



USAID | SOUTHERN AFRICA

From: Patrick Kollars, Regional Agreement Officer
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Subject: Request for Applications (RFA) Number 674-10-0051
Support for Integrated Service Delivery AMENDMENT TWO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The purpose of this amendment is to provide responses to questions raised under the Request for Application, and revise certain sections of the RFA.

I. Amend the Support for Service Delivery” Sector as follows:

1. On Page 20, include the following Illustrative Activities for Results I and Results II:
 - a) **RESULTS I –Increased access and utilization of services**
 - Explore decentralization of TB registration to health center facility level where diagnostic centers are available, and scale-up the introduction and use of community sputum collection points.
 - b) **RESULTS II – Enhanced quality**
 - Strengthen linkages between TB and HIV services at district level to improve active TB case finding and patient-centered treatment for both diseases.

2. On page 26, item 10. SSD related activities, include the following for Tuberculosis:

“The TB project that will focus on overall strengthening of the central National TB Program and improving and implementing comprehensive TB and TB/HIV control activities at national, zonal, district, health center and community levels.”

II. Section III,A.4.3, Technical Application, is amended to include the following Paragraph:

“f) The applicant shall provide a clear description of key monitoring and evaluation activities that it would undertake in order to monitor performance as well as measure key outcomes. There should be a clear link between the program’s higher level results and discrete activities which will guide selection of appropriate indicators that cover the whole spectrum from input to outcomes. Ensuring data quality – in terms of reliability, validity, and timeliness - should be at the core of the M&E system.

The applicant shall establish systems that promote timely utilization of information that is generated through the routine M&E systems and special studies/evaluations. Innovative and feasible strategies should be identified to gather, analyze and disseminate/use information for continuous program improvement and sharing of best practices. Cost effectiveness and efficiency, and the impact of integrated program implementation are some of the broader issues that the monitoring and evaluation plan should address. In line with the three ones principle, the applicant shall ensure the monitoring and evaluation is built in a way that strengthens the national M&E systems.”

III. Section IV, 1. Evaluation Criteria- Sector III, A. Technical Understanding and Approach- (HPSS) is amended to include the following:

- “- The technical approach reflects state-of-the art technical knowledge (including regarding methods for monitoring and evaluation), creativity, flexibility to the needs of the country and responsiveness to all technical areas and requirements.
- Applicant’s case study proposes an approach that fosters close collaboration with USAID projects and partners, particularly with SSD project, SCMS project, BCC project, as well as other relevant USAID partners active in Malawi.”

IV. Following are responses to questions raised. Only one response is provided for duplicative or similar Question and question variations are included in some cases

Q 1: We would like to request an extension of two weeks to ensure adequate attention to this RFA. Many key players in our application will be on TDY during the month of August.

Answer: The RFA closing date has been extend. Applications are due on September 13, 2010.

Q 2: On page 17 USAID writes that “...local activity costs for SBCC activities and the district level and below will be budgeted by the SSD partner” – how would USAID like to see these costs reflected in the SSD budget at the proposal phase?

Answer: Funding is included for the implementation of behavior change activities at community-level within the SSD project to ensure that one partner is responsible for implementaiton. Applicants should place notional activities and associated budgets for the activities in the SSD application. Exact activities will be negotiated during the work plan approval process. The approximate budget for BCC activities in year one is approximately \$200,000 and \$1,000,000 for each subsequent year, and is included in the SSD funding amounts listed in the solicitation.

Q 3: Please clarify how USAID interprets “substantial amount of time” on page 17 referring to the prime recipient’s level of effort on clinical mentoring of staff and addressing systemic issues; and coordinating the integration of the other two Sector Projects.

Answer: It is anticipated that each applicant will have a slightly different organizational structure. To that end, applicants should propose how they will support the above-referenced activities. The coordination of SBCC, HSS, and SSD is expected to be

done at all levels and will require time and attention by applicants. (See item #28 below).

Q 4: Please define the term “exploit” on page 19 under Result I illustrative activities related to primary health care opportunities in the delivery of an integrated MNCH platform.

Answer: No missed opportunity for quality health care provision to women, neonates, children.

