

Mexico Partnership Program - APS 523-12-002
Questions and Answers

February 29, 2012

1) Can an application address more than one technical area?

No. Concept papers and, later, applications must address only one of the five technical areas contained in the APS.

2) Can our organization work on more than one of the technical areas in the APS?

Yes, but you will need to submit separate concept papers for each technical area.

3) Can concept papers related to two separate technical areas include the same geographic location?

Yes, if that would be consistent with the geographic focus areas outlined for the relevant technical area in the APS.

4) Can you send concept papers before March 15?

Yes. USAID will review all concept papers received by March 15th.

5) Can we send concept papers between the March 15 and June 15 deadlines?

Yes, concept papers may be submitted at any time. USAID will review all concept papers received by the established deadlines.

6) Can you send concept papers for work with youth after March 15?

Yes. However, concept papers for the program areas of Increasing Youth Capacity to Play a Productive Role in the Community and Expanding Human Rights Protection Mechanisms that are received before March 15, 2012 will receive priority consideration. The majority of awards in these two areas are expected to be made by September 30, 2012.

7) If funds are expended early in the cycle, does that mean that new concept papers will not be accepted?

Concept papers will be accepted while the APS is open. The current ending date for the APS is January 29, 2013. USAID will amend the APS if funds are fully committed under one or more of the technical areas.

8) Can the concept paper be submitted in English or Spanish? What about the full proposal?

Yes, concept papers may be submitted in English or Spanish. The full proposal must be submitted in English.

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9) Is there priority given to either English or Spanish for concept papers?

No. Concept papers may be submitted either in Spanish or English.

10) Does the 15-page limit for applications include the budget?

No. If the concept paper is judged to have sufficient merit, USAID will invite organizations to submit a full application. The full application will include a summary of program activities, expected program results and mechanisms for monitoring and measuring program performance, a project timeline and implementation plan, a description of organizational technical, administrative and financial management capacity, a description of prior related work, and a budget.

Full applications and all supporting material must be submitted in English. USAID will provide organizations with instructions for submitting a full application, including recommended formats.

11) If there are deficiencies or missing information in a full application, will it be rejected out of hand, or will it have the opportunity to resubmit prior to the next quarterly deadline?

This decision will be made on a case by case basis. However, organizations may resubmit revised concept papers if they were not originally accepted.

12) Can we form a consortium with other organizations?

Yes, and we encourage you to do so. USAID/Mexico strongly encourages applicants to consider partnership, teaming or other arrangements that make best use of existing organizational capacity, resources and relationships.

13) Can we receive contributions or cofinancing from other donors?

Yes.

14) Can we submit applications for both the Mexico Partnership Program APS and the GDA APS addendum?

Yes.

15) If our organization is already working with a Merida Initiative proposal, are we eligible to apply?

Yes.

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16) How long will it take to receive funds after the program is awarded? Will funds be awarded in a lump sum or in parts?

The schedule for receiving funds will depend on the specific terms of the agreement that is signed. Typically, funds would be provided based on the achievement of agreed-upon results.

17) What is the program length?

Programs may last from one to three years.

18) How long do we have to complete the program of work?

Organizations will have between one and three years to implement the program, depending upon the specific proposal that is submitted.

19) How long after signing an agreement must work begin?

Agreements with USAID are generally effective on the date of signature.

20) Can an organization subcontract a U.S. firm to support program implementation? If a Mexican organization works with a U.S. organization, who has financial and program management responsibility?

Yes. A Mexican organization may submit a concept paper individually or in partnership with other international or local organizations. The Mexican organization must be the prime applicant, and would have overall financial and program management responsibility.

21) Can you recommend any agencies that can offer assistance in developing proposals?

No.

22) Are support letters required from other organizations (such as the Mexican government or partners)?

Support letters are not required at the concept paper stage.

23) What will USAID's role be in the administration of the agreement?

This will vary depending on the type of agreement that is negotiated.

24) What kind of reports would be required? Would reports need to be in English?

This will vary depending on what is negotiated in the final agreement. The official language under the resulting award will be English, so the reports must be submitted in English. In some cases, translations to Spanish will be required.

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25) What kinds of awards are contemplated?

USAID may award a grant, cooperative agreement, fixed obligation grant or simplified grant, depending upon the nature and amount of the application and the type of relationship to be established.

26) Is there a limit on the amount of funds that can be spent on overhead?

