

Re: RFA-617-13-000001-USAID/Uganda Communication for Healthy Communities (CHC)

RFA Section VIII- Other Information: Add the following provision:

CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IMPLEMENTATION (ASSISTANCE) – SOLICITATION PROVISION (FEBRUARY 2012)

- a. An organization, including a faith-based organization, that is otherwise eligible to receive funds under this agreement for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, or care—
 - (1) Must not be required, as a condition of receiving such assistance—
 - (i) To endorse or utilize a multisectoral or comprehensive approach to combating HIV/AIDS; or
 - (ii) To endorse, utilize, make a referral to, become integrated with, or otherwise participate in any program or activity to which the organization has a religious or moral objection; and
 - (2) Must not be discriminated against in the solicitation or issuance of grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements for refusing to meet any requirement described in paragraph (a)(1) above.
 - b. An applicant who believes that this solicitation contains provisions or requirements that would require it to endorse or use an approach or participate in an activity to which it has a religious or moral objection must so notify the cognizant Agreement Officer in accordance with the Standard Provision “Notices” as soon as possible, and in any event not later than 15 calendar days before the deadline for submission of applications under this solicitation. The applicant must advise which activity(ies) it could not implement and the nature of the religious or moral objection.
 - c. In responding to the solicitation, an applicant with a religious or moral objection may compete for any funding opportunity as a prime partner, or as a leader or member of a consortium that comes together to compete for an award. Alternatively, such applicant may limit its application to those activities it can undertake and must indicate in its submission the activity(ies) it has excluded based on religious or moral objection. The offeror’s proposal will be evaluated based on the activities for which a proposal is submitted, and will not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably due to the absence of a proposal addressing the activity(ies) to which it objected and which it thus omitted. In addition to the notification in paragraph (b) above, the applicant must meet the submission date provided for in the solicitation.
- [END OF PROVISION]

Questions and Answers

NOTE: THE CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION IS JANUARY 15, 2013, 4pm EST (WASHINGTON DC)

1. The RFA mentions two different closing dates for the application: January 15, 2013 and January 11, 2013. Please confirm which date is correct.

The correct application submission date is January 15, 2013, 4PM EST (Washington DC)

2. Due to the holiday schedule, we respectfully request an extension.

USAID maintains January 15, 2013, 4PM EST (Washington DC) as RFA application submission date.

3. PMP is mentioned as a requirement for Annex III and Annex VI on pages 27 and 28, respectively. We assume that USAID only wants to receive one PMP. Please confirm if there is an annex that is missing from the list.

On page 28, Annex VI- Draft PMP: Delete section and content in its entirety.

4. Please confirm if the cover page and TOC are excluded from the 30-page limit for the technical proposal.

The Cover Page, executive summary, Acronym List and Table of contents shall not be included in the 30 page limit for the technical proposals.

5. Can you provide the specific number of points or weights assigned to each of the four technical evaluation criteria listed on p. 31?

The following evaluation criteria are in descending order of importance: Technical Approach, Management Approach and Past Performance. The sub-criteria under each are weighted equally. There are no points or weights assigned.

6. Section C is referenced in five places: pages 19 (in two job descriptions), 21, 31, and 32. Section C is not included in the RFA document or as an attachment.

Delete "Section C" and replace with Section I wherever it is found in the RFA.

7. The RFA states that the reps and certs must be submitted with the technical proposal. This is unusual as they are generally considered part of the cost proposal. Do our

subpartners need to submit reps and certs as well and if so should these be submitted with the technical or cost proposal? Same with 1420s—these are generally not required in proposals for cooperative agreements. If they need to be submitted should they be with the technical or cost proposal?

Representation and Certifications can be submitted with the Cost Application. Subpartners should also submit Representations and Certifications.

8. Please confirm the number of Past Performance References (PPRs) each applicant is required to submit.

Subject to availability of space, include all Past Performance References of related programs during the past three years.

9. In the cover letter of the RFA, it states that more than one award may result from the solicitation. Is it USAID's preference to award a single award or multiple awards?

USAID's intention is to make a single award from this RFA. However, it is possible that, based on the results of the evaluation and award process, USAID may decide to issue more than one award.

10. In the Environmental Compliance section of the RFA (Pages 22-23) it notes that: "USAID has determined that a categorical exclusion applies to the proposed activities. " However, page 27 of the RFA states that "The technical application must include your approach to maintaining environmental compliance and management, to including: Approach to providing necessary environmental management expertise, including examples of past experience of environmental management of similar activities; An illustrative budget for implementing the environmental compliance activities..." Given that this project has been granted a categorical exclusion from 22 CFR 216, can USAID confirm that Applicants need not include an approach for maintaining environmental compliance and management in the technical and cost applications?