Q 5: In the Sector 2 SBCC program description, pages 40-41, objective iii the RFA refers to capacity building, mentoring, and ongoing TA activities for ‘SSD’ and ‘SDPSSD’ partners. A) Please confirm that ‘SDPSSD’ refers to ‘service delivery point support for service delivery’ partners. If incorrect, please define as this is not included in the acronym list. B) Please indicate whether or not references to ‘SSD partners’ and ‘SDPSSD partners’ are, by definition, one in the same.

Answer: Yes to A and B.

Q 6: At the bottom of page 45/top of page 46, the RFA states that the SSD program will be responsible for covering local costs associated with the implementation of the SBCC package in addition to capacity building activities related to its implementation. Does this mean that the SBCC program will only be responsible for budgeting for the TA and TA travel associated with any and all capacity building conducted with SSD partners, and that the SSD program will budget for all other capacity building-related costs (e.g., logistics, materials, etc)?

Answer: No. The SBCC program will be responsible for the development and production costs for SBCC packages including capacity building activities conducted at SSD sites using SBCC budgets.

Q 7: On page 40 under Objective iii, the bullet fourth from the bottom, states, “Plan for and support training of community and facility based providers and key groups at the community level in the use of priority EHP SBCC packaged interventions.” The bullet second from the bottom states, “Provide mentoring assistance to organizations and providers in the field, where appropriate and in close collaboration with the SDPSSD partners as needed.” Is the SBCC program also expected to provide capacity building and mentoring assistance to appropriate local community and facility based organizations/ providers above and beyond those partnering with the SSD program? If so, which program would budget for the costs associated with this (i.e., SSD or SBCC program)?

Answer: The SBCC program would be responsible only for those partners identified by the SSD program. It is envisioned that the SBCC packaged interventions developed will be of interest to GOM and other development partners. They would need to leverage funds to reproduce additional packages for local community or facility use and conduct additional capacity building and mentoring assistance as requested.

Q 8: On page 61 of the RFA, paragraph 3 it states: The first year (June 2011 to September 2012) funding level is estimated at \$11,948,911 for all sectors.” On page 63 of the RFA, it states that the estimated start date is on or about January

01, 2011. For budget purposes, can USAID indicate the correct estimated start date, and clarify the timeframe in months for year one funding levels?

Answer: The estimated start date is March 1, 2011.

Q 9: **In reference to Data Table 2: Total Funding (Program/Cluster) on page 61 would the program activity have to reflect the funding level per health area (i.e. FP, MCH, Nutrition, Malaria)?**

Answer: Program activity does not have to reflect the funding level however the recipient will be required to reflect the funding level for each health area during post award administration.

Q 10: a) In reading the RFA's language about the PEPFAR 8% Rule and USAID/ Malawi's mention on page 61 of the RFA that "The actual funding level for the first year of the Sector Agreement is subject to the acceptance of a request for a waiver (limited to Year 1) of the Single-Partner Award Limitation (described below). Please note the 8% rule only applies to PEPFAR, HIV/ AIDS funding and not other accounts," we were wondering if USAID intended to give offerors any guidance on the probability of the waiver or guidance on how to budget for year one funding if such a waiver is not probable. This appears to be very important information for decisions on investing business development money on this important procurement in Malawi.

b) On Page 62 of the RFA, under the title Single Partner Award Limitation it states as follows: "PEPFAR publishes the single-partner funding limits annually. The current limit applicable to this RFA is \$2 million." The amount allocated to HIV under SSD (\$13.16M) would put the SSD prime partner above this annual cap even without counting any existing PEPFAR funding. Please confirm that the applicable cap should be 8%.

Answer: For FY 2010, the limit is not more than eight (8) percent of the Malawi's FY 2010 PEPFAR program funding (excluding U.S. Government management and staffing costs), which equals \$3,883,950. Since the majority of funds for the SSD project are from non-PEPFAR sources, we are hopeful that the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator would provide a waiver if needed

Q 11: **In the RFA No. 674-10-0051 for Support for Integrated Service Delivery USAID mentions that three cooperative agreements will be awarded for Sector I, II and III, respectively. May the same organization prime on more than one funding opportunity? Alternatively, could one organization prime on one bid and sub to another organization on other bids?**

Answer: Yes, an organization can be either a prime, or a sub to another organization on all or any of the three sectors. However, given the complexity of the programs, organizations are encouraged to diversify, which could include serving as a prime and a sub on different sectors.

