AMENDMENT TO RFA-617-09-000005, SUSTAIN

Questions Received and USAID Answers:

1. **Chief of Party candidate is required to have a minimum of four years of overseas field experience. Could you please define "overseas field experience" more clearly? Does experience on the African continent count as overseas experience for purposes of this RFA?**

   USAID Response: For this RFA, the phrase "oversees field experience" is meant for US based applicants. For U.S. based organizations proposing US nationals for this position they should have worked in foreign or overseas countries for a minimum of four years doing relevant development work. .

2. **The Program Coordinator/Deputy Chief of Party is recommended to be an expatriate position for the first three years. The same applies to the Finance Director .What is USAID's definition of an expatriate? For instance, if someone is a national professional but has worked as an expatriate in another country for a number of years, does such person qualify to be an expatriate for purposes of this RFA?**

   USAID Response: No, for this RFA, an **expatriate** is a person qualified and with significant international experience in the area of expertise required and coming from a country and culture other than that of the persons' upbringing or residence (in this case Uganda).

3. **What is the logic behind the USAID recommendation for an expatriate position for the DCOP and Finance Director? Such arrangement can be disruptive to the project to switch staff in key positions mid-project and experts would represent a higher cost to the project.**

   USAID Response: Expatriates are not encumbered by local business cultures and practices and are expected to transfer best international organizational development skills to local staff through training, coaching and mentoring them to better manage complex funded projects with multiple funding streams. It is our anticipation that applicants will select a combination/configuration of staff that maximize benefits in this regard.

4. **Will an applicant lose points in the evaluation scoring (30% for personnel) if they do not take up USAID's recommendation to propose an expatriate for**

these two key positions? Or is USAID's recommendation merely something to consider with no scoring ramifications if not adopted?

USAID Response: It would not be wise to ignore USAID recommendations. The quality and caliber of the proposed personal will be a key consideration in scoring of applications.

5. **What proportions of the budget should be allocated for drug procurement, infrastructure including laboratory refurbishment? Does USAID have in mind a ballpark figure that it considers reasonable for such costs?**

   USAID Response: Applicants are expected to propose costs based on the RFA requirements and expected deliverables.

6. **Under Program Objectives, Approaches and Expected Results on page 21; the RFA mentions the procurement of ARVs, opportunistic infection drugs, reagents and consumables essential to ART. Does the term "drugs" in this RFA refer exclusively to ARVs or does the meaning extend to cover other drugs used for the comprehensive care of PLWA such as those for pain and managing the associated opportunistic infections?**

   USAID Response: The term drug refers to all the pharmaceutical products needed to ensure achievements of results under the RFA in line with USG regulations (FDA approved).

7. In Section II.1 Technical Understanding and Approach on page 30 of the RFA, it states as follows; "although this project is not expected to be a grants project," funding to regional and district hospitals "will be necessary" to expand services. The RFA further states "This activity will coordinate with the USAID contractor for Strengthening District Systems (SDS), which oversees all USAID grants to local government."

   i) Should applicants under this RFA assume monies for sub grants to expand services at RRH and district hospitals if needed will come from SDS? If not, what proportion of the overall budget of this project does USAID consider reasonable to sub grants? Could SUSTAIN offer small grants to local organizations for activities directly related to the SUSTAIN program or are the subgrants meant to be exclusively for Regional Referral Hospitals (RRH) and District Hospitals (DH)?

      USAID Response: There is no anticipation of sub-granting under this activity, however, if it becomes necessary to make any sub-grants, they would have to be justified and be pre-approved by USAID. Funding for all activities needed to achieve these results in this RFA should come from the SUSTAIN budget. SDS will fund activities of local governments falling outside the mandate of this RFA but considered essential and directly impacting the successful achievement of the RFA results.

ii) Who is the prime contractor on SDS?

USAID Response: The procurement of this activity is in progress; hence the prime contractor is yet to be determined.

8. On pages page 32-33, the RFA mentions; "Greater involvement of People with HIV/AIDS (GIPA) in Uganda." Does USAID considers it sufficient for SUSTAIN to work with PLHA organizations as collaborators on the chronic care model for HIV/AIDS care and treatment instead of making such organizations SUSTAIN partners?

USAID Response: Yes working with them is sufficient as long as they are involved in making key decisions and where possible in key positions. Please refer to the principles of GIPA/MIPA.

9. On page 20 of the RFA, it says, "SUSTAIN will provide care services for 120,000 ART and pre-ART patients." Can USAID clarify what they mean by this?

USAID Response: The 120,000 includes patients who are on ART and also patients who are enrolled on care but not yet on ART.

