

**RFA-617-12-000002 USAID Northern Uganda– Health Integration To Enhance Services
(NU-HITES)**

Questions and Answers:

**NOTE: THE CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO
MARCH 16, 2012, 4pm EST (WASHINGTON DC)**

1. Would it be possible for one organization to apply alone as an agency, limiting its proposal to only some of the objectives outlined in the RFA in several districts in the Lango Sub-Region?

USAID Response: USAID anticipates receiving applications from firms and organization that fully address all RFA intended objectives.

2. Page 20 states that there is a “mandatory minimum cost share percentage of 10% of the total proposed USAID contribution to the program”. Does this mean that the total program budget will be \$55m, with USAID providing \$50m and a cost share to the value of \$5m, or is the total program budget \$50, with USAID providing \$45m and a cost share value of \$5m?

USAID Response: Cost share is 10% of the proposed total USAID funding-\$50M.

3. Also relating to cost-sharing, can you clarify what is permitted in cost shares. For example we assume that volunteer giving in kind is permitted, as is activities funded through other non-USAID programs?

*USAID Response: In-kind contributions are allowable as cost sharing in accordance with **OMB Circular A-110** and **22 CFR 226.23**. This includes things such as volunteer time; valuation of donated supplies, equipment, and other property; and, use of unrecovered indirect costs.*

4. Page 20 gives guidance on the technical application format including that it must not require magnification. Aside from the spirit of this instruction, are there specific guidelines to observe, such as not less than 12pt Times New Roman Font for example?

USAID Response: Not less than 11 pt Times New Roman or Arial.

5. Page 20 also sets the limit of the technical application at 30 pages, not including annexes. Are there any exceptions to this limit for certain items, e.g. cover pages, contents pages, dividers, or indeed graphs, charts or tables, that would not be contained in the annexes?

USAID Response: The cover page, table of contents, acronym list and dividers are not part of the 30 page limit for the technical application.

6. Page 22 refers to Annex V the representations and Certifications, Assurances, but does not give a page limit. Is there a specific page limit for this Annex?

USAID Response: No.

7. Is there a page limit for the cost application?

USAID Response: No. There is no page limit on the cost application, but USAID encourages applicants to make it reasonably in length.

8. Regarding the 30 page limit, can we include an executive summary? If yes, does this executive summary count against the 30?

USAID Response: An executive summary will count as part of the 30 page limit.

9. Can we include additional annexes other than those indicated in the RFA? In particular, if possible we would like to include an annex with links to and brief descriptions of tools referenced in our application.

USAID Response: Yes, applicants can include at least two additional annexes.

10. For organizations which do not have a NICRA, what, if any, other documentation is required to substantiate the organization's proposed indirect cost rate?

USAID Response: Organizations which do not have a NICRA (negotiated indirect cost agreement) may propose an indirect costs if these costs can be verified through approved audits. http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a122_2004/ The principles outlined in this Circular A-122 provide guidance regarding indirect cost rates.

11. On page 25, Section V, Application Review Information, the Overview states that “the criteria by which the Grant Application will be assessed are as follows, in descending order of importance...” There are four Technical Criteria listed (Technical Approach, Institutional Capability, Key Personnel and Staffing and Past Performance). However, there is no scoring range indicating *relative importance*, nor are points given for any of the selection criteria. If possible, please allocate points for the evaluation criteria.

USAID Response: The information provided in the solicitation is in accordance with ADS 303.3.6.3.

12. On page 19 of the RFA, USAID states that it “encourages applications from potential new partners.” How does USAID define “new partners?”

USAID Response: New partners are firms and organizations that have not held any prior direct award from USAID.

13. Would USAID accept a cost share budget by major line items rather than detailed cost share budget indicated by attachment J of the RFA?

USAID Response: Cost share shall be present as requested in the RFA.

14. Please confirm if there are weighted points assigned to the evaluation criteria detailed on page 25, and clarify what those points are for: 1) Technical Approach; 2) Institutional Capability, 3) Key Personnel and Staffing, and 4) Past Performance.