Q 12: **a) Please provide more details on how to submit an application? Can an organizations like ours submit a proposal?**

b) How can an art and educational, non-profit, 501(c)(3), national organization submit an application as a non-profit charitable national organization with GRANT.GOV.

c) Can an organization currently receiving a U.S. Agency support on HIV/ AIDS as an association in Malawi submit an application for additional support for the broader health and policy systems strengthening.

Answer: All organizations are eligible to apply for the projects being competed. Refer to Section II. 4 for eligibility information, and Section III for application procedures.

Q 13: Based on the nature of the HPSS activities that focus on policy, advocacy and systems strengthening, which 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?

Answer: HPSS activities cost share requirement is revised to 7%. Partners are encouraged to cost share to the fullest extent possible.

Q 14: The solicitation provides two sets of guidelines for the format of the technical application: Section III.4.A (Pages 65-70) and Section IV. Which of the two guidelines should be followed?

Answer: The two sections are distinct. Section III provides the application and submission information. Section IV provides the application review process and evaluation criteria.

Q 15: Page 65 of the RFA states the Technical Application should be written “12 characters per inch.” Is Times New Roman 11 or 12pt acceptable?

Answer: The RFA should have stated 12 point font. Any font will be accepted, however it must be 12 point font or larger.

Q 16: Are pdf files acceptable for the electronic submission?

Answer: Electronic submissions are required in MS Word and MS Excel. For pages that will bear signatures PDF files will be accepted.

Q 17: Section III.4.c.ii (page 68) requests resumes in both the Personnel and Management Plan section of the technical narrative and the Annex. Please confirm that resumes can be provided only in the Annex and that description of qualifications and background can be included in the Personnel and Management Plan section.

Answer: Resumes are to be provided only in the annex.

Q 18: a) Is the ‘list of all programs’ referenced under Section III.4.d on page 69 the same as the list of the projects for which we submit past performance information sheets and that are identified in the technical proposal? Or is it a potentially distinct, more expansive list of projects from the past three years? If the list is distinct, please clarify what specific information should be included for each

program listed. If the list is the same as the projects for which past performance information sheets should be submitted, can applicants assume the list solely includes project names? Should applicants only include projects from the past 3 years in the past performance section or can highly relevant projects for more than 3 years be included as well?”

- b) Our organization has undertaken hundreds of programs in the last three years. Please clarify whether we are to describe all programs or only our programs related to scope of work of the Sector on which we are submitting a proposal. (Section II.4.A.3.d, page 69)**

Answer: No – the ‘list of all programs’ is not the same as the list of the projects. It is a separate list of projects from the past three years only and should include information in items i) through iii of Section III.4.d.

Q 19: When can applicants assume notification of the award? Page 70 of the RFA states “.forty-five (60) days after the date established as a deadline for receipt of applications.” Please clarify.

Answer: The RFA should have stated “sixty”. Applications are valid until advised otherwise.

Q 20: Is the RFA the exclusive way that USAID/Malawi will implement its programs for the three areas including Service delivery and systems strengthening?

Answer: Approximately 90% of USAID’s program budget is encapsulated in the RFA but it is not the exclusive manner that USAID will be programming its resources.

Q 21: Should experienced local organizations team exclusively with one applicant?

Answer: This is a business decision that the local organization must make.

Q 22: The MOH separates Mzimba North and Mzimba South into two separate districts, but the MOH is the only GOM office to do so. Could USAID clarify if the districts follow MOH delineations?

Answer: Please follow MOH delineations.

Q 23: We assume that graphics (figures) and tables are not included in the 20-page limit for the technical application and that tables may be presented in a font size smaller than 12 characters per inch. Please confirm this understanding.

Answer: Yes, tables are not included within the page limitation and font size doesn’t need to be standardized for tables.

