



December 14, 2015

**Subject: Notice of Funding Opportunity - RFA-688-16-000003 – Amendment 1
Implementing the Civic Engagement Activity in Mali**

Dear Prospective Applicant:

This Amendment 1 provides answers to questions raised by potential applicants by the deadline in Attachment A (Questions/Answers). In addition, a Summary Budget Template in Attachment B (Cost Application Template), and a Salary Range for Local Professionals in Attachment C (Local Compensation Plan) are provided, which applicants are encouraged to follow in developing the detailed cost application.

With this NFO/RFA Amendment 1, the due date for receiving application(s) is extended from December 23, 2015 to **January 13, 2016**.

Except for the specific changes transmitted through this amendment, all other terms and conditions of the RFA as published remain unchanged.

Sincerely,



Chitahka Floore
Agreement Officer

Attachment A: Questions/Answers

Attachment B: Budget Application Template (Summary and Detailed Spreadsheets)

Attachment C: Local Compensation Plan (Salary Range for Local Professionals)

ATTACHMENT A - QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

1. In the wake of recent events, does USAID anticipate making any changes to this solicitation?

Response: No. At this point USAID does not plan to make any change to the solicitation. The recent attack at the Radisson Blu confirms the need for this type of Activity in Mali. Recent events do, however, highlight the need for incorporating conflict sensitivity and flexibility into the proposed interventions.

2. On page 9, the RFA states that one of the assumptions made during program design is that "the signed peace agreement facilitates gradual security improvements and the return of government services to conflict-affected areas". Does USAID anticipate any changes to this assumption in light of the recent hotel attack in Bamako?

Response: Please see question #1. Despite the recent horrific attacks at the Radisson Blu hotel, USAID still assumes a gradual improvement in security and the return of government services to conflict-affected areas over the five year life of the program. The peace process and the overall security situation are likely to continue to experience periodic setbacks but the expectation remains of gradual improvements.

3. Since the implementer of this project will be required where necessary to collaborate with other organizations implementing DG programs in Mali, can more information be provided on the organizations planned for the implementation of the "Mali Justice Program" and "Sub-national Governance Program"? (page 7)
- Could USAID please provide the name of the awardee of the Sub-national Governance Program expected to start in January 2016?

Response: This procurement is still underway for both Activities, and USAID cannot share additional information at this time.

4. To what extent does USAID anticipate the Civic Engagement program will build the operational (managerial, financial, administrative) capacity of CSOs in Mali?

Response: The civic engagement program is not intended to build capacity only, but USAID envisions that the operational capacity of the CSOs subawardees will be improved through working with the program and the mentoring/coaching and other support that will be provided by the prime.

5. Does USAID envision the majority of activities under Objective 1 to be led by the project implementer or local sub-grantees? (page 10).

Response: USAID envisions the majority of these activities being led by local CSO sub-grantees working in partnership with the recipient of the award.

6. Is a baseline assessment required under the project (page 14)?

Response: Yes, a baseline is required for measuring results and the impact of project interventions. The baseline should not be an extensive assessment of all of Malian civil society but should rather be focused on developing data for evaluating the success of the project's activities. If the applicant can use information that is already available that can provide a baseline then an assessment may not be necessary.

7. Page 14 notes that M&E plans must be designed to incorporate planning for the evaluation of longer-term impacts. Can the Mission please clarify what this should entail?

Response: M&E plans must be useful for both determining the need for course corrections during implementation as well as sufficient to measure the long-term impacts of the project. The bullets on Page 14 give a good synopsis of what an M&E plan needs to incorporate.

8. Could USAID kindly provide further clarification regarding the geographic focus for activities presented on Page 20 of the RFA? Could USAID please clarify which USAID initiatives (and in connection which regions) are considered key for engagement with sub-national level activities under the proposed program?

