



November 22, 2011

REFERENCE: Request for Application No. RFA-168-12-000001, Anti-Corruption Civic Organizations' Unified Network (ACCOUNT)

SUBJECT: Amendment No. 02

Dear Applicants:

The purposes of Amendment No. 02 are to:

- Respond to questions posed to USAID in writing or orally during the Bidders' Conference held in Sarajevo on November 17, 2011;
- Correct an error on the cover page of the RFA.

I. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Can consortia apply for an award under this RFA?

A consortium may apply under the subject RFA but all members of the consortium must be local NGOs as defined in the solicitation, to be eligible for award. However, please note that a consortium is its own legal entity whereby the award is issued to the consortium entity and the organizations that fall under the consortium will implement the program description per their application.

If no such arrangement exists but applicants are interested in teaming, applicants may form a recipient-subrecipient relationship for the purposes of responding to this RFA. In this instance, the subrecipient does not have to be a local NGO, although the prime must be. Please be advised when structuring your teaming arrangements that the goal of limiting eligibility to local NGOs is to build local capacity and promote sustainability within BiH, i.e. we do not want to see a prime local NGOs simply serving as a "pass through" to an international organization proposed as a subrecipient.

2. Is the call for proposal dealing with the identification of a coordinating NGO from BH or also already for projects dealing with the issue of anti-corruption?

The Applicant can be any local NGO. It can be a coordinating NGO or an anti-corruption NGO. USAID expects that applicant will propose a management plan and offer evidence of its technical resources and organizational expertise to efficiently serve as a coordinator and/or a secretariat among local anti-corruption NGOs. This issue is elaborated in RFA, Section A – Instructions for Application Format – G. Organizational and Team Capabilities.

3. Are Terms of reference for the coordinating NGO already available and if, where can we find them?

USAID did not provide instructions on how Applicant should organize, manage and implement the project. The RFA provides Applicant the description on WHAT is expected. It is up to the Applicant to propose HOW they envision implementation of the ACCOUNT. The guidance for this is found in RFA, Section A – Instructions for Application Format – D. Technical Approach and Methodology and in the Section B-Program Description.

4. Is it planned to have a strategic approach to planning and implementing projects dealing with the issue of Anti-corruption, taking into consideration previous achievements and needs or will this be an open call for applications?

This RFA is an open call for applications. Past performance will be one of the evaluation criteria. The Applicants are expected to provide proof of the organizational history and experience. The guidance for this is described in RFA, Section A – Instructions for Application Format – H. Past Performance and Experience.

5. Can you explain what “best value” means?

Best value is defined as the expected outcome of a procurement that, in the Government’s estimation, provides the greatest overall benefit in response to the requirement. It is possible that award will be made to an Applicant whose application is other than the lowest priced one if the cost and non-cost factors of the application offer the highest benefit to the Government. If the highest ranked application is other than the lowest priced one, a trade-off analysis will be performed by the Agreement Officer to determine whether the technical benefits offered would justify a higher cost. While under this RFA technical factors are considered more significant than cost factors, cost is an important evaluation criterion. Cost factors gain increasing significance as applications receiving the highest ratings are more closely ranked.

6. In the RFA, when it references coordination with other activities, do you mean extending existing programs or expanding existing programs?

ACCOUNT is designed to augment (expand) existing civil society anti-corruption initiatives and raise their profiles from the local to the higher levels (from problem to policy level). ACCOUNT is NOT designed to provide funding for time extensions for specific anti-corruption initiatives.

ACCOUNT is expected to use the existing capacity and energy within civil society and to play a strategic coordination role to ensure regular information sharing, networking, and strengthening and streamlining of civil society efforts in the fight against corruption.

7. Can the NGO focus on one specific sector area instead of more sectors (reference page 20 of RFA that requests 3-5 sectors need to be identified)?

The Program Description for ACCOUNT envisions creation of policy-based nation-wide civil society networks in 3-5 sectors. Applicant is expected to identify these sectors in which NGO coordination will be pursued. If the Applicant decides to team with other NGOs, one of team NGO members can focus on one specific sector while others focus on other sectors. It depends on the Applicant’s decision what Technical Approach and Methodology it will propose.

