Solicitation # SOL-660-10-000006-Media Sector Development Program in the DRC

Note that the questions we have included in this Q&A have been inserted verbatim as they were received, only that we have disguised any reference to the company that submitted the question.

Questions from Potential Applications and Answers

Question 1

I have been reviewing the RFA and was hoping you would be able to ask a brief question regarding Cost Sharing.

Our company has been working diligently in rights-based Media Development in the DRC for years, with excellent results in not only developing the professional skills of the media sector there but also enabling local journalists to act as an agent of social change through training them on how to streamline human rights awareness into their day-to-day reporting.

Rights-media is a new category of media development created by our company – combining capacity building efforts with a specific communication objective. In our case, we build the capacity of local journalists to report more effectively on human rights, social justice and good governance issues. Rights-media provides local journalism practitioners with the skills to affect change on specific issues.

Rights-media bridges a sometimes contentious divide between two camps in the sector: traditional 'media development' proponents and 'communication for development' practitioners. The former of the two focuses on developing infrastructure and professional capacity of media professionals and outlets. The latter focuses on getting particular messages into the public domain through the media. Rights-media does both — it focuses on building capacity of local media outlets to effectively get messages to the general public.

While our company has the experience, local knowledge, innovative approach and capacity to successfully execute this USAID award, unfortunately at this point it would be unlikely for us to share 10-25% of the cost. I am wondering if you could provide any insight to the likelihood of an award being granted to an organization which would only be able to share roughly 1-2% of the cost.

Answer 1

As stated on page 10 of the RFA, "Cost sharing is encouraged of at least 10% - 25% **but not required**." Therefore the amount shared will not influence the evaluation of a company's proposal.

Question 2

I write in reference to the 28 April RFP for your Media Sector Development Program in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Our company has been active in Ituri, DRC since May 2005 and in North Kivu DRC since August 2009, and we have been working in the Central African Republic since 2008. Our project uses community and independent radio programing to foster awareness of rule of law and civic participation on national and international justice - all of our programming is interactive in nature and fosters civic interest and responsibility in particularly vulnerable communities. To enhance the effectiveness of our radio programming we also have a network of listening clubs in our target communities, we organize public meetings with high-level justice officials in target communities and we have produced two music CDs of songs written by local groups on the themes of human rights, rule of law and justice. We work in partnership with eleven community radios in the DRC, in Ituri and North Kivu.

The project would be a valuable model for players in your much larger initiative for media sector development because we are a success story in the DRC! While we are not working in the exact regions which you have prioritized, the same human rights, ongoing-conflict and pressure on independent media challenges exist in Ituri and North Kivus, and our ability to produce honest, interactive and popular programming, which gives voice to the priorities and concerns of our listeners, would serve as a viable model for a larger and more comprehensive Media Sector Development Program in Katanga, Maniema, South Kivu and Bandunu.

Would it be possible for us to participate in a larger umbrella partnership of NGOs in your Media Sector Development Program?

If not, is it possible for us to present a relatively small proposal to introduce our work to other media initiatives which will start in Katanga, Maniema, South Kivu and Bandundu under the USAID program?

Answer 2
As stated in the cover page of the RFA, "this is full and open competition" and any qualified U.S. and non U.S. organizations and institutions, including "partnerships or consortia" can apply.

Question 3

We hereby would like to have the following clarification as regards the RFA targeting the Media Sector Development in the DRC:

In Section C Program description - 1.Introduction (page 18), one can read:
"The USAID Mission to the DRC seeks applications from **U.S.-registered** organizations and/or consortiums to implement a three-year program to support the development of the media sector in the DRC".
One understands from this sentence that non US-registered organizations are not allowed to apply (as lead applicant).

However on the cover letter which is in principle less binding (second paragraph), one can read:
"USAID/EA is seeking applications from qualified **U.S. and non U.S.** organizations and institutions, in the form of partnerships or consortia that include DRC organizations..."
Here, one understands that non US-registered are allowed to apply, even as lead applicant.

Our organization, already managing a similar multi-donor fund in the DRC (as described in your RFA), is registered in France. In light of the above, we would like to know if we are eligible/allowed to apply to this RFA.

Answer 3

The RFA is open to **all qualified U.S. and non-U.S. organizations**; therefore your company would be eligible to apply for this RFA.

