

BAA 2021 - Questions and Answers (Q&A)

A. Technical Questions

1. Do proposals need to focus on only one of the four selected landscapes mentioned in the Solicitation?

- USAID will prioritize the Calakmul region (Quintana Roo and Campeche). Secondary priority regions will include the Lacandona Jungle and Sierra Madre in Chiapas, and the Sierra Sur region in Oaxaca. EOIs can focus on one or more of the priority landscapes.

2. Would it be possible to know the specific reach across the regions of Oaxaca's Sierra Sur and Chiapas Sierra Madre, perhaps on a community-level? We have done a map overlap with the proposed reach and we observed that there are some communities that are in-between the delimited area mentioned in the Solicitation. The question is, can these communities be included on the proposals, or only communities 100% inside the delimited area can be included?

- USAID's priority regions are approximate. Given that USAID is implementing the program through a landscape approach, it is not necessary that every action proposed or the potential solutions matches 100% with the selected areas. They are, however, expected to have the most impact in the priority regions (1st Priority Region: Calakmul; 2nd Priority Regions: Chiapas & Oaxaca).

3. We will apply with a proposal for Oaxaca-Chiapas; we are aware that the winning institution of last year's program made a proposal for this same area. Given this, our question is: would it be possible to have our proposal as is? (do we need to avoid repeating approaches?)

- For the purposes of this Solicitation, USAID is not looking to duplicate existing efforts, but rather identify and build partnerships and collaborations that will help to enhance the overall results of these efforts through a more integrated Landscape Approach.

4. We are promoting a macro project for the conversion of conventional avocado and cactus production orchards to agroforestry, certifiable production systems and the formation of social enterprises. The project operates in conjunction with the Morelos state government and the United Nations Development Program. This project is located in the area called Los Altos de Morelos on the slopes of Los Volcanes National

Park. The project also incorporates an area of the state of Puebla adjoining the state of Morelos. Does this zone fall into your eligibility area?

- USAID will prioritize the Calakmul region (Quintana Roo and Campeche). Secondary priority regions will include the Lacandona Jungle and Sierra Madre in Chiapas, and the Sierra Sur region in Oaxaca.

5. The solutions have to include all of the nine strategies for transforming landscapes?

- The nine strategies presented in the Solicitation are only illustrative, not required.

6. Do we need to provide a solution for each region?

- Please see the answer to question number 1.

7. Should we focus only in the Calakmul region?

- Please see the answer to question number 1.

8. Can we present a solution intended only for women?

- Yes.

9. We would like to make sure that this project is for the Mexican Forestry and Land Resource Management Project, in association with Research and Development (R&D) in the field of deforestation side by side.

- This is a USAID/Mexico solicitation with the purpose of testing, researching, developing, scaling-up, and evaluating innovative approaches to decrease deforestation, add value to sustainable productive systems, diversify and improve rural livelihoods in selected landscapes in southern Mexico. USAID will prioritize the Calakmul region (Quintana Roo and Campeche). Secondary priority regions will include the Lacandona Jungle and Sierra Madre in Chiapas, and the Sierra Sur region in Oaxaca.

10. How much total area of study would this project be covered in Calakmul, Selva Lacandona y Sierra Sur, and Sierra Madre locations?

- The mentioned regions where it is planned to carry out actions are approximate. Specifically, USAID is seeking solutions that can be tested across priority landscapes with a variety of stakeholders and a landscape approach.
- This Solicitation's main objectives are to decrease deforestation, add value to sustainable productive systems, diversify and improve rural livelihoods in selected landscapes with a clear impact and a landscape approach.

11. Would USAID Mexico consider including mangrove forests under this proposed activity? While the focus on inland forests is clearly stated in the call for EOI, the problem and approaches described are also applicable to mangrove forests in Mexico. Therefore, including mangrove forests might provide an opportunity to strengthen the activity, including development and application of a “ridge to estuary” Landscape Approach as a strategy to sustainably address deforestation in southern Mexico.

