

SOL-OAA-13-000005 FP/RH ISSUE

Questions and Answers

Question 1. Does the cover page count toward the 40-page limit for the technical narrative?

Answer: No.

Question 2. On P. 6, the RFA provides a clear definition of the term, “implementation science.” The term, “implementation research” immediately follows as one activity to generate knowledge. For purposes of this award, what is your definition of “implementation research?”

Answer: Implementation research is defined as an evolving agenda of novel research to study implementation, evaluate impact, and to improve scale-up processes. Elements of implementation research include social science research, operations research, program research, and evaluation studies.

Question 3. On p. 11, the RFA states that the goal of the USAID/PRH framework is “to enable countries to meet the family planning needs of their people”; the Strategic Objective is “to advance and support voluntary family planning and reproductive health programs worldwide”. For purposes of addressing the sub IRs, does your definition of RH include MCH/ HIV/STI?

Answer: No. The definition of RH for the ISSUE FP/RH Project includes MCH/HIV/STI only as they relate to family planning (FP) and/or integration with FP.

Question 4. On page 21, it reads: “Applicants should include an illustrative work plan for core funding for the first year and an illustrative project monitoring plan (PMP) with indicators to measure the effectiveness of activities.” Are the proposed first year work plan and PMP to be contained in the 40-page limit of the technical narrative?

Answer: The illustrative project monitoring plan (PMP) should be included within the 40 pages. The illustrative work plan may be included as an annex.

Question 5. On Pg. 23, it states that the Implementation Science /Knowledge Translation Specialist should, among other skills, have “at least five years of leading complex FP/RH service delivery and/or Implementation Science projects in developing countries.” Does this mean the specialist has to have led the projects while based in developing countries?

Answer: No, the specialist does not need to have been resident in developing countries while leading the projects. However, the specialist should have extensive international experience including multiple years of in-country FP/RH research and service delivery experience based in a developing country/ies.

Question 6. On P. 26 under Branding/Marking requirements, it says a branding and marketing plan will be developed after a presumptive awardee has been selected. Yet, in a bullet on P. 22 under Management Plan, the proposal is to include a “description of how the Project will be branded so that it will be identified as distinct/separate from the prime.” Is a branding/marketing plan to be developed as part of our technical proposal?

Answer: The Branding Strategy and Marking Plan will be required of the Apparently Successful Applicant, at a later date. Neither has to be included in the technical application. Please see ADS 320.3.3 for further guidance.

Question 7. The RFA indicates that Annex 6 - Initial Environmental Examination and Environmental Determination will be provided through a RFA amendment, within a few days. What is its status?

Answer: Please see the Initial Environmental Examination, included in this amendment.

Question 8. On page 39 of the RFA, it says the cost application must include a copy of the document that specifies the legal relationship between the parties (if a consortium is being established). Can this document be a teaming agreement, a letter of support, or a memorandum of understanding?

Answer: Yes

Question 9. Given the complexity of this RFA and change in scope from the previous project, we would like to ask for an extension of the closing date.

Answer: No. An extension of the closing date is not possible.

Question 10. Please provide some clarity on the anticipated split between core and field support funds for this project. When should we project field support beginning?

Answer: The split between core and field support funding is only notional and is based on past experience of similar projects. Field support funding is not guaranteed and will vary based on a particular Mission’s needs, priorities and available resources. It will also depend on the awardee’s ability

to work with Missions, the value of the project to a particular Mission's program, and the awardee's existing experience, capacity and local relationships in a particular country.

Question 11. Please provide guidance on the detail of budgeting required over the 10 year period of award given that the actual work is fairly undefined at this point, especially in the out years of the project.

Answer: Unfortunately, additional information/guidance cannot be provided regarding the budget submission. Applicants should provide cost estimates that detail the funding required to achieve the program, for the 10 year period.

Question 12. Page 21 of the RFA states, "For long-term planning, applicants can approximate that one-third of all funds in the out years will come from field support, given a recipient's leveraging efforts with USAID Missions over the life of the project". Should applicants assume that 2/3, or \$100 million, of the ceiling will be allocated as core funds over 10 years? Should applicants therefore provide detailed budgets for the entire 10 year project with two-thirds of funds budgeted as core support?

Answer: No. The \$150 million is the **estimated** ceiling for this project, and it should not be assumed to be the actual budget. Annual project funding will depend on the availability of funds and approval of the annual work plan. The project must provide cost estimates that detail the funding required to achieve the program. See also question #10 for additional information on field support funding.

Question 13. Please define what objectives or sub-objectives will be funded by core funds.

Answer: All objectives may be funded by both core and field support funds.

Question 14. Page 20 of the RFA says that applicants outline two family planning scenarios and states that applicants must "estimate resource requirements" needed to implement the scenario activities. Should the budgets for these scenarios be included in the cost application? If so, are these two scenarios meant to be budgeted as part of core funds or illustrative field support activities? If detailed budgets for scenarios 1 and 2 are requested in the cost application, can USAID provide a budget ceiling and time period for each?

Answer: No, budgets for the scenarios do not specifically need to be included and/or detailed in the cost application. Responses to the scenarios will be used to assess an applicant's capacity to develop and articulate a technically sound, realistic plan that is responsive to the context in a particular country and/or set of countries. The estimated resource requirements for each of the scenarios may be a lump sum listed within the application and applicants do not need to describe funding sources.

Question 15. Are illustrative budgets for field support activities required for inclusion in the cost proposal? If so, should they be budgeted separately from the core support budget?

