.

18) **May USAID please clarify what constitutes a "*proposed major sub-contractor/sub-recipient*" (page. 39).**

Answer: A proposed sub-contractor/sub-recipient is major when it receives 10% or more of the total estimated award amount.

19) **Page 40 of the RFA: Would USAID please confirm the order and documents required for submission in the Technical Application Annex?**

Answer: We do not have any specific instructions regarding the order of documents to be included in the Technical Application Annex. We believe that the Section 4, "The Annex" (page 40 of the NFO) is clear enough to suggest to the Applicants what documents may be included in the annex.

20) **How many personnel references would USAID like named for each key personnel position?**

Answer: Please provide three references for each key personnel.

21) **There are no page limitations for each Annex document outlined in the RFA. Would USAID please confirm this?**

Answer: It is true that there are no page limitations for the annexes. However, unnecessarily elaborate art work beyond those sufficient to present a complete and effective application in response to this NFO is not desired.

22) **Would USAID consider extending the deadline for submission?**

Answer: See response to question No. 08.

23) **The first page of the RFA (p. 6) cites a footnote on: Department of Social Protection DSP (2015) Powerpoint presentation during the USAID OVC Consultation Workshop 28-29 July 2015 in Gaborone. Would USAID share this and other background material that it has cited in RFA footnotes but are not readily available online, such as the Botswana National Plan of Action for OVC (2010-2016)?**

Answer: We have attached to this amendment any relevant documents that are available.

24) **Would USAID provide additional guidance on the expected role of highly skilled US volunteers?**

Answer: USAID expects Applicants to explain how they will involve or use highly skilled US volunteers during the implementation of the project. For example, Botswana currently hosts US Peace Corps volunteers who come to the country to perform HIV/AIDS work. They work with civil society, including community based organizations, to implement programs. Applicants are expected to spell out the role that they envision these volunteers playing in program implementation.

25) **Would USAID please clarify whether it intends applicants to design and implement economic strengthening interventions or focus on ensuring access and strengthening to existing GOB programs?**

Answer: Applicants can design and implement sustainable economic strengthening interventions. In addition, applicants are expected to ensure access to existing GOB programs.

26) Page 43 of the RFA requests the Evidence of Responsibility from the Applicant. Please confirm that this is only required from the prime.

Answer: Yes, the requirement is for the prime applicant only as we expect that the prime will determine the responsibility of each of their sub-recipients before issuing the sub-award.

27) Would USAID kindly provide its local compensation plan for CCN staff?

Answer: See response to question No. 09.

28) Section A.8(B) of the RFA states "Applicants can access the approved IEE for USAID/Botswana activities on grants.gov which is posted as part of the NFO package." However, the IEE is not currently available on grants.gov. Would USAID kindly provide a copy of (or link to) the IEE?

Answer: Please find it attached.

29) Page 29 of the RFA states: "USAID has established a required cost share of 15% of projected award amount for the recipient of the award." Page 43 of the RFA further states "Cost sharing of 15% is required, in addition to USAID funds." However, page 49 of the RFA states "although Cost Share is not mandatory, i.e., it remains at the discretion of the Applicant, if Applicant proposes a cost share, amounts included as cost share may be considered in this analysis". Please clarify whether cost share is required.

Answer: A cost share of 15 % is required.

30) Section D(4), with regards to Personnel costs, states that "Any proposed salary increase [initial or annual] must be sufficiently justified and supported with the organization's personnel policies (to be provided as annex to the cost application)."

Would USAID consider removing the requirement to include these policies as an annex in the cost application and allowing applicants to certify that proposed increases are in accordance with their organization's personnel policies and that a copy of the policy will be provided to USAID upon request?

Answer: Yes, a certification confirming that the proposed salaries and increases are in accordance with the organization's personnel policies is sufficient. USAID will request for a copy of the policy, should we need it.

31) **Section D(4), with regards to Construction costs, states that "Construction is not eligible for reimbursement under this award. Construction means … alteration, or repair … of buildings … and includes, without limitation, improvements, renovation, alteration and refurbishment." Would USAID confirm that minor renovations or upgrades needed to ensure that the project office space and any posted staff residences are functional and secure are not considered "construction" as defined above? If such minor renovations or upgrades would be considered "construction," would USAID consider allow applicants to include a very modest amount in their applications for such minor renovations or upgrades, should they be deemed necessary.**

Answer: It depends what is meant by upgrade. Some office upgrades do not fall under the definition of "construction" and can be budgeted under Other Direct Costs. However, renovation does fall under the definition of "construction" as noted above. For these purposes, "improvements, renovation, alteration and refurbishment" includes any betterment or change to an existing property to allow its continued or more efficient use within its designed purpose (renovation), or for the use of a different purpose or function (alteration). Improvements also include improvements to or upgrading of primary mechanical, electrical, or other building systems.

"Improvements, renovation, alteration and refurbishment" does NOT include non-structural, cosmetic work, including painting, floor covering, wall coverings, window replacement that does not include changing the size of the window opening, replacement of plumbing or conduits that does not affect structural elements, and non-load bearing walls or fixtures (e.g., shelves, signs, lighting, etc.).

32) **Section D(6) requires submission of Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of the Recipient. Please provide a copy of the required certifications and**

assurances and please clarify whether these certifications and assurances are to be submitted by the prime applicant and proposed subrecipients or only by the prime applicant.

Answer: See response to question No. 12.

33) **Would USAID kindly provide a copy of (or link to) the current bilateral agreement between the US and Botswana in English or confirm that there is no bilateral agreement between the US and Botswana?**

Answer: Please see attached the requested document.

