

**Questions Received for RFA Number RFA-OAA-10-000004,
Health Policy Project (HPP)**

1. Q. Page 19 of the RFA states that “*Applicants must include a detailed five-year budget...which provides in detail the total costs for implementation of the program...*” The instructions go on further to state core budget assumptions for years 1 through 5 (\$3 million in FP/RH and \$3 million in HIV/AIDS core funds each year) and field budget assumptions for year 1 only (\$8 million in field support for the first year). Given these instructions, we assume that the budget submission must also include organizational field support budget estimates for years 2 through 5. Is our assumption correct?

A. Yes, the budget submission should also include field support estimates for years 2 through 5, although these will be mostly illustrative as it is difficult to make detailed estimates of field support contributions in the out-years.

2. Q. The Health Policy Project (HPP) is described in several places in the Request for Application (RFA) as a “follow-on” to the current Health Policy Initiative (HPI).” Can USAID please explain the rationale for using a single RFA for HPP, which we understand is to “follow on” to work previously undertaken through a multiple award IQC, and that builds on centrally-funded policy work historically funded through acquisition instruments (e.g., RAPID I-IV, OPTIONS I-II, POLICY I-II, and HPI)?

A. Although HPP seeks to build on the contributions of the previous centrally-funded acquisition agreements noted above, HPP is different from its predecessors in that its primary focus is on capacity building, institutionalizing approaches developed under past projects, and strengthening country ownership and leadership of health policy and governance. USAID determined that a cooperative agreement would be the most appropriate mechanism given this shift in the project’s emphasis. Cooperative agreements are well-suited to fostering a stronger sense of partnership among USAID, the implementer, and partner country governments, and allow for greater flexibility as priorities and policymakers change over time; USAID believes this orientation towards partnerships and flexibility is necessary to effect the capacity creation and change envisioned under HPP.

In addition, USAID’s experience with single and multiple-award contracts and cooperative agreements suggests that single award mechanisms allow the Agency to best capture and share lessons learned and best practices across the project. This enhances the project’s capacity to exercise global leadership—the primary function of central agreements.

3. Q. Page 9 of the RFA states that “*Technical applications are limited to 35 pages (12 point single-spaced type, 1 inch margins), not including the cover page, executive summary, appendices, figures and tables.*”

- a. **May Applicants include a cover letter, table of contents, and list of acronyms after the cover page, which also would not be counted against the page limit?**

- b. **Please verify that all figures and tables included in the technical body sections will not be counted against the 35-page limit.**
- c. **If figures and tables do count against the 35-page limit, is it acceptable to include them in an annex, and will they be considered in the evaluation?**

A. The cover letter, table of contents, and acronyms do not count against the 35-page limit. Figures and tables included in the technical body sections do count against the 35-page limit. Figures and tables included in the annexes do not count against the 35-page limit. Figures and tables included in the annexes do not have to be evaluated unless the RFA requests specific information and says it can be included in an annex.

4. Q. Case Study 2 on pages 11-12 requests a discussion of five activities to be carried out under a Partnership Framework Implementation Plan. It is suggested in the RFA that “Country X” is the site for such a program. Please clarify whether USAID is requesting a discussion of technical approaches in a generic Country X or for a specifically selected or named country, as for case studies 1 and 3.

A. USAID is requesting a discussion of technical approaches for a generic country with a mixed epidemic and the specified Partnership Framework Implementation Plan.

5. Q. On page 16, instructions state to include in an annex: “A complete staffing plan including key personnel and core technical staff, with underlying rationale, including an organizational chart demonstrating lines of authority and staff responsibility accompanied by position descriptions.”

- a. **Please clarify whether a rationale and detailed position descriptions are required for Key personnel positions, given the RFA’s description of and mandate for these positions.**
- b. **Please clarify whether detailed position descriptions are required for core technical staff positions only, or if these are also required for other positions represented in the staffing plan.**

A. A rationale for the key personnel positions is not required; however, USAID is interested in understanding the underlying rationale for lines of authority as they relate to the key personnel positions. Detailed position descriptions are required only for core technical staff positions.

6. Q. On page 16, instructions state “Applicants should provide the following information which may be included in an annex:” Please confirm that the bulleted items that are listed below this instruction (pages 16-17) may be included as separate annexes (opposed to a single annex).

A. Yes, the bulleted items can be included as separate annexes rather than one single annex.

7. Q. On page 17, Section B3C, instructions state “The Applicant should describe plans for rapid start-up of the project...” On page 32, Section C3, evaluation criteria include “The application describes plans for rapid

start up of the project, including the first year plan of activities and timeline.”

