



August 10, 2017

**Subject:** Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)  
Request for Applications (RFA) No. RFA-596-17-000003  
Amendment No. 1

**Program Title:** PASCA 3.0 – Central American Project for Sustaining and  
Championing the Human Rights Response to Human  
Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

Dear Applicants:

This Amendment No. 1 to subject RFA is hereby issued to make some changes to the original RFA and respond to the questions (attached) received in response to this solicitation as follows:

1. Page 1 of the RFA: Delete Key Personnel & Past Performance Due on August 21, 2017 (7:00 am Guatemala time) and replace with August 28, 2017 (7:00 am Guatemala time).
2. Page 1 of the RFA: Delete closing date of September 7, 2017 (7:00 am Guatemala time) and replace with September 21, 2017 (7:00 am Guatemala time).
3. Section B, 3.2 Substantial Involvement: Delete in its entirety: “AOR Approval of the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan.”
4. Successful applicant is required to mobilize within 30 days of agreement award.
5. Section F.3 A “Annual Work Plan” delete “Within 45 days of award” and replace with “45 days after mobilization “
6. Section F.3 B A) “Monitoring Plan” delete “Within 60 days of award” and replace with “60 days after mobilization”.

**General**

1. This would mean Preliminary Submission materials entitled Key Personnel Annex and Past Performance Annex and the full Technical and Cost Applications would be due the same date.

**Response: Please see the response to question 1 above.**

2. Taking into account the variation in technical scope between the original PASCA 3.0 RFI released earlier this year and the final RFA, is USAID/Guatemala open to extending the deadline for the submission of the full application to September 21, 2017?

**Response: Please see the response to question 2 above.**

3. RFA-596-17-000003 indicates that application Key Personnel Annex and Past Performance Annex are due August 21, 2017 and the full application is 7:00 am Guatemala time September 7, 2017.

**Response: Please see the response to questions 1 & 2 above.**

4. The RFA has resulted in some significant changes from the original RFI that was released earlier this year, particularly the removal of Component 3 around Strengthening Civil Society Engagement, and the reduction in budget by 50% from \$20M to \$10M.

a. Given the revised scope of work and reduction in budget, would USAID consider extending the due date to allow more time for development of a responsive technical proposal?

**Response: Please see the response to question 2 above.**

b. Must all key personnel positions be 100% LOE for the life of the project?

**Response: It is up to the applicant to decide their staffing strategy.**

c. Can the countries be phased in and out in order to accommodate the reduction in budget?

**Response: USAID's policy program works regionally with specific activities in each country according to country context. Applicants should know the needs and opportunities in each country, and define the level of effort required for the implementation for the project. USAID expects to work at the same time in all countries with different level of effort depending of the context.**

d. Can start-up be phased over two years?

**Response: USAID expects the successful applicant to mobilize at all sites within 4 months of the award being signed. Initial mobilization is within 30 days of signing the agreement.**

e. Some indicators are required to be collected annually in each country. Should phasing be allowed, with the indicators still be required every year?

**Response: For those indicators reported by the countries in annual basis, the project will do it annually. USAID will evaluate the periodicity of the reports for other indicators on case by case when the full Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan will be developed by the successful applicant.**

## **Program Description**

5. With the removal of Component 3, and focus on inclusion of key population organizations in the process of achieving sustainability, we are concerned that the scope and the revised budget won't allow sufficient funds to achieve the remaining scope of work. How do you envision engagement of key population organizations in light of the reduced budget?

**Response: The applicant should propose how to involve civil society organizations (including KP) in accountability and advocacy activities to achieve sustainability, as set out in the first component of the RFA.**

6. The RFA mentions that USAID defines the level of effort and budget for each country in its Regional Operational Plan in its Strategic Direction Summary (SDS) and the Focused Outcome and Impact Table (FOIT), available in <https://www.pepfar.gov/>. Should these budgeted amounts referenced in the FOIT be used as a guide for budget amounts that align with the activities in the RFA?

**The level of effort and budget described in the FOIT is illustrative for each activity listed and not necessarily represents the level of funds available for those activities. The applicant has to plan with the level of funds noted in the RFA.**

7. The RFA mentions working at the regional and national or above-site level in the five countries where the Regional HIV/AIDS Program has presence and develops specific country activities: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama as well as regionally (including Belize and Costa Rica) when interventions involve COMISCA and the RCM. Should these activities budgets be treated as individual country (e.g. Guatemala) budgets or as regional budget items?

**Response: The regional activities should be budgeted in the Guatemala budget.**

8. On page 16, paragraph one, USAID states the further analysis on barriers faced by Garifuna in Honduras relates to HIV related services access may be requested. Is the implication that this analysis would be requested of the successful applicant for this award?