34) **Is USAID able to provide documentation to the selected recipient to verify exemption of taxes for the program and for any posted expatriate staff members on the program?**

Answer: The current practice is for partners to submit their tax invoices with proof of payment and their value added tax (VAT) reimbursement claim request form to USAID. USAID will, in turn, submit the information to Botswana Unified Review Services (BURS) for the partner to receive the VAT reimbursement. This practice is only limited to implementing organizations (program) and not expatriate staff members.

35) **If the estimated start of the project is July 21, 2016, could USAID please reconsider the feasibility of reaching the targets outlined in Table 6 (p. 13 the RFA) by September 30, 2016?**

Answer: USAID will work with the awardee to adjust the targets based on the actual award date.

36) **In addition to the cumulative, minimum, life of project (LOP) target of 57,408 beneficiaries, provided on page 14, is there also a total, unduplicated, LOP target requirement?**

Answer: Yes, the applicants are required to provide an expected LOP unduplicated target.

37) **The RFA states on p. 14 that "USAID anticipates lower unit expenditures moving forward and the opportunity to achieve higher results." Please explain what is meant by "lower unit expenditures" and how higher results are expected to be achieved with less funding.**

Answer: On an annual basis, PEPFAR programs are subject to annual expenditure analysis. Unit expenditures are calculated as a result of this exercise (amount spent per financial year/number of beneficiaries reached). Experience from the past 2 years has shown that as programs become more established (increased skill with program methodologies, collecting and reporting data and with some of the beneficiaries rolling over the years etc.), programs have reported reaching more with less funding, hence "lower unit expenditures".

38) Given that USAID expects that the OVC partner will serve the same clients/families as the Advancing Partnerships in Communities (APC) project – primarily through referral linkages – there will inevitably be some duplication, even with close collaboration between the two projects. Can USAID please provide some guidance on duplication related to the CARE_COMM indicator? Will both organizations reporting on the same beneficiaries be viewed as duplication, despite provision of different services by the two partners (page 19)?

Answer: USAID does not expect the OVC partner and APC to serve the same clients/families with the **same** services. USAID expects the two partners to coordinate closely and to iron out any issues that may relate to duplication in terms of services provided and clients reached especially since the two partners will be operating in the same geographic area. USAID also expects the two partners to have very strong referral systems to ensure clients referred to receive services from each partner are completed. For example, APC provides HTC services. The OVC partner will not provide HTC services; however, among other things, IR2 is about ensuring OVC and their families have access to HTC services. The expectation is for the OVC partners to refer to APC for services which this latter is uniquely positioned to provide and vice-versa.

PEPFAR recently revised the MER indicator. As a result, the CARE_COMM indicator is no longer required for reporting to PEPFAR; however, USAID/Botswana would like to continue collecting data related to this indicator to build evidence around community work.

39) **We understand that USAID would like the applicant to maintain the results framework described on pages 16-22 of the RFA. However, the RFA states on p. 55 that within 60 days of award, the recipient must develop and execute a performance monitoring plan (PMP) / monitoring and evaluation plan (M&E) that includes "process, output, outcome and impact components." The language used on p. 55 suggests that the applicant should develop a logical framework, which would likely require reorganization of the results framework. Please confirm that the applicant should, as part of its technical application, use the results framework provided.**

Answer: The applicant should use the result framework provided.

Within 60 days of the award, the recipient will be required to have developed and submitted a performance management plan (PMP). The PMP will include all PEPFAR required indicators as well as program appropriate indicators that would be used to collect routine program data. The PMP will state when the indicator will be collected (quarterly, semi-annual or annual), sources of data etc.

40) **Does USAID anticipate that a baseline, mid-term and final evaluation will be conducted for this project?**

Answer: Yes.

41) **Does USAID expect that the baseline and evaluation(s) will be budgeted in the applicant's cost application and carried out under the scope of this project, or will they be budgeted and carried out by an entity external to the project?**

Answer: The baseline and final evaluation will be budgeted and carried out by an entity external to the project.

42) **Please confirm that the biannual survey that includes MER 1.5 indicators for OVC programming will be conducted in years 1, 3, and 5.**

Answer: Yes, the biannual survey that includes MER 1.5 indicators for OVC will be conducted in years 1, 3 and 5.

43) **May the applicant include the required organizational chart and supporting documentation, such as a staffing matrix, in the Annex?**

Answer: Yes, they may include those documents in the Annex.

44) **How does USAID define a major sub-contractor/sub-recipient under this RFA?**

Answer: Please response to question No. 20.

45) **Does USAID require the applicant to include examples of past performance in the technical narrative for all partners, or only for major sub-contractors/sub-recipients?**

Answer: Please include only for the major sub-contractors/sub-recipients.

46) **Does USAID require the applicant to include past performance information sheets in the Annex for all partners, or only for major sub-contractors/sub-recipients?**

Answer: Please include only for the major sub-contractors/sub-recipients.

47) **In the definition of "cost effectiveness" on p. 49, the RFA states that "Cost Share is not mandatory, i.e., it remains at the discretion of the Applicant." Please confirm that 15% cost share is mandatory.**

Answer: The cost share of 15% is mandatory.

48) **We want to enquire whether the Tsela Kgopo Gender and OVC Project Performance Evaluation is an open public document that can be shared and/or quoted widely. If so, could you kindly share, or let us know if it is not a public document.**

Answer: The requested document is public and can be found attached.

[END OF NFO AMENDMENT NO. 01]