Response: USAID WASH initiatives, especially in Mopti are considered one key point for engagement. Activities will take place at both the national and subnational levels and applicants are encouraged to explain their thought processes in selecting specific regions to work in while also maintaining flexibility to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

9. Given that the project's geographic scope will expand beyond Bamako, does USAID envision that the project implementer have more than one office? (page 20)

Response: USAID will leave management decisions regarding how many offices are necessary (and where they would be located) to the applicant. It is expected that the Applicant will propose a management structure that allows fulfilling the objectives of the RFA at a reasonable and realistic cost.

10. Page 20 of the RFA describes the selection process Applicants should apply when choosing CSO partners under the program. Can USAID please clarify if it is expected for Applicants to follow the described process during the application process, proposing specific CSO partners in submitted applications, or if the selection of CSOs is an activity that should be planned for the months immediately following the Award?

Response: The selection of CSOs will be conducted in collaboration with USAID and therefore should be planned for the months following the award.

11. Objective 2 of the proposed program states 'CSOs collaborate effectively with government and the private sector to develop public policy and advance issues of common interest.' We kindly request that USAID clarify the following:

- Please confirm that the program is expected to support both the development of new policies as well as support CSO advocacy and watchdog capacities on government implementation of existing policies.

Response: In general, the problem in Mali is not the absence of policies or laws, it is the failure to implement existing policies and laws so USAID expects the majority of the recipients LOE to be spent on practical ways to oversee and advocate for the implementation of existing regulations and laws.

- Please confirm that the program should focus its efforts on supporting CSOs in building an enabling policy environment for both the priority sectors listed (i.e. health, education, agriculture, economic growth) as well as the cross-cutting issues mentioned (i.e. gender-sensitivity, inclusion, empowerment).

Response: Yes, the program should focus its efforts on building an enabling environment for both the priority sectors listed as well as the cross-cutting issues.

12. Does USAID have a preference for how much of the overall budget be allocated to local sub-grantees?

Response: USAID does not have a hard figure for how much of the overall budget should be allocated to local sub-awards. The appropriate percentage of the overall budget used for sub-awards as opposed to other line items is left up to the applicant. Please note, however, that as written in the RFA these sub-awards will constitute a critical piece of the overall activities.

13. **Key Personnel:** Would USAID consider removing the advanced degree requirement for the Deputy COP/Program Coordinator, or substituting additional years of experience for the advanced degree? For example, would four years of relevant experience equal an advanced degree?

Response: The profiles for Key Personnel are illustrative. Experience can serve as a substitute for an advanced degree. 3-4 years of relevant experience can equal an advanced degree; however it is up to the applicant to make the case for how the experience is relevant.

14. On Page 29, D.4.1. Technical Application Format, Annexes: Implementation Plan and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. The NFO states that the final work plan and M&E plan will be completed within 30 days of award. Given the tensions in Mali, and the importance of a "Do No Harm" approach, would USAID consider an Implementation Plan and an M&E Plan that detail finalization of work plans and M&E plans within 60 days? Drafting a set of context specific, conflict appropriate questions that will ensure the safety of respondents; finding a third party evaluation team that specializes in this type of work; and fielding the team to collect data in a challenging and fluid security environment will require the utmost care and consideration.

Response: Section D.4.1 is modified to state: "The final workplan is due within 60 days."

- The NFO also states, "Plans should also include gender-sensitive, conflict sensitive, and child-sensitive (as applicable) indicators and disaggregation by sex and by other factors as appropriate (i.e. age, development sector, type and size of organization, etc.)" Can USAID please clarify if it makes distinctions among children, youth, and adolescents? If so, can USAID please provide the age ranges for children versus youth?

Response: For USAID, children are up to 15 years old, youth is generally 30 years and younger.

15. Regarding the Application format, page limits and Annexes:

- Could USAID kindly confirm that the "management structure" annex listed on page 26 and 29 is the same as the "organizational chart" annex?

Response: The organization chart can be included in the Management Structure Annex in which, applicants can provide supplemental information.