Q 24: Page 68 requests that applicants “Include job descriptions and resumes of proposed key personnel in the narrative.” May these items be included in the annex instead, per page 70 (which asks that resumes appear in the annex)?

Answer: Resumes must be provided in the Annex, Job Description must be in the narrative.

Q 25: The district case study is first mentioned on page 44 in the context of the SBCC (Sector II) proposal. But it appears under the evaluation criteria for the SSD (Sector I) proposal. Is that an error?

Answer: Each application should include a case study, which will also be considered when evaluating the applicants proposal. Please note that the case study does not count towards the page limit but shouldn't be longer than five pages.

Q 26: Please clarify district preferences by USAID, if there are any.

Answer: In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, applicants should propose districts; however, it is preferable that three districts should be chosen per zone.

Q 27: Please clarify the level of support for the Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Advisor to the NMCP included under Result IV.

Answer: Full time staff member seconded to NMCP to support malaria Monitoring and Evaluation.

Q 28: a) Will local organizations and the GOM representatives participate in the MAG or is it strictly reserved for USAID-SSD Project implementing partners?

b) The RFA indicates that joint work planning will take place between Sectors I, II, III. Can USAID provide more information on how they see this joint work planning occurring.

Answer: The MAG will be comprised of staff from the MOH, USAID, and the prime partners. Each prime recipient will have a work plan. In addition, all project primes will meet to create a singular work plan to ensure close coordination and collaboration. Coordination and joint work planning will also take place through monthly meetings on the management group.

Q 29: Does USAID/Malawi expect the applicant to budget for supply-side performance based financing incentives?

Answer: Yes.

Q 30: Full procurement of LLINs under SSD could require a disproportionately high percentage of the SSD budget. As such, does USAID/Malawi expect SSD to a) contribute to the cost of procuring LLINs, b) work closely with LLIN sources but not pay for nets, or c) budget for the full procurement of LLINs, over the life of project?

Answer: Do not budget for nets. The applicant is expected to work closely with LLIN sources.

Q 31: Page 70 of the RFA requires "detailed annual budgets" and "Separate spread sheets for each of the three program years." Should this instead read "three program sectors"?

Answer: No. The applicant must submit a budget for each sector being applied for. The sector budget should be broken down by year, and should be for five years.

Q 32: **Page 70 of the RFA says “It is strongly preferred that these budgets include a breakdown of the costs allocated to any sub-recipient involved in the program, as well as the breakdown of the financial and in-kind contributions of all such organizations.” Is USAID asking for detailed information on the cost-share or in-kind contribution?**

Answer: Yes.

Q 33: **On page 72, #7, the RFA calls for separate cost estimates for the management of the program including program monitoring. Would it be sufficient to group such support costs together in the budget (for example – all such personnel staff subtotaled together)?**

Answer: No.

Q 34: **On page 72 of RFA #8 - are we to include this information in the budget narrative or as a stand alone document? Also, it states discuss the management information procedure you will employ – is this referring to financial management or program management?**

Answer: The information must be included in the narrative. The management information procedure is for financial management.

Q 35. **On page 66 of the RFA, applicants are asked to provide “the bottom line funding request from USAID” in the program abstract. This instruction seems to contradict the statement on page 70 that “The Cost Application must be completely separate from the applicant’s technical application.”**

Answer: Please submit, as requested, a budget figure in the abstract that represents the cost requested from USAID and a separate cost application, along with a detailed budget.

Q 36: **On page 67 under ii. Sub-agreements, what comprises a “proposed sub-recipient/sub-contractor?” Does this include illustrative local partners we name in the technical as potential TA or implementation partners, but do not name in the budget? (i.e., those with which a formal, committed partnership has not yet been established?).**

Answer: Yes.

Q 37: **The word "components" is used to describe various aspects of Sector III. Please clarify what is meant by "components detailed in the Program Description," in the second paragraph on page 67 of the RFA.**

Answer: Generally, components means program components, which for USAID Malawi will be the current RFA (which has three components) plus another two components, supply chain management and private sector/social marketing. However, please note within components, the same word may be used to signal technical pieces (nee components) of the overall program for that “arm” of the RFA.