- Although the USAID priority region is the Calakmul region (Quintana Roo and Campeche) and secondarily priority regions the Lacandona Jungle and Sierra Madre in Chiapas, and the Sierra Sur region in Oaxaca, organizations may propose solutions in their EOIs that include areas outside of the specified landscapes and other states.
- USAID is seeking solutions that can be tested across landscapes with a variety of stakeholders. The purpose of this Solicitation is to enhance the overall results of these efforts through a more integrated Landscape Approach.
- USAID seeks creative and innovative approaches, however, there should be a clear connection in the proposal with the specific objectives of this year's Solicitation (to decrease deforestation, add value to sustainable productive systems, diversify and improve rural livelihoods in selected landscapes in southern Mexico).

12. Noting that the Mission conducted a similar BAA process last year on blended finance, and the need to find synergies with ongoing programs in the target landscapes, are there early results or information that can be shared to help participants to fine tune their thinking around ways to complement, link to, and build upon the Sustainable Landscapes Ventures activity?

- USAID/Mexico has released a report called Strategies for Transforming Landscapes in Mexico available in both English and Spanish that can be found here <https://bit.ly/3epfhbC> and <https://bit.ly/38qXZam>

13. Should EOIs consider all four target landscapes or can they select some of these to focus on?

- Please see the answer to question number 1.

14. The call for EOIs mentions that the four focal states received early REDD+ investments. Does USAID expect EOIs and proposed solutions to build on those REDD+ investments or focus on REDD+ activities?

- EOIs may consider building off previous REDD+ investments but it is not required.

15. Regarding the scale of management, land tenure and gender equity: Is there a spatial limit to the implementation of the proposals? (minimum or maximum surface and its distribution).

- No, there is not a spatial limit to the implementation of the proposals.

16. Regarding the scale of management, land tenure and gender equity: What conditions are foreseen in terms of land tenure or type of property and the number of land-owners?

- USAID does not have a predetermined set of conditions it is looking for. The BAA co-creation process will be used to explore the issues described in the BAA Addendum in more depth.

17. Relating to the scale of management, land tenure and gender equity: How will gender equity be established?(For example: in programs and official agencies in Mexico the majority is established as 50-1).

- USAID does not have a predetermined approach for establishing gender equity. The BAA co-creation process will be used to explore the issues described in the BAA Addendum in more depth.

18. Regarding the commercialization of the ecosystem services generated: Who would be in charge of the commercial proposal for the carbon market? (USAID, or the project proponent work team, or other)

- USAID does not have a predetermined approach regarding markets in the landscapes. The BAA co-creation process will be used to explore the issues described in the BAA Addendum in more depth.

19. With respect to the 9 strategies identified in the focus groups, should the proposal focus on one strategy or can it link several strategies in parallel in the proposal?

- The nine strategies presented in the Solicitation are only illustrative not required.
- USAID seeks creative approaches and new partners, and looks to organizations submitting EOIs to bring new thinking and genuine interest in collectively designing, testing and evaluating solutions that will leverage USAID resources to advance the key objectives outlined in the Solicitation.

20. In terms of climate change, is it possible to propose climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies?

- Yes. USAID illustrates nine strategies in the Solicitation, among these there is a Landscape approach.
- A landscape approach to sustainably managing natural resources integrates policy and practice for multiple land uses - within a given area, or landscape - to ensure equitable and sustainable use of land while strengthening measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services.

21. Should Climate Change goals be aligned with INDC and the National policies?

- USAID expects that climate change targets will be aligned with Mexico's NDC and national climate policy.

22. What is the link between this BAA and the other USAID Mexico BAA currently active / running?

- USAID expects the two activities to be complementary and to coordinate with each other when there are opportunities to do so.

23. Noting that the Mission conducted a similar BAA process last year on blended finance, and the need to find synergies with ongoing programs in the target landscapes, are there early results or information that can be shared to help participants to fine tune their thinking around ways to complement, link to, and build upon the Sustainable Landscapes Ventures activity?

- USAID/Mexico has released a report called Strategies for Transforming Landscapes in Mexico available in both English and Spanish that can be found here <https://bit.ly/3epfhbC> and <https://bit.ly/38qXZam>.