**Response: USAID is currently implementing some studies to know if Garifuna populations have problems to access health services. If that is demonstrated in the studies, some above site activities could be required from the awarded applicant in the second year of the project in order to reduce those barriers. These activities would have to be reflected in the budget for years two and on.**

9. On page 21, fourth paragraph, USAID states that the "applicant will work to promote cost-effectiveness and efficiency through optimizations in-service delivery and supply chain systems." Is the expectation that this work related to supply chain would be done in cooperation with specific supply chain partners in the region or solely by the successful applicant with the stakeholders explicitly mentioned in the NOFO?

Response: All applicants should provide its strategy to use the information from other partners involved in supply chain and service delivery in their application.

**Response: The applicant's task will be used for the positive results of that technical assistance for political dialogue and advocacy to remove barriers to the implementation of those good practices, expand access and coverage, and ensure stock of medications and other HIV supplies.**

### **Eligibility Information**

10. RFA-596-17-000003 Section C Eligibility Information, 2 Cost Sharing or Matching outlines that the required cost sharing under this RFA is 20% of the USAID Contribution. Would SAID/Guatemala be open to removing Cost Share from the Eligibility Criteria and allow Applicants proposed cost sharing to be considered in the review process in accordance with Appendix I to Part 200, E. Application Review Information?

**Response: According to USAID's experience in HIV/AIDS programs, cost share is a fundamental purpose of promoting sustainable actions over time. USAID considers that the cost share level required under this RFA is appropriated for this project.**

### **Application and Submission Information**

11. On page 38 of the RFA, one of the requirements for the Key Personnel Annex is a one-page position description. In addition to a description for the Project Director and Senior Sustainability Advisor, does USAID want a separate one-page description for each of the five country representatives even if the only difference among the position descriptions is the country assignment?

**Response: USAID has emphasized in the Program Description that the policy context in each country is different. Therefore, the country representatives could require different knowledge, skills as well as different level of effort for each country.**

12. Could USAID please confirm that they are looking for position descriptions and summaries in only the annex?

**Response: Please delete position summary. Applicants only need to provide position descriptions in the annex.**

13. Could USAID please confirm that the executive summary is not counted towards the 40 page limit for the technical application?

**Response: The executive summary is not part of the 40 page limit of the technical application. The executive summary can't exceed two pages.**

14. On page 36, the RFA says that the Technical Application Cover Page must include the names, titles, and signatures, of the “person(s) who prepared the application.” Would USAID please confirm that only the primary contact needs to sign the Technical Application Cover Page?

**Response: Correct. Your organization's primary contact is who has signed the Technical Application Cover Page.**

15. Would USAID please confirm that all of the following 4 items under Additional Information on pages 42-43 of the RFA are only required from the Apparently Successful Applicant upon later request from USAID? If this is not the case, could USAID please confirm that each should be submitted as an annex in the technical application and that it does not count towards the 40 page technical application page limit?

- Certificate of Compliance
- Branding Strategy and Marking Plan
- Mobilization Plan
- Pre-Award Risk Assessment

**Response: Correct. The four items mentioned above will be requested by the Agreement Officer from the apparent successful applicant.**

16. Can USAID confirm that the Mobilization Plan will not be required as part of the applicant's initial submission?

**Response: Correct. Please see the response to question 15.**

17. Regarding the submission email(s), would USAID please advice if it would like for organizations to include the name of the project (PASCA 3.0) in the subject line as stated in the first paragraph on page 36? The example email subject line on page 35 does not include the name of the project.

**Response: Please note that the example in page 35 refers to how to subtitle multiple emails, “Part 1 of 2”. USAID would like to receive your technical and cost application (separate from each other) identified with “NOFO number, the name of**

**the firm submitting the application, and the project name (PASCA 3.0. - Central American Project for Sustaining and Championing the Human Rights Response to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)).**

18. Kindly confirm whether the early submission of these application elements is considered part of the Eligibility Information or a Preliminary Submission pursuant to Appendix I to Part 200? Specifically, in Appendix I to Part 200, D. Application and Submission Information, 4. Submission Dates and Times – is USAID/Guatemala’s intent for the annexes to be “separate from the full application” or can USAID/Guatemala indicate if more than one cycle of application submission or review will take place? Can USAID/Guatemala please amend RFA-596-17-000003 Section C Eligibility Information if the Key Personnel Annex and Past Performance Annex are considered to be eligibility factors for Applicants?

**Response: USAID confirms that the early submission of these application elements is part of Section D “Application and Submission Information”. These Annexes are part of the full application. Applications will be reviewed/evaluated by the Selection committee once the full applications are received.**

19. Does the submission of these annexes on August 21, 2017 indicate that USAID/Guatemala intends to use these materials to determine applicant eligibility prior to the RFA closing date? Specifically, in Appendix I to Part 200, C. Eligibility Information, 1. Eligible Applicants, are the annexes a factor in Applicant eligibility and scoring of Criterion 2 – Management and Staffing Strategy on p. 48? How will USAID/Guatemala remove bias from the application review when annexes that carry significant evaluation merit are received from organizations in advance of the RFA close date?