Q 38: On page 67 under ii. Sub-agreements, the later part of the paragraph describes an ‘implementation plan,’ but it is unclear in what format the applicant is able to respond. It states, “Applications should describe in detail implementation plans related to the methodologies included in the project descriptions, showing the phasing or dates by which planned activities would be carried out as well as proposed indicators to assess the progress of the program.” While many of the elements bulleted under this statement will be addressed in the technical approach narrative, can a table/grid be used to address all of these elements together in a comprehensive format, and included as an annex?

Answer: Yes, all of the information should be pulled together in a draft workplan (also known as an implementation plan).

Q 39:

- a) The Application Format Guidelines and Assumptions requests offerers to discuss “Coordination with others’ previous experience,” yet there appears to be no evaluation criteria that correspond to this information. (Section II.4.A.3.a, page 67 and 80)
- b) There appear to be some discrepancies between the Application Format Guidelines and Assumptions and the Evaluation Criteria in Section IV. For example, there are very specific instructions regarding the implementation plan provided in the referenced section (page 67), yet there does not appear to be an evaluation criterion under Technical Approach for the Sector III solicitation, Health Policy and Systems Strengthening (HPSS), corresponding to the implementation plan. (Section II.4.A.3.a, Page 67 and 80)
- c) On page 65 of the RFA under Technical Application format the sections are laid out as A-E - A. Technical Approach/Intended Results; B. Program Management; C. Past Performance; D. Monitoring and Evaluation; and E. Gender Equity Plan – However the narrative that follows on the next few pages (pages 67-69), A-E are different. In that set, M&E is eliminated and there is a confusing new B called "coordination with others' previous experience." Could you please clarify what the sections for the technical narrative should be?

Answer: The technical application should be divided as stated - A through E. The “Coordination with others’ previous experience” will be factored into the overall technical approach as laid out in the section. (See items II, and III above)

Q 40: Please confirm that an acronym list will not count towards the page limit for the technical application.

Answer: Confirmed, it will not count toward the page limit.

Q 41:

- a) Sub-agreements: Could you please clarify the statement found on page 67 under ii. Sub-agreements, “Technical application information for proposed sub-recipients and/or sub-contractors should follow the same format as that submitted by the applicant”? What exactly does this mean in terms of the information and/or documentation that must be submitted for sub-recipients and sub-contractors named in the technical application?

b) Are Past Performance References required from subrecipients?

Answer: The role of the sub-recipient and/or sub-contractor should be described in full in the application. Documentation in the same format as that submitted by the applicant is required for subawards with whom an organization shall "team" or "partner" in the implementation or conduct of the program. Past Performance references must be submitted for such sub-awardees.

Q 42: Should the draft PMP be included in the 20 page proposal? (page 81)

Answer: No.

Q 43: How does the Mission envision this technical assistance to be different from the now-starting district-level CDC project entitled "HIV Leadership Development and Management Capacity Building"?

Answer: Please propose the technical assistance your application envisions providing. Please indicate how it is linked with the CDC project and partners.

Q 44: a) Is there a list of the districts in the zones? On-line, there are 27 districts noted in the South, North, Central areas.

b) Does USAID have some districts that it supports? I would like to know which districts are these?

Answer: There are 28 districts in Malawi. USAID works at the national level and at district level with some districts receiving more support than others. Applicants are encouraged to work with both Ministry and District officials in choosing districts.

Q 45: Please define "major subcontractors," as referenced in Section II.

Answer: Please note, this should read "subcontractors"

Q 46 Is budget summary by program cluster?

Answer: Yes.

Q 47: a) On page 100, the links to the assurances and certifications are non-working. Please publish revised links.

b) Should all subcontractors, major subcontractors, or no subcontractors also provide the Certifications listed under Page 72 of the RFA - Section III.4.B - 8, 10(a), 10(b), 10(c), 10(d), 11(a), 11(b), 11(c), 11(d), 11(e)?

Answer: Certifications are included as part of amendment two.

All other terms and conditions of the RFA remain unchanged and in full force and effect.