10. What advise does USAID offer regarding the proportion of pre-ART patients who become eligible for ART during the SUSTAIN program period?
USAID Response: The applicants are expected to propose strategies that will enhance sustained care and treatment for those already enrolled on ART and those who become eligible during program implementation.

11. Could USAID clarify if the 120,000 patients also include the 23,075 ART patients referred to on page 19 of the RFA?

USAID Response: Yes.

12. On page 19 of the RFA; It mentions, "At the end of the two years SUSTAIN will maintain approximately 23,075 patients on ART through services at the 11 RRHs and 13 DHs."

i) Would USAID clarify on what this means? Would services offered at the JCRC Regional Centers of Excellences (RCEs) located at some of the RRHs be sufficient to meet the requirements of the SUSTAIN RFA?

USAID Response: No. This RFA is about building the capacity of MoH, districts and facilities to provide HIV/AIDS services. Offering services at the JCRC Regional Centers of Excellences (RCEs) alone will not meet the RFA requirements.

ii) JCRC RCEs are considered part of the MoH capacity building. Would it be reasonable to maintain some of the patients at these RCEs (e.g. at JCRC Kampala, JCRC Kakira) so as to not congest RRHs and DHs or not to inconvenience patients who would have to travel long distances (e.g. from JCRC Kampala where they are in care to Masaka Hospital)? It is important to consider that JCRC acts as a tertiary referral center and some patients cannot be without such services.

USAID Response: Applicants are expected to propose approaches on how to accomplish the results outlined within given the current situation.

13. Page 7 indicates that an estimated $10 million is available for funding Year 1 until the project fully transitions from TREAT on September 30, 2010. Please clarify whether the estimated $10 million is for the entire period of Year 1 of the SUSTAIN project (approximately Feb. 1, 2010 – Jan. 31, 2011) or for that period of the SUSTAIN project that overlaps with the TREAT project (approx. Feb.1, 2010 – Sept. 30, 2010).

USAID Response: The estimated $10M year one budget is for entire first 12 months of project implementation which starts on/about Jan/Feb 2010**.**

14. Will any non-expendable property (furniture, equipment, vehicles, etc.) be transferred from the TREAT project to SUSTAIN? Additionally, will the remaining supplies of drugs from the TREAT program be transferred to SUSTAIN?

USAID Response: No. The working assumption is that current TREAT project non-expendable property will remain under care and custody of JCRC until a disposition plan is negotiated with JCRC at the end of the project. For this RFA, applicants are advised to budget for new NXP.

15. One of the Expected Program Results under Objective 1 is “ARVs, OI drugs, reagents and consumables provided”. Given that an alternative mechanism may be used for the procurement of these items, could USAID provide all offerors with an estimate for budget purposes to be used for this line item?

USAID Response: Applicants are expected to estimate the cost of achieving project deliverables, quantity and costs of products used in the project including the cost for ARVs, OIs, reagents and consumables.

16. Page 30 of the RFA on technical application guidelines indicates the applicant should propose a phased transition plan to submit for USAID approval post award. Please clarify whether a detailed transition plan is required as part of the application.

USAID Response: Applicants may use the tentative transition plan highlighted in annex two of the RFA for proposal writing. Then the successful applicant will work with the MoH and stakeholders to develop a more refined, detailed and thorough transition plan.

17. The technical application guidelines indicate that the application is limited to 30 pages. Please confirm that this page limit does not include the cover page, table of contents, list of acronyms, and data restriction pages.

USAID Response: The cover page, Table of contents, List of acronyms and other annextures shall not be included in the 30 page limit.

18. Under Budget Preparation and Submission Instructions page 37-38, USAID requires copies of the Applicant's financial reports for the previous 3-year period. Is this for all applicants or only those that have not worked with USAID before?

USAID Response: It is USAID's desire not to burden applicants with submission of numerous documents in the initial application. Accordingly, applicants will submit copies of the applicant's audited financial reports for the previous 3-year period **upon receiving a specific request from the Agreement Officer.**

19. Under Budget Preparation and Submission Instructions page 38, USAID requires a copy of the Applicant's NICRA if applicable. It then states "(This competition is restricted to local and Regional organizations (see cover letter)). A NICRA from such an organization would be unusual. However, if your organization has a NICRA, please submit it." The cover page states that local and international organizations are eligible to bid. Please revise the language in this section so that it is consistent with the cover page.

USAID Response: Paragraph (b) is re-stated as follows:

"b. NICRA if applicable. Note that non-US organizations may not have a NICRA with a US government agency which is required for to support recovery of indirect costs on US government contracts. Such organizations should propose all costs as Direct costs since without a NICRA they do not have a basis for charging indirect costs."