USAID Response: Refer to response for question no. 12

15. The RFA states that Annex V of the Technical Application will include the applicant's Representations and Certification, Assurances. Typically these documents would be included as part of the Cost Application. Would USAID consider revising these instructions and include these documents in the Cost Application?

USAID Response: Applicants should submit Annex V as requested by the RFA.

16. Please confirm if the applicant must use the position titles listed in the RFA on page 14?

USAID Response: While applicants can propose alternate titles, USAID expectations and position contents shall remain the same.

17. In Section IV.3 of the RFA (pages 21-22), there are six allowable annexes listed: CVs for Key Personnel; Draft Implementation Plan; Draft Performance Management Plan; Past Performance References and Information; Representations and Certifications, Assurances; and Sustainability Plan. Would USAID consider additional annexes such as Letters of Support from local organizations, Letters of Collaboration from partners and Letters of Commitment from personnel?

USAID Response: Refer to response for question no. 10

18. Pg 18 - The RFA states that recipients will need to obtain USAID approval of subrecipients. It is our understanding that USAID's substantial involvement policy restricts USAID's involvement with subawards to a) approving the transfer of activities to a third party and b) approving substantive provisions of the subawards. Will you please provide clarification on the necessity for prior approval of subrecipients rather than the typical prior approval for transferring of work and/or substantial clauses of the agreements?

USAID Response: Subrecipients presented by the applicant and approved by the Agreement Officer as part of the final approved budget will not require further USAID approval. But

Subrecipients identified by the recipient after award shall require USAID approval as part of substantial involvement. Please reference ADS 303.3.11 – Elements of Substantial Involvement - (c) (2).

19. Pg 27 - An implementation plan is due 30 days from the effective date of the award. Would It be possible to change the language from "effective" to "executed" as there is the Possibility of a delay in signing agreements from effective date, which could affect the recipients ability to comply with this due date based on the "effective" date.

USAID Response: The effective date of award is the date of the Agreement Officer's Signature. Therefore, there is no delay envisioned as a result of this date.

20. Pg 28 - The RFA includes a requirement for recipients to include accruals for the following quarter in the current quarter or period. This appears to be a new requirement and does not appear that it should be part of the SF-425. Will you please provide clarification? Would it be possible to have the information be provided as part of the accrual report that is due before end of quarter?

USAID Response: SF425 section 7 provides for either cash or accrual basis of accounting. This enables the AOR to plan and monitor the project fund (pipeline).

21. Can you clarify if applicants should propose to provide the wrap around services described under Sub-objective 1.2 Expected outcome: "Increased access of vulnerable groups and families to prevention, care and treatment as well as wrap around services..." (page 8) or if the project is only expected to provide increased access through activities such as improved referral and collaboration mechanisms?

USAID Response: Only through activities such as improved referral and collaboration mechanisms are expected. Additional wrap-around activities may however be proposed.

22. Will the donor provide funds for direct implementation of wraparound services (ref. Sub-objective 1.2 bullet 3, Pg. 8)?

USAID Response: Please refer to response in No.21. And any proposed activities should be included in the budget.

23. On page 9 it states "the recipient will not be expected to procure any of the following commodities, as they will be provided through existing USAID procurement mechanisms: ARVs and OI drugs, contraceptive commodities, ACTs and RDTs, bed-nets, and Ready to Use therapeutic foods (RUTF)" NU-HITES will, we understand, have a role in managing the supply chains for these products, but are we right to assume that we don't accord any budget lines for purchasing these commodities? Where will commodities be delivered to? Should we assume all supply chain costs from a specific location (Kampala for example)?

USAID Response:

Supply chain management role: NU-HITES will be expected to fund and oversee the quality implementation of the roll-out of the MOH district level supply chain strengthening package (called SPARS -Supervision, Performance Assessment and Recognition Strategy) in districts where the package is not already being supported by another USAID partner.

Commodity procurement: No budget lines for purchasing of the commodities listed above are required. In addition to the items listed, USAID also procures all male circumcision kits and related pharmaceutical products for IPs.