- a. Is it intended for the Applicant to provide an illustrative Year 1 plan of activities (workplan), or is the Applicant to only provide a start-up plan?**
- b. If an illustrative Year 1 Workplan is required, please confirm that the Year 1 Workplan may be included as an annex.**

A. It is intended that the Applicant provide an illustrative Year 1 workplan, as well as a description of plans for rapid start-up of the project. The illustrative workplan may be included as an annex.

8. Q. The RFA instructs Applicants to provide past performance documentation as an annex according to instructions in both the B3B (per pages 16-17) Staffing and B3C (page 18) Management and Institutional Capacity sections.

- a. Is it intended for the past performance information to be included within both the staffing and management and institutional capacity evaluations?**
- b. Please clarify under which sections of the evaluation criteria past performance will be evaluated.**

A. Past performance information and references may be included in one annex. In the Staffing section the application will be rated on its organizational arrangements, its staffing pattern, the number and types of positions proposed for each organization and whether they reflect the expertise of each organization, whether or not they are duplicative, and whether or not they represent an efficient use of resources. In the Management and Institutional Capacity section, the application will be rated on the extent to which the Applicant and its partners have the institutional capacity, organizational systems and competence to carry out, monitor, and report on the activities outlined in the RFA in both global and country-specific contexts.

9. Q. Instructions provided on page 18, Section B3D, regarding annual indicators are unclear – requesting indicators and targets for “years 1, 2.5, and 5” and later requesting illustrative indicators for “Year 1 and Year 5.” In addition, Evaluation Criteria on page 33, Section C3, indicates that the PMP “...should demonstrate what will be achieved by year three and by the end of the project.”

- a. Please clarify whether the Applicant is expected to propose targets only (not indicators) for certain project years after year one.**
- b. Kindly provide clarification on which years the illustrative targets should be proposed.**

A. The applicant is expected to propose indicators and associated targets for years 1, 2.5, and 5.

10. Q. Given the amount of information requested in Section B3D (page 18), please confirm that an illustrative Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) Table may be included as an annex.

A. Yes, the illustrative PMP may be included as an annex.

11. Q. Included within Section B. Preparation Guidelines for the Technical Application are instructions and information regarding Cost Share requirements (page 18), but Cost Share is not included within the Evaluation Criteria presented on pages 27-33.

- a. Please clarify whether a narrative regarding Cost Share is intended to be part of the 35-page technical application.
- b. If a narrative is required, given that the RFA instructs that narrative sections should be “organized in the order of the evaluation criteria,” kindly confirm that an Applicant’s narrative regarding Cost Share may be included as an annex to the technical application.

A. As described on pg. 20 of the RFA, “cost-share should be discussed in the budget narratives to the extent necessary to realistically assess these sources and funds and the feasibility of the cost-sharing plan”. The cost-share narrative thus is intended to be part of the cost/business application, which is separate from the technical application and does not count towards the 35-page limit. The narrative should be included in the cost/business application and not as an annex to the technical application.

12. Q. Page 19 of the RFA states that “Applicants must include a detailed five-year budget...which provides in detail the total costs for implementation of the program...” The instructions go on further to state core budget assumptions for years 1 through 5 (\$3 million in FP/RH and \$3 million in HIV/AIDS core funds each year) and field budget assumptions for year 1 only (\$8 million in field support for the first year).

- a. Given these instructions, we assume that the budget submission must also include organizational field support budget estimates for years 2 through 5. Is our assumption correct?
- b. If so, should these estimates be in accordance with the stated value (of the entire 5-year project) of \$250M?

A. See the answer to Question 1 above. The estimates should assume an overall project ceiling of \$250 but should not necessarily assume that obligations will reach that ceiling.

13. Q. Based on the nature of the HPP activities, which focus on policy and advocacy that do not typically lend themselves to large cost share opportunities, would USAID consider reducing the required percentage cost share to something in the range of 5 to 10 percent?

A. The cost share amount for this RFA shall be reduced from 20% to 10%.

14. Q. Several countries where the project could potentially work are developing policies supporting safe abortion. How do U.S. policies referenced in Footnote 1 apply to the project in this case? How do these policies apply to cost share activities?

A. As noted, a number of statutory requirements apply to foreign assistance funds. These include that such funds cannot be used to lobby for or against abortion, to pay for

the performance of abortion as a method of family planning, or to motivate or coerce persons to practice abortion. These requirements apply to the activities conducted under this project. 22 CFR 226.23 provides that cost share must meet various criteria, including that the cost share is “necessary and reasonable for proper efficient accomplishment of project or program objectives.” Cost share contributions should be used to further the goals of the project and are not appropriately used for activities that are explicitly prohibited therein.