24. I notice that in the description of the grant opportunity, it mentions "in selected landscapes in southern Mexico." I guess this leaves us out (we work the forests that surround Mexico City). Do you know if USAID will offer grant opportunities for central Mexico?

- USAID does not currently offer environmental grant opportunities in Central Mexico. Current USAID opportunities can be found at www.grants.gov, beta.sam.gov, and <https://www.usaid.gov/business-forecast/search>.

B. BAA Co-creation and concept paper

25. Will the workshops mentioned in the Stage 2 of the activity be taken in-person, or virtually?

- The Workshop activities in Stage 2 will take place virtually due to the current pandemic regulations. Barring changes to pandemic regulations, subsequent stages also will take place virtually.

26. General: Who is considered qualified as the subject of the Award? If possible, please comment on the strengths and profiles that would be desirable or necessary as part of the applicant group.

- Organizations invited to participate in the co-creation workshop are eligible to take the lead in developing a concept paper to submit after the workshop. Organizations are also free to join the coalitions of other invitees as partners. Third parties, i.e., those not invited to co-creation, may also be invited to join coalitions as partners.
- Concepts will be reviewed against the following five criteria: 1. Technical approach and impact; 2. Collaboration and inclusion; 3. Sustainability of solutions; 4. Leverage and resource mobilization; 5. Research and evidence-

based solutions; and 6. Experience and partnership value. More information can be found on page 9 of the solicitation.

27. General: Is there a limit to the number of participants in the work teams?

- If an EOI is accepted, no more than two representatives per organization or consortia can participate.

C. Expressions of Interest

28. The Solicitation mentions "Leverage and resource mobilization" and a "Resource Leverage Plan". Must organizations mention monetary or in-kind counterparts that are consolidated or to be obtained during the project's execution period?

- Yes, USAID would like to see what resources potential partners could bring to a USAID partnership or a clear plan for how the potential partners could raise leverage contributions (in kind or cash) that go into the development of the planned interventions of the Activity.

29. Is it necessary to express interest through an organization or could a single person send an application?

- No, it is not necessary to express interest through an organization. An individual can submit an EOI.

30. Is it possible for public organizations who work on similar initiatives to submit an Expression of Interest?

- It is possible for organizations who work on similar initiatives to submit an EOI.
- Government organizations are not eligible to apply.

31. I would like to know if there is any problem in case of having a double citizenship (Mexican-American).

- With respect to EOI submission, nationality is not considered.

32. The organization has a large project on the Selva Lacandona made up of several sub projects. Is there a possibility of submitting the large project for your consideration or are the potential financing amounts of the order for smaller projects?

- Specifically, USAID is seeking solutions that can be tested across landscapes with a variety of stakeholders.
- You can present either project or both for consideration in the Expression of Interest (EOI).

33. If the submitted project was a sub project, would it be possible to submit more than one Solicitation (more than one sub project)? That is, is it possible for the organization to submit two or more different projects?

- Organizations can only submit one EOI. Organizations can present one or more of their projects for consideration within the EOI.

34. Are counterparts required? If yes, in what percentage?

- USAID is asking that organizations have a clear plan of how they will obtain leverage contributions (in kind or cash) that support the development and implementation of planned Activity interventions. One of the EOI selection criteria is an organizations' ability to contribute or mobilize resources in support of the Activity. No specific percentage is required.

35. Is the preparation of more than one project / concept allowed as part of the same EOI?

- One EOI can have different approaches and/or concepts integrated into it.

36. Process for Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) is a requirement for Expression of Interest (EOI). Could you please elaborate and explain what is BAA?

- A Broad Agency Announcement is the full co-creation activity development process of which the EOI is the first step.
- Please see the "USAID BAA Process" document (both in English and in Spanish) at the following link(s) for more detailed information: <https://bit.ly/3epfhhbC> and <https://bit.ly/38qXZam>

37. What is the difference between the Resource Leverage Plan at the EOI stage (capital, products or services, existing programs, etc.), and the “clearly articulated plan for mobilizing additional investment” (through private sector resources, climate finance, or other available sources of financing)” at the concept stage? Will all contributions – “capital, products, existing programs” and “private sector resources, climate finance, or other financing”—count as leverage? And is a contribution of “at least two times USAID's investment throughout the life of the Activity” a strict requirement or general guidance?