Transport/distribution costs: No transport/distribution costs need to be assumed by the IP except for pick-up and distribution of male circumcision kits and related pharmaceuticals, which are delivered to a site in Kampala.

Presidential Malaria Initiative (PMI) will procure long lasting insecticide treated nets for NU-HITES districts and the implementing partner has to transport them from Kampala warehouse to intended locations.

24. Can you clarify the statement on Page 9 that "Community-level nutrition-related activities will be covered by the Community Connector and SCORE programs. The Recipient will need to closely align any proposed nutrition activities, particularly community-level activities in those districts with these implementing partners...." Should applicants propose community-level nutrition activities or leave them to CC and SCORE? There appear to be two districts (Apac and Amolatar) which are not covered by CC and SCORE. Should applicants propose community-level nutrition activities only in these districts?

USAID Response: Where SCORE and CC exist, NU-HITES will need to work with these partners in a complementary manner; while SCORE and CC will largely be responsible for community level nutrition activities there are likely to be areas of considerable overlap and linkage which all the partners need to map out in order to enhance efficiency and coordination. Where SCORE and CC do not exist (Apac and Amolatar) NU-HITES will be expected to propose appropriate community level nutrition activities likely to result in the expected outcomes spelt out under Result 1.

25. On page 13 the RFA outlines the important role that private provider and public/private partnerships will play. However does USAID have a particular definition of what an acceptable private provider is? There are some providers who are registered with the local health authorities, and there are others who are not. Does USAID have particular expectations about what are legitimate private providers to work with?

USAID Response: The private sector in the Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP) is divided three categories; Traditional Practitioners, Non Governmental Organization (NGOs) and Private Health Care Providers. Staff at private facilities should have licenses from their respective

professional councils like the Uganda Medical and Dental Council for doctors and dentists, Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council, etc. Private providers providing ART services should be accredited by MOH.

26. On pg. 18, estimated funding, it states that the total estimated budget for this RFA is \$50 million, subject to the availability of funds. The approximate breakdown for funding by program area is as follows: HIV/AIDS (PEPFAR) – 60%; TB - 8%, Malaria (PMI) – 8%; MCH –7%; RH/FP – 7%; Nutrition – 10%. Is there an expectation that the Level of Effort for program activities under the grant would be broken out in similar percentages?

USAID Response: Results would be expected in approximately similar percentages. The LOE should be prepared keeping the expected results in mind.

27. On page 21 the RFA outlines the requirement for a “draft implementation plan for all activities through the end of the current fiscal year” – are we correct to assume that this is fiscal year April 2012 – March 2013.

USAID Response: The US Government Fiscal year cycle runs from October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012

28. On page 41, details of coverage for the large/relevant USAID projects with district-level implementation is noted to not be an exhaustive list. Will USAID provide additional information on coverage of its other Acholi and Lango-funded projects beyond the question and answer period if needed by applicants for planning purposes?

USAID Response: All relevant projects have been mentioned, and information provided is felt to be sufficient for purpose of developing the application.

29. Linked to this, can USAID direct proposers to any sources of information relating to the specific programs that a successful proposal must link up with? For example, are there published outcome reports from NUMAT, or from the relevant projects listed on page 41, that will allow proposers to ensure that their program aligns efficiently with these programs and doesn't duplicate existing efforts?

USAID Response: The recipient should refer to the mid-term evaluation of NUMAT referenced in C.9. Reports from other relevant projects may also be found at the USAID DEC website.

30. Page 21 of the RFA indicates that we should include a "draft implementation plan for all activities through the end of the current fiscal year...". Please confirm that "through the end of the current fiscal year" means April through September 2012.

USAID Response: Please refer to response for question no. 27.

31. On page 9 of the RFA, USAID provides a list of commodities for which the project will not be responsible for procuring. HIV test kits and laboratory reagents are not included on this list. Should the project plan to support direct procurement of these commodities or will they work with GOU and USAID to ensure adequate supply of these products as well?