No, there is no pre-set limit. This will be part of the negotiation with USAID. At the full proposal stage, each organization must submit documentation that properly supports the proposed indirect cost rates.

27) Regarding the budget, would expenditures on computer equipment, for example, be covered? Are the funds available for construction (of a youth or community center, for example) and for computers?

USAID may consider all types of expenditures that are directly related to and required for the achievement of the program goals, including equipment, staff costs, workshops, events, etc. Details on the specific types of costs that would be covered by USAID – and any restrictions or limitations on these costs - would be negotiated on a case by case basis as part of the final agreement. USAID would generally not consider construction costs.

28) For the concept paper stage, is any budget detail needed? Should we just include the total amount of funding requested?

For the concept paper, organizations should include the total amount of funds requested. Additional budget detail would be required at the full application stage.

29) Can there be a variation between the amount of funds requested at the concept paper stage and the amount requested in the full application?

Yes. However, the amount requested should not at any point exceed the total amount of funds available under the applicable technical area.

30) Is co-investment or a financial counterpart contribution required?

No, there is no requirement for counterpart contribution. However, cost sharing is strongly encouraged and may be considered as a factor in evaluating cost effectiveness.

31) If the applicant proposes a 3 year proposal, does USAID grant the funds for 3 years or does the applicant have to re-apply every year?

You do not have to re-apply every year. USAID will consider proposals for programs that are from one to three years in length. The schedule for receiving funds will depend on the specific terms of

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the agreement that is signed. Typically, funds would be provided based on the achievement of agreed-upon results.

32) Can USAID provide seed capital for programs?

Yes, as long as the proposed activities fit within the requirements of the APS.

33) Is there a minimum time that NGOs must have been established in order to be able to submit an application?

Yes, organizations should have been in operation as a local Mexican organization for no less than two years immediately preceding the date of application.

34) Do organizations have to have two years' working experience, or is two years being registered to do business enough?

Organizations should have been in operation as a local Mexican organization for no less than two years immediately preceding the date of application.

35) Can organizations carry out activities in the United States that will benefit Mexico?

Yes, as long as the activities will have an impact on desired results in Mexico.

36) Is a sustainability plan required?

No, a sustainability plan is not required in the concept paper phase.

37) Do the applicants have to comply with the requirements listed in www.grants.gov, such as obtaining a DUNS number, etc.?

This is not required at the time of submitting a concept paper. Please review the instructions for concept paper submission that are included in the announcement.

38) Does USAID retain exclusive control of all information generated by projects? Can we, for example, publish results in academic journals or other publications?

Any specific arrangement regarding information generated by a project would be part of the agreement negotiations. Generally, information generated under USAID programs is publicly available, and could be published in academic journals or other publications.

Engaging Civil Society in Promoting Clean Energy Technologies and Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation

- 39) Can you please specify which parts of Chiapas are included or prioritized in your geographic focus for the Global Climate Change component or if Los Altos of Chiapas are part of your priority areas?**

In principle, any location within the State of Chiapas that offers significant opportunities/sources for REDD/clean energy projects would be acceptable.

- 40) You say you will prioritize projects that link to other USAID projects in the north of the country. How can we find out more about those projects?**

General information about USAID activities in Mexico is included in the APS. Additional information may be found at USAID's website, <http://mexico.usaid.gov>.

- 41) Would a proposal on adaptation to climate change to reduce vulnerabilities be eligible for A.1 Engaging Civil Society in Promoting Clean Energy Technologies and Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation?**

No. The APS only covers activities related to clean energy and sustainable landscapes, not adaptation. (to climate change?)

- 42) If we make a proposal on Global Climate Change, does it need to include both mitigation in energy use and forestry and land use sectors (REDD+) or can it address only REDD+ aspects?**

No, it does not; the proposal may address one or both of these topics.

- 43) Of the illustrative activities, do we have to include all of them or can we select only one?**

Concept papers do not need to cover all or any of the illustrative activities. These were provided as examples, but are not meant to be limiting. Other good, innovative ideas that fit within the objective and comply with other parameters of the APS also would be eligible.