8. Does NGO have to include public-private partnership in Application?

Public-private partnerships (PPP) are not required and, therefore, not evaluated separately, i.e. applications will not be evaluated negatively because of its exclusion. However, we encourage applicants to be innovative in how they can leverage this type of coordination and if included, will be evaluated as part of the larger evaluation criteria depending on how the applicant positions this partnership in their application, i.e. under what section they highlight the relevance of the PPP in their application.

9. What is the financial requirement of an NGO that does not have a NICRA? Can they submit annual tax forms? Do those reports need to be in English?

Overhead costs and indirect costs for an NGO without a NICRA should be allocated on a reasonable and consistent basis across all projects they are involved in. During the pre-award assessment and any subsequent audits, indirect costs will be reviewed to ensure the NGO has a reasonable basis or methodology for allocating indirect costs across all projects. Annual tax forms will be reviewed as part of the pre-award assessment. Annual audits do need to be in English, past reports reviewed as part of pre-award process do not need to be translated.

10. Can an audit company that performs the required audit under the program be based outside of Bosnia, e.g. in the US?

Yes, in case the audit company is among those listed as accepted by USAID/Washington Inspector General.

11. What is the requirement regarding Branding and Marking for the media outlets proposed in the program?

It is USAID’s requirement that the prospective awardee complies with the Branding and Marking requirements under the envisioned program to the maximum extent practicable. If the prospective awardee determines that using Branding and Marking tools for certain activities under the program would not be in the best interest of the U.S. Government, with sufficient justification, a case-by-case exception may be provided.

12. Can an applicant that is currently a subawardee under another program be a prime for this effort?

Yes, it is up to the subject applicant to determine its organization’s capability of successfully implementing the objectives of this solicitation in light of its other business and financial obligations.

13. Can a subawardee be a sub on multiple applications?

Yes, it is an arrangement fully determined by the prime and subrecipient regarding obligation and commitment for the purposes of responding to this solicitation.

14. Can an eligible organization apply for this solicitation without CCR registration?

Yes, but the apparently successful applicant must complete the CCR registration before an award is made.

15. Can an organization propose to:

a. partner with a governmental entity under the program;

We want to encourage the support and buy-in from our counterparts for the ACCOUNT activity and if the applicant can demonstrate a commitment by a host government entity we would welcome it. However, there are certain restrictions to providing financial support to a host government entity that cannot be determined without first knowing what government entity is being proposed and in what capacity. Any partnership with a government entity that proposes USAID funding in support of it will require legal review and Agreement Officer approval.

b. engage a government official as personnel under the program?

With limitations, it is possible to engage host government employees as personnel under USAID programs.

Salary supplements to host government Employees are not allowable without the written approval of the by the Assistant Administrator in Washington. Further information on determining whether certain payments are considered salary supplements can be found in Cable: [State 119780, dated April 15, 1988](#). Please note that exceptions to this requirement are issued only rarely and a strong justification must be provided for us to consider recommending an exception to Washington.

16. Is there a preferred/required format for the submission of the application, i.e. for the technical application, a word document converted into a PDF file?

- a. Section “A Instructions for Application Format”, paragraph 2. details the basic requirements regarding the format of the technical application. Applicants can submit their application in a word document or PDF format as long as it conforms to the aforementioned requirements. We do request that the individual e-mails submitted do not exceed 5 megabytes.

- b. Detailed budgets shall be submitted in a word, PDF document or in an excel sheet. The excel document is preferred and request that formulas are used in the excel document to enhance the evaluation process and minimize potential errors in the budget. Corresponding budget narratives can be submitted in a word or a PDF format.

II. MODIFICATION TO THE RFA

In the last paragraph of the cover page of the subject Request for Application, delete the phrase “pre-award audit” and insert “pre-award assessment” in lieu thereof.

Sincerely,



Eleanor TanPiengco
Regional Agreement Officer
RSC/RCO Budapest