**Response: No. It is not USAID’s intention to use these early annexes submission to determine applicant’s eligibility prior to the RFA closing date. The information is provided to the Selection Committee, with comments, once the full applications are received at USAID. This procedure pretends to expedite the procurement process.**

20. How will USAID/Guatemala evaluate the Preliminary Submission materials in these annexes if they are separate from the full application (e.g. are they given a different evaluation criteria merit)? If the annexes are deemed Preliminary Submission materials and if they are separate from the full application, are they removed as a required item in the final application package that is limited to 40 pages?

**Response: All information included in annexes (Key Personnel and Past Performance) are not part of the 40-pages technical application limit. The Selection Committee will receive the full applications, including the Annexes, at the same time for evaluation. Annexes should not be submitted with your final application.**

21. If an Applicant does not submit the Key Personnel and Past Performance Annexes on August 21, 2017 but does include these materials on September 7, 2017 – is the application considered valid?

**Response: USAID will not consider those applications that do not comply with the submission dates required in the RFA.**

22. Please confirm that like the full application, the Key Personnel Annex and Past Performance Annex may be submitted via email to [guatemalaproposals@usaid.gov](mailto:guatemalaproposals@usaid.gov) to the attention of Ms. Paz.

**Response: Correct**

23. Please confirm RFA-596-17-000003 Section D. Application and Submission Information 5. Cost Application Format c. Budget at the top of p. 40 “Applicants must include each line item listed below and include additional line items as applicable to your technical application” is intended to say “to your cost application”; as earlier instruction on p. 35 (as Section D. 3.

**Response: What USAID means when saying “...and include additional line items as applicable to your technical application” is that the Applicant cost application has to match with what is being proposed in the technical application.**

24. Application Submission Procedures paragraph 4 indicates that “Technical and Cost applications must be kept separate from each other”).

**Response: Correct, technical and cost applications must be kept or submitted separate from each other.**

25. Please confirm that the information requested from the apparently Successful Applicant described in RA-596-17-000003 Section D. Application and Submission Information 6. Additional Information is not required for the Applicant’s proposal submission on September 7, 2017.

**Response: Correct.**

26. RFA-596-17-000003 Section D. Application and Submission Information 8. Funding Restrictions “ Vehicles” notes that “Funds may not be used to purchase vehicles or pay for long-term leases” (p.44). Section F. Federal Award Administration Information 2.3 2. Value Added Tax (p.55) indicates that “USAID will support the customs clearance of official project vehicles.” On p. 62, the Closeout/Demobilization Plan cites vehicles will be an element of the applicant’s request for disposition instructions. Please clarify if vehicle purchase is permitted with funds allocated by the resultant award of RFA-596-17-000003?

**Response: USAID confirms that vehicles are not contemplated under this RFA. All expenditures for transportation shall be included in the budget.**

27. Given that the cost of ground transport could be higher than purchasing vehicles, could this restriction be waived?

**Response: Please see the response to question 25.**

28. Please confirm that the IEE Categories applicable to RFA-596-17-000003 are “Healthcare service delivery initiatives” and “Improved institutional response to public health priorities”?

**Response: Activities under this project were catalogued as “Categorical Exclusion”. Activities under this project do not include any service delivery, only consider technical assistance, meetings, advocacy actions, etc. none of those will generate waste.**

29. Section D., p. 38 of the RFA indicates that “applicants must submit fully completed past performance information data sheets to USAID.” How many PPI sheets are requested? Can applicants also include PPIs from any subawardees?

**Response: USAID would appreciate Applicants to submit no more than five relevant past performance information on the prime. PPI information is not required for subs.**

30. Does the cover letter count towards page limit?

**Response: No**

31. On Page 38. USAID states that the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan must be submitted as a 5 page annex. Would USAID please consider extending this to 7 pages?

**Response: This is the initial MEL plan and the page limit remains at 5.**

32. Page 35, item 2.a.vi. states “Document must be in a recent Windows-compatible version of MS Word (version 2000 or later), Excel and PDF” and on pages 35–36 under “3. Application Submission Procedures” it is stated that “Each Application, either technical or cost, should consist of only one file in Microsoft Word comprising the complete application, plus one file in PDF comprising the complete application. In the case of the Cost Application, in addition to the MS Word and PDF files, the electronic submission must also include a budget in a non-protected MS Excel file.” Can USAID please confirm that the Cost Application must be submitted in triplicate, i.e. 1) the complete

Cost Application in MS Word including the full budget; 2) the complete Cost Application in PDF, including the full budget; and 3) the full budget by itself as a non-protected MS Excel file.