USAID Response: The Partner shall not be expected to procure HIV test kits or Lab reagents. For more information, please refer to #23.

32. On page 9 of the RFA, USAID refers to the Enhanced Enabling Environment project “currently in design.” When will this project be awarded, and is there a summary available?

The solicitation for this program is anticipated to be issued o/a 3rd quarter FY2012.

33. On pages 43 of the RFA, USAID notes “Please show costs for implementing the HRH Package separately in budget proposal.” Similarly, there are notes on pages 46 and 48 saying “please show costs for implementing the District Support Package separately in budget proposal.” Is the recipient expected to deliver an identical or similar HRH and District Support Packages as are currently being implemented by other current USAID programs? If so, is it possible for USAID to share the cost of the current packages and implementation details?

USAID Response: The expectation is that the activities enumerated in the package be implemented. We expect the recipient to show innovation and creativity in proposing a budget to implement these activities. Sharing a budget would be counterproductive to this expectation.

34. Regarding Annex IV Past Performance References and Information on page 21 of the RFA, are PPRs for the last three years requested for the prime applicant only, or for consortium members as well?

USAID Response: Past Performance References are should be submitted by the prime, and the consortium members who are identified in the application.

35. “Improved Literacy” is a Sub-IR 3.1.1.1 in DO3, but is not explicitly mentioned in the text of the RFA. Please clarify if USAID expects that the NU-HITES project will include elements to address literacy.

USAID Response: This project (NU-HITES) is not expected to address literacy.

36. On page 9 of the RFA, USAID states “The Recipient will not be expected to procure any of the following commodities as they will be provided through existing USAID procurement mechanisms...” Will the recipient be permitted to purchase small quantities these types of commodities to address stock gaps?

USAID Response: The recipient is not expected to procure commodities on a regular basis. The recipient may be permitted to purchase small quantities of commodities as a buffer in case

of stock-outs. This would need to be approved by the USAID AOR. For further information please refer to responses for question No. 23 and No. 31.

37. The RFA on page 40 states that “UCP implements activities in all target districts”, while the table on page 41 shows UCP is present in only 9 districts. Is UCP present in all target districts or only 9? If UCP implements activities in all target districts, should we expect UCP technical assistance?

USAID Response: UCP is a national project on Human Resources for Health (HRH) and is not continuously present in any of the districts. However UCP has significant interventions/activities in the 9 districts and some activities in all the districts. Technical assistance on the implementation of HRH related activities shall be provided by UCP in order to ensure this project is implemented according to national guidelines, plans and priorities.

38. Please clarify the relevant program management and supervisory experience requirement for the NU-HITES Chief of Party stated on page 14. Does this requirement mean the Chief of Party must have a) a minimum of 15 years of relevant program management experience *plus* 15 years of supervisory experience or b) combined 15 years of relevant program management experience and supervisory level experience, e.g., 7 years of program management experience, 8 years of supervisory experience?

USAID Response: USAID refers to combined experience that clearly demonstrates his/her level of competence for the Job.

39. On p. 10 of the RFA, it reads, “Where an established UHMG franchised (Good Life) clinic exists, the Recipient will incorporate it into its HCT strategy for the area.” Please clarify if the Recipient will focus on the HCT or Behavior Change strategy.

USAID Response: The focus of the Recipient's collaboration with UHMG is expected to be around HCT and promoting socially-marketed products.

40. When does USAID expect the “Strengthening Governance, Accountability, Participation and Performance (GAPP)” project to be awarded?

USAID Response: The anticipated award date for GAPP is o/a July 2012. GAPP solicitation no is SOL-617-12-000011.

41. On p. 8 of the RFA, Sub-objective 1.2, the third outcome lists voluntary family planning, child health and nutrition as wrap around services. In other places in the RFA, these services are listed as part of the integrated package of quality health services expected of the recipient. Please clarify.

USAID Response: Nutrition interventions (and child health too) are broad; there are those that are best delivered as part of the integrated package within the health facility setting e.g. ENA, NACS/IMAM. There are also those that are best delivered within communities and households e.g. HH food security, WASH/hygiene, referrals for livelihood support, nutritional support, etc. Recipients are expected to identify appropriate delivery mechanisms for the different types of interventions in a way that maximizes outcomes and taking into consideration available resources.

