



Request for Information (RFI)

Posting Date: September 10, 2019

Response Due Date: October 15, 2019, (Dhaka time)

Request for Information (RFI) Number: 72038819RFI00017

Activity Title: "USAID Bangladesh Protibesh Activity"

Dear Partners:

This is a Request for Information (RFI) only as defined in FAR 15.201(e) to obtain information and stakeholder feedback is to get broad stakeholder and market feedback as to soundness and robustness of the conceptual design from interested organizations with relevant experience and capabilities.

BACKGROUND

Bangladesh's ecosystems and biodiversity have suffered severe degradation due to rapid economic growth, unplanned urbanization, severe pollution, weak environmental governance, major infrastructure projects, a lack of land use policies and territorial management plans, over-exploitation of natural resources. All of these factors, but not limited to, weakens the country's overall resilience, self-reliance and ability to achieve long-term sustainable development.

The purpose of this RFI is to offer the opportunity for interested organizations and individuals to provide recommendations on approaches to strengthen environmental management and governance at the local, regional, and national levels; improve ecosystem conservation; mitigate threats to biodiversity; and to promote sustainable natural resource management in Bangladesh.

The place of performance for the envisioned activity will be Bangladesh and length of the activity is five years. The estimated budget for any potential activity will be between \$15 and \$20 million dollars.

RFI FORMAT

All eligible and interested organizations are strongly encouraged to provide comments by the closing date and time noted on page 1. Respondents shall use only size 12 Times New Roman font or similar size typeset, 8.5 by 11 inch paper, and single-spaced pages for all narrative documents, with each page numbered consecutively, and must not exceed 5 (five) pages. If the respondent cares to include relevant reports, those reports may be included, preferably as embedded links. The submission must be in English. Please do not submit applications, proposals, or resumes as they will be discarded. This RFI is issued only and solely for information and planning purposes; and USAID reserves the right to use information provided by respondents for USAID's own purposes. All information provided will become the property of USAID, and will not be returned, released publically and treated as confidential.

Questions regarding this announcement will not be answered.

RFI SUBMISSION

Submission via email is required; phone calls or hard copy delivery will not be accepted. E-mail submissions shall be sent to: Contracting/Agreement Officer Kathlyn Bryant (kbryant@usaid.gov), and A&A Specialist Ahsan Rahman (marahman@usaid.gov) with the subject line, "Response to RFI No. 72038819RFI00017, USAID Bangladesh Protibesh Activity".

OTHER INFORMATION

This RFI provides prospective offerors/applicants with a fair opportunity to develop and submit competitive proposals/applications to USAID for a potential funding. Although the term "offeror/applicant" may be used in this RFI, no determination regarding choice of instrument has been made whether any follow-on announcement will be in the form of a Request for Proposals (RFP), indicating a contract vehicle, or a Request for Applications (RFA), indicating a cooperative agreement or grant. However, after USAID reviews and considers any responses, a decision will be made regarding whether USAID will request the selected offerors/applicants to submit a full proposal/application and how to proceed with a potential activity subject to fund availability and USAID priority.

Please note that release of this RFI in no way obligates USAID an award commitment on the part of USAID nor does it commit USAID to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation of responses to the RFI. Responses to this RFI are strictly voluntary and responding to this RFI will not give any advantage to any organization in any subsequent procurement. FAR Clause 52.215-3 REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OR SOLICITATION FOR PLANNING PURPOSES (OCT 1997) is attached and made part of this RFI.

Best Regards,



(Kathlyn Bryant)

Supervisory Contracting/Agreement Officer
USAID Bangladesh

52.215-3 Request for Information or Solicitation for Planning Purposes (Oct 1997)

(a) The Government does not intend to award a contract on the basis of this solicitation or to otherwise pay for the information solicited except as an allowable cost under other contracts as provided in subsection 31.205-18, Bid and proposal costs, of the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

(b) Although "proposal" and "offeror" are used in this Request for Information, your response will be treated as information only. It shall not be used as a proposal.