**Response: Please delete PDF format for technical and cost applications. Technical proposal and budget narrative must be submitted in Word, text accessible. Budget must be submitted in Excel, with formulas unlocked.**

33. Will USAID consider accepting the cost application as a PDF version only?

**Response: Please see the response to question 31 above.**

34. Will USAID consider accepting the budget as an Excel version only?

**Response: Please see the response to question 31 above.**

35. P. 38, “5. Cost Application Format” – the RFA lists “f) A copy of personnel and travel policies” as a required section in the Cost Application. Can USAID please confirm that these policies are only required for the prime applicant?

**Response: This requirement is deleted in its entirety. This information will only be requested from the successful applicant.**

36. Also, since personnel policies can be very broad and span multiple documents, can USAID please be more specific about which components of personnel policy should be submitted? For example, is USAID only interested in policies with potential cost or budgetary implications, such as salaries/compensation, allowances/benefits, time-off, procurement, or is USAID also interested in non-cost type policies, such as codes of ethics, whistleblower policies, anti-harassment policies, diversity/equal opportunity, telecommuting, etc.?

**Response: Please see the response to question 34 above.**

37. Pages 38–42, “5. Cost Application Format” – On page 38 in this section it is stated that the Cost Application must contain various sections, these are enumerated from a) (“Cover page”) through i) (“Additional Requirements”). Following this enumerated list, however, the RFA only provides detail for items a) through c); no detail is provided for items d) through i). Is this intentional? If so, can USAID provide further specificity about these items, especially item i) “Additional Requirements”? If this was not intentional, could USAID please amend the RFA to include the omitted descriptions of items d) through i)?

**Response: The RFA provides details for items “a” through “c” only and it was intentional. With regards to items “d” through “i”, they are self-explanatory.**

38. Bottom of page 39, “5. Cost Application Format, c. Budget, list of items 1. – 7.” – Item 1. states: “Description and justification for the technical work to be implemented by the sub awardee outlining activities at a high level and describing how the proposed grant fits within the applicant's technical approach, including geographic focus.” Can USAID please confirm that the information requested in Item 1 should only appear in the Cost Application and not the Technical Application? And, if this is the case, can USAID confirm that this information should appear in item d) of the Cost Application (i.e. the Budget Narrative), or – as this paragraph states, as a “separate summary”? If it is a separate summary, in which section of the Cost Application should this be included? Similarly, can USAID please answer this same question with respect to the other items in this list, i.e. items 2. Through 7?

**Response: The information in Item 1. should appear in the cost application of individual sub awards greater than \$1,000,000 as part of your application. Somehow, this information should be reflected in the technical application. Additionally, the information should appear in the budget narrative of your cost application. Items 2 through 7 are self-explanatory and part of the due diligence that you will have to do for a sub awardee.**

#### **Application Review Information**

39. On p. 49 of the RFA in Section E, the RFA notes that the Senior Sustainability Advisor “must have a Bachelor’s Degree in Business and preferably a Master’s Degree in Business Administration, Economics, or Finance.” Would USAID consider allowing a Bachelor’s degree in another related field such as Economics, Law or Public Health for the Sustainability Advisor?

**Response: No.**

40. Section E, page 48-50 outlines the expected Key Personnel for the program. Given the revised scope and budget since the RFI was released, would USAID allow applicants to propose a different management and key staffing model in order to be efficient and cost effective?

**Response: In accordance with previous HIV Program past experience with policy projects, this schema of key personnel has been effective in regional HIV projects.**

41. Can USAID provide weighting for the merit review criteria?

**Response: Criteria are in descending order of importance. Sub-criteria are of equal weight.**

### **Federal Award and Administration Information**

42. Please clarify if the Annual Implementation Plan annex should be for Project Year 1 only.

**Response: The Annual Implementation Plan Annex, for year one, should cover the period of the award date: o/a January 2018 through Sept. 30, 2018.**

43. Page 58 states: “Please refer to [www.pepfar.gov](http://www.pepfar.gov) for updated PEPFAR Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (MER) indicators Indicator Reference Guide, October 2016.” The most recent [PEPFAR MER 2.0 indicators](#) are from January 2017. Please confirm that these most recent PEPFAR indicators should be used.

**Response: Yes, please use the latest version of January 2017 that can be found at <https://www.pepfar.gov/documents/organization/263233.pdf>**

44. In Section F, p. 60, the RFA outlines instructions for Annual and Semi-Annual Performance Reports. Is USAID expecting a consolidated report, or should there be a regional report and separate country reports?

**Response: USAID expects to receive a regional summary report with separate additional country reports.**

All other terms and conditions of the RFA remain without change and in full force.



Charis Nastoff  
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