- How are "Annex D: Management Structure" and the technical proposal's "Management Approach" different?

Response: In the management structure Annex, applicants can provide supplemental information.

- Does USAID have font or margin preferences for the technical application?

Response: USAID does not have other requirements than the ones mentioned in the RFA, Section D.4.1.

- Should the technical application be submitted as a PDF or in Microsoft Word?

Response: The Technical application can be submitted in PDF or Microsoft Word.

- Can offerors include Performance Planning Reports (PPR) tables as annexes?

Response: Yes, the applicant can include PPR tables as annexes.

- Is the acronym list to be excluded from the page limit? Is there a page limit for the list?

Response: Yes, the acronym list is excluded from the page limit of the technical application. No, there is no page limit on the acronym list.

- Can the full job descriptions of key personnel be included as an annex?

Response: Yes, however, the full job descriptions of key personnel/positions can be included as part of the Annexes, but a description of the roles and responsibilities of proposed key positions must be part of the 25 pages of the Technical Application Body, under the Management Approach sub-section.

- Are full job descriptions for important but non-key personnel required?

Response: Yes. Please refer to page 27 of the RFA, last paragraph of "Management Approach and Staffing Plan."

16. Page 29, D.4.2. Cost Application Format, Format. The NFO states, "The Cost Application is to be submitted as a separate document from the Technical Application and come in minimum two parts: Budget (summary and detailed, with narratives) (see template in the Attachments of this RFA)." Can USAID please provide the referenced template?

- On Page 29, under D.4.2. Cost Application Format- USAID made a reference that a "budget template will be provided", but the RFA did not have a budget template. Did USAID intend to attach a template?

Response: Yes. Please see attachment B (Budget Application Template) of this amendment.

17. Could USAID please confirm that five past performance references total from both the prime and any partners are to be included as an annex?

Response: Yes, a total of 5 past performance references from both the prime and any partners are to be included as an annex.

18. Page 30 notes that a procurement plan for commodities is a required part of the budget summary. Could you please elaborate upon what the offeror is to include in this plan?

Response: As stated in the RFA, the applicant is "encouraged" to provide a procurement plan that will list the commodities to be procured during the life of the award and the estimated timing of these acquisitions.

19. Pages 36-27, Section E – Application Review Information, 1. Technical Evaluation. Can USAID please provide the weight for scoring of each of the technical evaluation components: Technical Approach, Management Approach and Key Personnel, and Organizational Capacity and Past Performance?

Response: The Technical evaluation criteria are listed in descending order of importance. Under this RFA, as written on page 36, the technical application will be evaluated by a Committee using an adjectival system, and technical considerations are more important than cost.

20. What is the anticipated start date of the award?

Response: The anticipated start date of the award is May 2016.

21. Should applications budget for an independent evaluation or will it be conducted externally by USAID?

Response: The performance and impact evaluations will be ordered by USAID. The applicant does not need to budget for them.

22. Could USAID please provide a current copy of the Local Compensation Plan?

Response: The Local Compensation Plan is provided as attachment C to this Amendment.

23. What is the major subcontractor threshold?

Response: There is no threshold for the major sub-awards (sub-grant and or sub-contract) in this RFA. However, during the design of this activity, USAID Mali has determined that the award of an assistance instrument (Cooperative Agreement) would better respond to the need than an acquisition instrument. Therefore, major sub-contracts under this award are discouraged.