(c) This solicitation is issued for the purpose of: "Requesting Comments" to the concept for a new program.

Attachment A

Request for Information (RFI) USAID Bangladesh Environmental Governance Activity

The purpose of this RFI is to offer the opportunity for interested organizations and individuals to provide recommendations on approaches to strengthen environmental management and governance at the local, regional, and national levels; improve ecosystem conservation; mitigate threats to biodiversity; and to promote sustainable natural resource management in Bangladesh. This RFI is also intended to inform USAID about overall market dynamics and interests and capabilities of potential organizations and individuals active in the sector.

BACKGROUND

Rapid economic growth, unplanned urbanization, severe pollution, weak environmental governance, major infrastructure projects, a lack of land use policies and territorial management plans, over-exploitation of natural resources, and increasing climate vulnerabilities are some of the many forces that impact Bangladesh's natural systems. As a result, Bangladesh's ecosystems and biodiversity have suffered severe degradation, which weakens the country's overall resilience, self-reliance and ability to achieve long-term sustainable development.

This Activity will build upon USAID's past and current efforts to support co-management strategies to build communities' capacity to more effectively exercise management over natural resources. This Activity envisions broadening its co-management approach to include increased participation at the local, regional and district levels with the aim of more fully engaging local stakeholders and enhancing the sustainability of environmental conservation efforts.

USAID envisions providing technical assistance to improve ecosystem-based management in Bangladesh by enhancing good environmental governance practices in and around at least two key biodiversity areas. The initial target geographies would likely include areas in and around the Sundarbans Reserve Forest in Khulna Division and in and around the ecologically critical forest and wetland ecosystems in Sylhet Division.

The interventions under this activity have not been detailed, but principles such as supporting Bangladesh's journey to self-reliance, fostering a free, fair and transparent Indo-Pacific region, and promoting inclusive development are fundamental to all USAID programming in Bangladesh. It will target local government institutions located around key biodiversity areas while working in tandem with local organizations and civil society.

USAID has identified the following strategic objectives as areas of focus:

1. Strengthen environmental governance through an ecosystem-based management approach.
2. Address threats to biodiversity in and around targeted key biodiversity areas.
3. Advance viable incentives that promote sustainable natural resource management.

INFORMATION REQUESTED

USAID is specifically interested in feedback and comments on the following questions:

1. What do you believe are the most pressing threats to biodiversity in Bangladesh? What approaches should USAID use to mitigate these threats?
2. What strategies should USAID employ in order to strengthen environmental management and governance at the sub-national level in Bangladesh? What strategies should USAID pursue in order to strengthen environmental policy and institutions at the national level?
3. Is the co-management model, as currently articulated, sustainable and effective? If not, what steps can be taken to increase its effectiveness while promoting sustainability and self-reliance?
4. Please comment on this **Development Hypothesis**: *If environmental governance is strengthened through a participatory ecosystem-based management approach, and if key threats to biodiversity are addressed, and if viable incentives are advanced that promote sustainable natural resource management, then ecosystem conservation will be enhanced in key biodiversity areas of Bangladesh.*
5. Are there stakeholders that have not been sufficiently engaged in the past? If so, do you have recommendations on how they should be engaged?
6. Are the proposed objectives sufficient and strategic to strengthen ecosystem conservation in Bangladesh? Are there any objectives that you would suggest USAID consider changing, adding, or eliminating? Why?
7. What are examples of sustainable and scalable approaches that USAID could implement to reduce threats to biodiversity conservation in Bangladesh? What approaches to reduce threats to biodiversity conservation have been overlooked or discarded by development partners that should be revisited?
8. What constraints face sub-national governments when implementing sustainable natural resource management and biodiversity conservation programs?
9. How and where can USAID engage best with the private sector to advance biodiversity conservation in Bangladesh?
10. To what extent do you think alternative livelihoods and/or other economic incentives should be integrated into biodiversity conservation programs in Bangladesh? Why?

[[END OF REQUEST FOR INFORMATION 72038819RFI00017]]