- The Resource Leverage plan at the EOI stage articulated existing resources that an organization or consortium currently has or plans to bring as leverage. The "plan for mobilizing additional resources" focuses on both the leverage that the organization or consortium can bring and also on funds to be mobilized resulting from programmatic activities.
- USAID's definitions for leveraged and mobilized resources are as follows:
 - Leverage: Contributions (in kind or cash) that go into the development of the planned actions of the Activity
 - Mobilized resources: Contributions (in kind or cash) that are product of the actions developed by the Activity
- Ideally solutions will bring a contribution of at least two times USAID's investment throughout the life of the Activity using a combination of leveraged resources and mobilized investment. USAID expects offerors to provide a contribution target and a plan for reaching it as part of submitted concepts.

38. As a federal employee, can I participate in the call?

- No, government organizations are not eligible to apply.

39. Is there going to be a pre-registration to be able to participate?

- In order to be considered for the co-creation process and workshop, organizations must submit an Expression of Interest (EOI). Only selected organizations will be able to participate. Previous experience with USAID is not required.

40. Can non-governmental or civil society organizations that are located in other states, but have appropriate methodologies and experience for the purposes of this project, participate?

- Yes.

41. Are project proposals required to submit co-investments by the organization submitting the proposal?

- Please see answer to number 34.

42. Does the proposal need a counterpart? If so, what is the portion?

- Please see answer to number 34.

43. We have reviewed the project requirements and basis for selection. However, I was wondering if there is a scoring system that is public and can be shared?

- USAID will review and select EOIs in accordance with the criteria set forth in the "EOI Selection Criteria" section of the Solicitation. There is not a scoring system to share, given that selections will be made on a case-to-case basis.
- Submissions are not evaluated against other submissions, but solely against the evaluation criteria outlined in the Solicitation (Technical approach, Impact, Partnership additionality, and Diversity of perspectives and capabilities).

D. General

a. Collaboration

44. How is the leader determined when AID (USAID?) decides to work with other consortia/partnerships, once the next Stages are reached?

- Members of a consortia will need to decide which organization amongst the members will be the "leader" of the consortia in advance of submitting a concept. The organization that submits the concept for the consortium is the leader.

45. What are the inputs of Line Agencies or local bodies in terms of manpower, land, and other resources?

- Community enterprises, smallholder producer organizations, and other local organisms and entities that have experience and capabilities in line with the objectives of this solicitation are invited to participate.
- USAID seeks creative approaches and new partners, and looks to organizations submitting EOIs to bring new thinking and genuine interest in collectively designing, testing and evaluating solutions that will leverage USAID resources to advance the key objectives outlined in the Solicitation.
- It is required of the potential Partners to have a clear plan of how they will obtain Contributions (in kind or cash) that go into the development of the planned actions of the Activity.
- For more information please see the "EOI Selection Criteria" section of the Solicitation, which can be found on the following link(s): <https://bit.ly/3epfhhbC> and <https://bit.ly/38qXZam>

b. Budget

46. Do you have an estimated budget for this Solicitation? Will it be similar to last year's?

- No funding level is determined at this time. USAID will, however, discuss potential funding levels with organizations whose Expressions of Interest (EOI) have been accepted into the next stage (BAA Workshop).
- As stated in USAID's Business Forecast, a range of USD \$10 - 24.9 million has been set for this Solicitation.

47. What is the expected budget?

- Please refer to answer number 46.

48. Can payments to operational, technical and local people who participate in the projects be included in the budget?

- As a potential partner you should describe whether you (and your consortium if applicable) come with assets or resources already available to use to support

this partnership with USAID, and/or a plan on how you could acquire additional funding.

- While a budget is not required as part of the EOI, organizations' ability to contribute or mobilize resources will be considered.

49. Are there restricted items or expenses?

- Although there are guidelines on which type of expenses are allowed with USAID's resources, at this point in time the main focus is on determining the EOIs that will be selected to participate in the upcoming Co-Creation Workshop.