- 44) Are environment programs limited to the three communities listed under youth in the APS?**

No. Each technical area has its own geographic focus. For environment programs, policy, advocacy, capacity development and information dissemination activities may take place at the national or sub-national level. Local-level activities in the forestry area should take into account Government of Mexico (GOM) preferences, locations where organizations have existing capacity and experience, and locations where projects consistent with sustainable landscapes funding could be implemented. These locations currently include the Yucatan peninsula, parts of Chiapas, southwestern Chihuahua, Jalisco, Valle de Bravo-Amanalco (State of Mexico), and Oaxaca. Local-level activities in the energy area should take into account GOM preferences, locations with significant renewable energy resources, and areas

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complementary to other USAID programming. These locations currently include Baja California and Chihuahua.

45) Must the environment projects develop new ideas?

Under the environment technical areas, those projects that develop new ideas will be considered more competitive than projects that propose only to implement existing ideas.

46) Under the environment objective, would a proposal regarding a financial mechanism be of interest?

Yes, a financial mechanism could be of interest if it responds to the objectives under environment.

47) Can demonstration projects be 'small scale?' What do you mean by 'small scale?'

Yes, projects can have benefits for small areas, but the total proposal submitted to USAID cannot be less than \$100,000. It would be best if lessons learned in small scale projects could be applicable to or replicable in larger regions. USAID does not have a set definition for the size of the small scale projects; that would be up to the organization to define.

48) Who is the Government of Mexico (GOM) counterpart for environment projects?

We do not have a direct GOM counterpart for every project; however, our work aligns with and supports GOM goals, and we ask that your submission demonstrate how this principle applies to your proposed work plan.

Increasing Youth Capacity to Play a Productive Role in the Community

49) Can proposals include work outside designated communities under the youth technical area?

Yes, but only if this is required to reach young people primarily from the designated communities. This may be the case, for example, if a community is covered by a secondary school located outside of the specific community.

This may also be the case for job creation and workforce development activities, where the broader population in the designated cities of Ciudad Juarez, Monterrey and Tijuana may be considered as beneficiaries.

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- 50) Regarding the three geographic areas of focus, if our organization is outside of these three areas, are we still eligible to apply? We understand the beneficiaries must be part of these communities, but can those working on the project/program be from outside?**

Your organization may apply. The organization that is implementing the program does not need to be located within the three cities or the three communities that have been identified as the geographic focus for work in this area.

- 51) Under the youth technical area, can proposals take place in only two of the three communities identified?**

Yes, proposed activities can take place in one, two, or all three communities. They do not have to include all three.

- 52) Can 'mental health' work in the youth area address addiction recovery?**

No. Mental health activities should focus on addressing issues related to crime and violence. Addiction recovery activities are covered by other programs supported by the USG.

- 53) Can we see results of the analysis that was done by the international consultant in the target communities?**

The objectives and activities that are included in the APS related to youth are a direct result of this analysis. The consultant's report may be shared at a later date when it is completed.

- 54) Can a program that provides therapy to children with disabilities be considered?**

Any proposed activity should directly relate to meeting the technical areas outlined in the APS.

- 55) Under the youth objective, is it required to submit a separate concept paper for each sub-area to be addressed?**

No, if the proposed activities are only under one technical area (youth), one concept paper is sufficient. However, if proposed activities fall under different technical area (for example, youth and environment, or competitiveness and justice system reform), separate concept papers are required.

- 56) How are youth defined?**

For the purposes of work in this area, youth are defined to be between the ages of 10 and 29.

- 57) Can youth that benefit from the projects be married or single?**

The only restriction on youth participants is that they be between 10-29 years old; it does not matter whether they are single or married.

Expanding Human Rights Protection Mechanisms

58) Does human rights work have to be nationwide?

Yes, that is our preference. Work in this area is expected to take place at the national level, with a focus in those states with a high prevalence of human rights issues.

59) Can human rights work include activities focused on journalists?

Yes, but only if this is part of a broader approach to meeting the human rights objectives as described in the APS.

60) Certain donors and funding sources have limits on lobbying or advocacy activities within Mexico. Are there any restrictions on this type of activity?

Applicants for USAID assistance are restricted from doing any type of lobbying in the U.S. However, supporting citizen participation in policy reform or advocacy activities within Mexico may be considered if they directly contribute to the objectives outlined in the APS. For the technical area of human rights, developing civil society capacity for advocacy and social mobilization and shaping and influencing public opinion and dialogue may be an element of the approach.

Increasing the Capacity of Civil Society Organizations to Support Mexico's Implementation of a New Criminal Justice System

61) Can work to increase public knowledge of justice sector reform include publication of books, holding of conferences, production of videos?

Yes.