Question 4

I wanted to let you know that our company (an American company) will be applying for the RFP to do work in DCR. As you may know, we have a large French-to-Africa audience in DRC, a fully staffed International Media Training Center and the capacity to carry out the work. We will be looking to partner with appropriate organizations (the ____ and other) on aspects of the proposal.

I wanted to make sure there are no restrictions on our applying for the grant. We have worked with the REDSO in Nairobi on many other projects, most recently funding for Avian and Swine Influenza training for journalists. We also have a number of agreements with USAID, including for broadcasting and training in Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Mozambique.

Answer 4

See Answer 3

Question 5

Is it expected that the project will support the production and broadcast of radio programs that would reach a national audience (the 4 targeted provinces of the RFA and the 7 other provinces of the DRC)?

Answer 5

The program targets four provinces: Katanga, Maniema, South Kivu and Bandundu. As stated on page 18, "targeted interventions in Kinshasa will be considered where the offeror makes a compelling argument", with national level efforts focused on "the improvement of the legislative framework and enabling environment for media" (page 30).

Question 6

Should applications (including work plans and budgets) account for three or five years?

Answer 6

Applications should account for five years. The technical application should discuss proposed approaches for the core three years as well as the two one-year options. The cost proposal should include a budget for the core three years (with an annual breakdown) and two one-year options.

Question 7

On page 6, in the first paragraph of the sub-section titled “Technical Application Format,” it is stated that “Resumes, C.V.s and past performance reports *only* may be included in an annex. No letters of commitment are required.” Part H. of that same sub-section indicates that eight attachments are expected (i.e. “Overall Management Approach, Signed personnel statements, Resumes or CVs for proposed Key Personnel and their roles and responsibilities, Maps (if any), Letter of support from host governments, Past performance references, Sub-agreements, and Other attachments”). Please confirm which set of instructions governs limitations on attachments.

Answer 7

The technical application format is listed on pages 6-7 of the RFA. Sections A to F count towards the 30-page limit.

Question 8

Would USAID please provide further clarification on expectations for the M&E format, as discussed on page 8? What is meant by the sentence: “Evaluations will be implemented within catchment areas of assisted facilities to assess demand, access, and quality of services.” What is the relationship between the expectations on page 8 and the expectations stated on page 43, as follows: “The offeror should include a comprehensive Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) plan as part of its proposal?”

Answer 8
Section E on page 8 of the RFA is replaced with the following text:

The offeror should include a comprehensive Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) as part of its proposal. The PMP should clearly demonstrate how planned activities will contribute to the project goals and lead to the achievement of intermediate results. At a minimum it should include the required indicators listed in Section C.

Question 9

The technical evaluation criteria for monitoring and evaluation (page 41) refer to a sustainability plan. Should the sustainability plan be discussed as part of M&E and/or as part of the Program Description?

Answer 9

The technical approach should discuss how “the mix of proposed activities will contribute to the future sustainability and independence of assisted media outlets”.

Question 10

Page 7 states: "It is expected that each critical area of program focus will be represented by relevant technical expertise" and that the application "should also indicate the names, positions, titles and provide full resumes of important managerial and technical personnel who will be involved in program activity." Page 14 states: "it is envisaged that the Key Personnel positions will include the Chief of Party, Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, and Financial Management Specialist." Please confirm that Key Personnel (including names, CVs, etc.) should be limited to these three positions, and should not include additional positions relating to the technical areas, such as business management or the regulatory environment.

Answer 10

Evaluation criteria include the "strength of the qualifications, expertise and relevancy of proposed personnel" (page 40). As such, the proposal should include the information required on page 7.

Question 11

Discussion of the program description on page 8 states that a Management Plan must be included within the 20-page limit of the program description. Page 15 states that a detailed Management Approach should be included as an annex. Please confirm whether the Management Plan and the Management Approach should be the same and if it should be included as an annex, rather than within the 20-page limit of the program description.

Answer 11

The Management Plan and Management Approach are the same. An overview should be included in the 20-page limit of the program description, with a more detailed discussion of the management approach attached as Annex H.1.

Question 12

Should the work plan described on page 7 be included as part of the Program Description or may it be submitted as an annex?

Answer 12

An illustrative implementation plan should be included as an annex.

Question 13

While activities beginning on page 30 are suggested as illustrative, the RFA also states that "additional level of detail and activities are expected to be developed by the applicant." To what degree does this mean these activities, as well as the results listed, are expected?

Answer 13

Applicants are required to propose a set of activities that will lead to the achievement of the expected results listed in Section C. Activities listed in Section C are illustrative.