Attachment B: Cost Application Template (Summary and Detailed Spreadsheets)

Budget Spreadsheet: Dollar Costs

Summary Spreadsheet

Cost Line Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Labor (Salaries, Fringe Benefits, Allowance)						
Consultants						
Travel, Transportation & Per Diem						
Equipment and Supplies						
Activities Support Costs						
Sub-Contracts						
Other Direct Costs						
Total Estimated Direct Amount						
Indirect Costs						
Total Estimated Amount						
Cost Share						

Detailed Budget Spreadsheet: (to be used for the prime and subs)

ITEMS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
LABOR						
Direct Long-Term Labor (Expatriate)						
Direct Long-Term Labor (Local)						
Home Office						
Allowances						
Fringe Benefits						
Consultants						
- Direct Short-Term Labor (Expatriate)						
- Direct Short-Term Labor (Local)						
Total Labor						
TRAVEL, TRANSPORTATION & PER DIEM						
Assignment to Post and Entitlement						
International Travel						
Local Travel						
Per Diem						
Total Travel, Transportation & Per Diem						
EQUIPMENT						
Expendable Equipment & Supplies						
Vehicles & Non Expendable Equipment						
Total Equipment						
ACTIVITY COSTS						
Commodities						
Training						
Other						
Total Activity Costs						
Sub-Awards						
US NGOs						
Local NGOs						
Total Sub-Contracts						
OTHER DIRECT COSTS						
Field Office						
Communication and Misc. Office costs						
Equipment maintenance costs						
Home office costs, communication and other						
Total Other Direct Costs						
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS						
INDIRECT COSTS						
Overhead						
G & A						
Other Indirect Costs						
Total Indirect Costs						
TOTAL ESTIMATED AMOUNT						
Cost Share						

ATTACHMENT C: ILLUSTRATIVE LOCAL COMPENSATION PLAN (
(Salary Range for Local Professionals)

Grade	Basic Rate	Currency	Salary Minimum	Salary Maximum	Job Title (Function)
	No Benefits included		Step - 1	Step - 13	Titles
FSN - 1	Annual	Mali	1,431,560	2,218,916	Janitor
		F.CFA			Driver
FSN - 2	Annual	Mali	1,815,615	2,814,207	Janitor – Gardener - Warehouseman
		F.CFA			File Clerk - Duplicating Equipment Operator
FSN - 3	Annual	Mali	2,398,999	3,718,447	Guard - Mail Clerk
		F.CFA			Clerk Typist - Distribution Clerk
FSN - 4	Annual	Mali	2,723,862	4,221,990	Clerk Typist - Receptionist
		F.CFA			Office Machine Repairman - Telephone Operator
FSN - 5	Annual	Mali	3,480,991	5,395,531	Clerk Typist – Voucher Examiner
		F.CFA			Supply Clerk - Data Entry Clerk
					Telephone Operator - Shipment Assist
FSN - 6	Annual	Mali	4,564,497	7,074,969	Document Control Clerk - Files mgt Supervisor
		F.CFA			Cashier
					Motor Pool Supervisor
					Property Records Supervisor
FSN - 7	Annual	Mali	5,898,117	9,142,089	Secretary , Office Manager
		F.CFA			Maintenance Foreman - Maintenance Inspector
					Procurement Assistant
					Cashier
FSN - 8	Annual	Mali	7,724,440	11,972,872	Payroll Liaison Assist; Admin Assist.
		F.CFA			Shipment Specialist
					Development Program Assistant
					Project Mgt Assistant
					Voucher Examiner; Property Mgt Supervisor
FSN - 9	Annual	Mali	10,567,773	16,380,045	Budget Analyst
		F.CFA			Maintenance Specialist
					Human Resources Assistant
					Procurement Specialist
					Management Assist
FSN 10	Annual	Mali	12,311,218	19,082,374	Dev Assist Specialist
		F.CFA			Supervisory Voucher Examiner
					Project Management Specialist
FSN 11	Annual	Mali	14,434,295	22,373,159	Financial Spt Advisor; Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist
		F.CFA			Dev Program Specialist/Budget; Conflict Advisor
					Executive Specialist (Admin) - Systems Administrator
					Project Management Specialist
FSN 12	Annual	Mali	17,413,806	26,991,390	Chief Accountant
		F.CFA			Supervisory Financial Support Advisor
					Development Program Specialist
					Project Management Specialist