Applicants need not submit approach for maintaining environmental compliance and management (But I will also check with Environment Officer in EC)

11. Page 27 of the RFA requests Contractor Biographical Data Sheets for key personnel. Based on the information provided in the Paperwork Reduction Act Information section of form 1420-17, it is our understanding that this form is only for use under USAID Contracts and therefore not required for use.

Applicants shall be required to submit Biographical Data Sheets for their key personnel

12. Section V (Application Review Information beginning on page 31 of the RFA) does not provide the points/weighting for each category of the proposal. Could USAID kindly share how scores will be weighted between the Technical Approach, Key Personnel, Management Approach, Past Performance?

Refer to response in question No.5 above.

13. How many past performance references should be included in the Annex? Should only the Prime Applicant include Past Performance References or should the same number be included for significant sub-partners who have 10% or more of the total budget?

The Prime applicant and major sub-partners should present their past performance references.

Major sub-partners are those expected to perform at least 20% of the technical effort or to provide the professional expertise for a particular component of Section I, even if the component is expected to be less than 20% of the work under the agreement to be awarded as a result of this RFA.

14. Is there a limit on the file size for attachments submitted via email?

Applicants can submit proposals broken up into multiple email attachments (2MBs each) but not to exceed three (3) attachments per each email.

15. In page 24 of the RFA, under section II.2, it states that the performance period is for five years, can USAID kindly inform applicants as to the anticipated start date or month of the award?

USAID anticipates that the resultant agreement from this RFA will be awarded in/around April 2013

16. On page 7 of the RFA, it states, "A final evaluation of HCP activities is forthcoming, and will inform that new activity." Please provide information on when this report will be available and how we may access it.

This report will not be ready by the time of submission of applications in response to this RFA. So, this statement should be disregarded. No information from this evaluation will be used to inform this RFA.

17. Page 18 of the RFA, I.6 Key Personnel states that “A minimum of four out of the five key personnel positions must be from either Uganda or the East African Region.” Under the description for the Chief of Party, the RFA states that “the COP shall be either a Uganda citizen or from the East African region.” Based on these two statements it is clear that the COP must be either Ugandan or a TCN from East Africa. However, could USAID please clarify in regards to the remaining four Key Personnel positions that one ex-pat from outside the East African region is acceptable?

YES one expert outside the East African Region will acceptable.

18. Regarding CHC coordinating with other data collection, monitoring and evaluation activities such as Lot quality Assurance Sampling (LQAS), this activity is funded by the MSH supported STAR E Project which ends in 2014. Will USAID support to the LQAS continue beyond the end date of that project? (See top of p. 16.)

STAR-E Program implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) provides technical support and coordination for LQAS. USAID funded Implementing Partners support districts to conduct the survey and analyze the data. Districts have a role to identify resources for the survey.

19. Throughout the RFA, the project is called on to strengthen the MOH's capacity to lead and coordinate health communication efforts. In line with this, does USAID plan to provide direct funding to the MOH for production, distribution and other health communication costs?

No direct funding is intended to be given to MOH. As mentioned in the RFA, the role of partner shall be to build the capacity of MOH to enable them effectively respond to the identified health issues.

20. Page 16, under IR3, calls for coordination with other data collection, including the HMIS and proposed MCH surveillance. Also listed is LQAS, which is a methodology. What specific LQAS is being conducted in Uganda and on what topic?

USAID supports use of LQAS to assess district level service coverage and performance. For more details please see <http://www.starelqas.ug/>. Additionally, this program may leverage LQAS surveys for limited program data collection.

21. On page 10 of the RFA, it states “Communication for Healthy Communities will execute national-level communication initiatives, it will work closely with the MoH and other USG-funded service delivery partners to ensure that these programs are linked to community-level activities that respond to needs at the local level, and to harmonize communication efforts,” is it USAID’s expectation that applicants should directly implement national level campaigns and only support those at the local level in designing and implementing community based campaigns?

There are communication initiatives which will not be national in nature but as community based campaigns. The applicant will support these campaigns. If there is need to have national level campaigns that are linked to community initiatives the applicant will have to work with the USG service delivery partners to scale up, but where need be the program will directly contribute to this scale up.

22. Can you provide the MOH Information Education Communication (IEC)/Behavior Change Communication (BCC) strategy? This document is mentioned on p. 4; however, not included as an attachment.

This document was later changed to National Communication Guidelines. Upon posting of this amendment, document shall be uploaded as attachment to the RFA.