42. On p. 2 of the RFA, it states that "the purpose of NU-HITES is to continue the technical assistance and capacity development support similar to that provided under NUMAT". Does this mean NU-HITES should cover the same disease-focused targets of the NUMAT project, with the addition of HSS and other PHC targets? If so, does USAID expect NU-HITES to continue funding existing disease-focused activities at the NUMAT level?

USAID Response: The expectation is for the recipient to suggest how best to allocate resources to address the stated health challenges in an integrated fashion. Targets should be set based, among other things, on the proposed resource allocation.

43. On p. 18 of the RFA, it states, "The approximate breakdown for funding by program area is as follows: HIV/AIDS (PEPFAR) – 60%; TB - 8%, Malaria (PMI) – 8%; MCH – 7%; RH/FP – 7%; Nutrition – 10%." Will the Recipient be required to report financials by program area?

USAID Response: Refer to response in No.26

44. On p. 18 of the RFA, the funding breakdown for NU-HITES indicates 60% of funds will come from PEPFAR. Does this mean 60% of the project effort should be focused on HIV/AIDS?

USAID Response: Refer to response in No.26

45. Page 9 of the RFA states that the recipient will not be expected to procure commodities (ARVs, OI drugs, contraceptive commodities, ACTs and RCTs, bed-nets, and RUTF) provided through existing procurement mechanisms: Does this include condoms, Medical Male Circumcision Kits, and laboratory reagents?

USAID Response: Refer to response in No.23 and 36

46. Please clarify the two Notes found on pages 46 and 48, *Note: Please show costs for Implementing District Support Package separately in budget proposal.* Are these meant as instructions to the Applicant? Would USAID please give clear guidance on its expectations for these notes as related to the Supply Chain Management Strengthening Package, and the District Support Package?

USAID Response: A separate section in the budget proposal for each of these packages would be appropriate for this purpose, using the same format in presentation as for the overall budget.

47. Please confirm the 5 page limit assigned to the Draft Performance Monitoring Plan in Annex III, as discussed on page 21, is for the narrative description only and that a table of illustrative indicators, planned data sources, data collection and calculation methods, baseline information and annual targets linked to proposed activities may be in addition and separate.

USAID Response: Annexed materials are not included in the page limit.

48. In Attachment E “District HRH Package and Expected Role of District Implementing Partners,” one of the Expected Roles of District based IPs is to “work with districts to improved infrastructure equipment and supplies at the health facility.” (pg 43) Would USAID place elaborate on the types of activities this is meant to entail and whether any construction would be included?

USAID Response: This does not entail major infrastructure / construction, however minor rehabilitation may be accommodated, such as necessary equipment and supplies related to work place improvement and performance improvement of the health workers in the districts.

49. Can you please provide the most recent DO3 PMP referenced in the RFA? If this is not possible, please provide a results framework.

USAID Response: The DO3 Results Framework is included in Annex 1. The Draft DO3 PMP is found in attachment H-Reference Documents List.

50. On page 14, 1.6 Key Personnel, it states that “The Recipient shall propose up to five Key Personnel under this Cooperative Agreement, including the Chief of Party, the Monitoring and Evaluation manager, the Finance Manager, and experts in the key technical areas of the Cooperative Agreement. Can the Recipient propose fewer than five, recognizing that the three positions listed will require AOR approval for any changes?

USAID Response: Less than 5 key personnel can be proposed by the applicant. AOR approval shall be required for the approved key positions. For this RFA, these may range between 3 to 5 proposed by the Partner.

51. On page 21 of the RFA, USAID states that “the technical application must include your approach to achieving environmental compliance and management,” including a budget for implementing the environmental compliance implementation and monitoring. Is this to be included in the 30 pages as part of the Technical Approach or is it an Annex?

USAID Response: This may be an annex but referenced in main document (application).