50. What is the designated budget for the project(s) selected through this BAA?

- Please refer to answer number 46.

51. Does USAID/Mexico have a sense of the number of awards it may make through this BAA? The size of the award that consortiums should aim for?

- Please refer to answer number 46.

52. What is the minimum and maximum amount of economic support or financing for the projects?

- Please refer to answer number 46.

53. General: Will a minimum percentage be established for these contributions?

- Please refer to answer number 46.

54. What is the financial ceiling?

- Please refer to answer number 46.

55. Can the estimated budget be presented in dollars?

- Yes.

56. I understand from USAID forecasts, that the total estimated range for this call is \$10M-\$24.99M over a period of 5 years. However, I would be interested to know: a) Whether there is a budget ceiling for individual projects, or if there are multiple funding brackets?; and b) If there is an expected period for projects?

- Neither the funding level nor the period of performance has been determined at this time. USAID will, however, discuss the period of performance and potential funding levels with organizations whose Expressions of Interest (EOI) have been accepted for co-creation with the Agency.
- The selected EOIs will go through the co-creation workshop to develop collaborative solutions, then USAID will select one or more proposals through the peer review process to advance to the next stages.
- USAID will discuss potential activity duration with organizations whose EOI have been accepted for co-creation with the Agency.

c. Duration

57. For how many years does USAID suggest the submitted proposals last?

- USAID will discuss the period of performance with organizations whose Expressions of Interest (EOI) have been accepted for co-creation.

58. Period of Performance of the proposals (how many years). Do you have a preference for short-term or medium-term projects? Short, less than two years; medium-term, 3-5 years?

- Please see answer to No. 57

59. For how many years will the financing last?

- Please see answer to No. 57

60. What start and end dates does USAID have planned for the project (s) selected through this BAA?

- USAID expects activities to start in the fourth quarter of FY2021, pending the availability of funds. USAID will discuss potential activity duration with organizations whose EOI have been accepted for co-creation with the Agency.

61. What is the minimum and maximum duration expected of the projects presented?

- Please see answer to number 57.

62. What is the minimum and maximum time of the proposal?

- Please see answer to No. 57

d. Leverage

63. Can organizations that are already receiving USAID funding in other projects participate?

- Yes.

e. Other

64. USAID has already implemented the REED+1 forestry project in four states of Mexico since 2010. Could you please provide us output information on the implementation of these projects?

- Please check the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) at <https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/home/Default.aspx> for information regarding past USAID projects.

f. Process

65. Are the parameters for "Improved Livelihood" to be specified in terms of increased income, improvement in living conditions, increased nutritional values and health improvement, and the natural environment of target groups?

- Change in income is one of the parameters that USAID will use to measure the improvement of livelihoods. Other parameters for measuring this have not yet been determined.

66. Will the co-creation workshop be carried out in Spanish or English?

- The workshop will be carried out in Spanish.

67. Is there a format to send you the "expression of interest"?

- Submissions must:
 - Be in English or Spanish;
 - Be no more than three (3) pages in length, with text no smaller than 12 points; Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins;
 - Include a cover page (not counted against page limit) with the following information: Applicant Name/Group, Contact Information, and Response Title; and
 - Include two submission attachments in email, one in .doc and one in .pdf format
- For more information on additional requirements and topics your submission must cover, please see the "USAID BAA Process" and the "2021 BAA Solicitation" document that can be found on the following links: <https://bit.ly/3epfhhbC> and <https://bit.ly/38qXZam>

68. What are the requirements the "expression of interest" must have?

- For more information on the requirements and topics your submission must cover, please see the "USAID BAA Process" and the "2021 BAA Solicitation" (page 6) document that can be found on the following links: <https://bit.ly/3epfhhbC> and <https://bit.ly/38qXZam>

69. General: What are the contributions that USAID considers valid as a contribution from the work team? (land tenure or ownership, parallel resource management linked to the proposal)

- Types of proposed resources that your organization or your consortium (if applicable) could bring to a USAID partnership (capital, products or services, existing programs, etc.) or a plan to leverage additional funding should be articulated in the Resource Leverage Plan.