Answer: No, they are not required.

Question 16. In completing the SF 424 documents, should applicants only include the amount budgeted in the core budget, or should amounts budgeted for illustrative field support activities be included as well?

Answer: Applicants should include the total funding amounts (core & field support) when completing the SF 424 form.

Question 17. Page 23 of the RFA states “resumes for these non-key program staff will be limited to four pages.” Does this mean 4 pages per staff member? What is the page limit on the resumes for key personnel?

Answer: No, the limit is 4 pages total for non-key staff. There is no page limit for the resumes of key personnel and their resumes may be included as attachments.

Question 18. On Page 22 of the RFA, applicants are asked to provide a “description of the how the project will be branded so that it will be identified as distinct from the prime organization.” Can USAID please confirm that neither a Branding Strategy nor Marking Plan are required to be submitted as part of the application, but rather the Apparently Successful Applicant will be asked for these documents at a later date.

Answer: Yes, the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan will be required of the Apparently Successful Applicant, at a later date. Neither has to be included in the application. Please see ADS 320.3.3 for further guidance on See also question #6.

Question 19. A cost matrix is referenced on page 39 of the RFA. Could USAID kindly clarify what the cost matrix refers to? Is this the detailed budget that applicants must submit?

Answer: Yes, the cost matrix is the detailed budget.

Question 20. Is the Performance Monitoring Plan meant to be included in the body of the technical application, and therefore count toward the 40-page limit, or can it be included as an attachment?

Answer: See answer to question #4.

Question 21. Is the illustrative first year workplan, referenced on page 21 of the RFA, meant to be included in the body of the technical application, or can it be included as an attachment?

Answer: See answer to question #4.

Question 22. Is the skills matrix referenced on page 24 of the RFA meant to be included in the body of the technical application, or can it be included as an attachment?

Answer: The skills matrix can be included as an attachment.

Question 23. Page 39 states that cost share can come from various sources but “not other USG funding sources”. Page 40 states that “potential contributions of non-USAID sources to this cooperative agreement as cost share” should be described in the budget narrative. Does this mean that we can include other USG sources of funds as cost share as long as they are not USAID?

Answer: As stated in the RFA, cost share can come from various sources, but **not** other USG funding sources.

Question 24. As part of sub-objective 1, applicants are required to provide a list of priority research questions that they propose to answer under the ISSUE FP/RH program and identify country contexts in which research will be conducted. Can ISSUE resources be devoted to funding implementation of interventions, as needed, to answer these research questions? Or must ISSUE resources be only used for research and evaluation of activities funded by others?

Answer: These decisions will be made on a case by case basis. USAID’s preference is for the ISSUE project’s core funding to complement existing interventions implemented through other projects and/or sources and to focus ISSUE core funding on research, evaluation and technical assistance. However, some critically important and/or novel research questions and associated interventions may be funded with core.

Question 25. Part of sub-objective 3 is devoted to “providing technical assistance to monitor and evaluate scale-up of evidence-based practices in delivery programs at global, regional, country levels”. Under this illustrative activity, would ISSUE FP/RH funds be available for use to support actual scale-up of the evidence based practice(s), or must ISSUE FP/RH funding be devoted only to the research/evaluation component?

Answer: The ISSUE project’s core funding will remain focused on research, monitoring, evaluation and technical assistance for scale up. However, field support funding may be used to support scale up of evidence-based practice(s) and interventions.

Question 26. Page 16 – Elements of Substantial Involvement, item 3 includes concurrence on selection of subaward recipients and/or the substantive provisions of the sub-awards. Please clarify, pursuant to 22 CFR 226 why USAID concurrence on selection of subawards and/or substantive provisions of the subaward is required. 22 CFR 226.25 (c) 8 states that a recipient is required to seek prior approval for subawards not described in the application and funded in the approved budget. It does not authorize AID to concur on the selection or subrecipients nor the clauses of the executed subaward document executed between the recipient and subrecipient.

Answer: In accordance with 22 CFR 226.25, (c) 8, which states “For non-construction awards, recipients shall request prior approvals from the USAID Agreement Officer for one or more of the following program or budget related reasons:

8. Unless described in the application and funded in the approved budget of the award, the subaward, transfer or contracting out of any work under an award. This provision does not apply to the purchase of supplies, material, equipment or general support services.

Therefore, USAID must approve the selection of **all** sub-awards, at time of award and for the duration of the award.

Question 27. Please confirm that the cover page is not included as part of the 40 page Technical Application.

Answer: See answer to question #1.

Question 28. Page 24, 2nd paragraph states: “The section on personal capacity in the main body of the application will include brief statements of major duties, experience, academic background and resumes for each key personnel and other senior program staff proposed. Resumes for key personnel, other senior program staff...should be included in the attachments.” Please clarify where resumes of key

staff and other senior program staff are to be included. If the resumes are included in the main body of the application, will they count as part of the 40 pages limit?

Answer: See answer to question #17. Please include brief summary statements of their key skills within the main body of the application. The resumes of key personnel may be included as attachments.

Question 29. Page 21: Is the PMP just for Year 1 or for project duration?

Answer: The illustrative PMP should be for the project duration.

Question 30. What total amount of core funds from USAID will be available in the first year?

Answer: Unfortunately, at this time detailed funding information cannot be provided.

Question 31. Do charts and diagrams (e.g. org chart) included in the main body of the proposal count toward the 40 page total?

Answer: Yes.