



USAID | BANGLADESH

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AMENDMENT NO. 1

Request for Applications (RFA) Number: RFA-388-14-000001,
Women's Empowerment Activity

DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENT:

The purpose of this amendment is to:

- I. Modify Cover Page and Section IV.5, Application Submission Deadline
- II. Modify Section IV.4.B.E (Page 46), Management Plan;
- III. Modify Section I.1.iii (Page 10, paragraph 2), USAID COORDINATION
- IV. Modify Section IV.4.B.G (Page 47), Past Performance,
- V. Provide answers to questions received on the RFA specified deadline

BY: _____

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DATE: _____

3/20/2014

I. Delete "Application Deadline: April 8, 2014, 1600 Bangladesh Time" from Cover Page and Replace with "Application Deadline: April 30, 2014, 1600 Bangladesh Time".

Delete the paragraph Section IV.5 (Page 52), **SUBMISSION DEADLINES** in its entirety and replace it with the following:

"Applications shall be due at 1600 hours Bangladesh Local Time on April 30, 2014. USAID will determine whether an application that is not received by the Agreement Officer by one of the methods specified below by the time and date indicated will be late. Because making an award is critical to USG foreign policy goals, time is important and late applications may not, at the sole discretion of the Agreement Officer, be considered."

II. Delete the paragraph Section IV.4.B.E (Page 46), Management Plan in its entirety and replace it with the following:

E. Management Plan

*The applicant should propose a management plan and describe how the proposed plan will contribute towards achieving the objectives and results described in the Program Description. The proposed plan should specifically state and justify the composition and organizational structure of the entire activity team. It should also describe how the technical expertise and experience of all staff members is most conducive to achieving expected results of the activity. The plan should specify the role and estimated amount of time each staff member will devote to the activity and/or specific components within the activity. Delineation of roles, responsibilities, authority, and processes for decision making within applicant's in-country team and between the home office and the field must be spelled out clearly. **An organizational chart is expected to either be embedded into the Management Plan or provided as an annex** and clearly depict lines of authority, staff responsibility, and the role of sub-recipient organizations (if any).*

*The applicant should clearly identify proposed partners, explaining the roles and responsibilities of each and the proposed management operating structure. **Signed Memorandum of Understanding with proposed partners should be presented in an annex** (excluded from the 30-page limitation) and will be reviewed. Services to be provided by each partner institution or organization shall be described. Applicants shall describe the process of identifying and supporting sub-grantees (if any) and specify the technical resources and expertise of proposed subcontract/sub-recipient organizations (if any). Should the applicant decide to utilize sub-agreements, detailed information on its experience in overseeing and implementing sub-agreements should be provided.*

The management plan should also describe how the applicant would coordinate and synergize its interventions with other programs of USAID/Bangladesh and other donors. The applicant should

provide information on proposed field management structure and financial controls as well as details on home office backstopping and its purpose (if applicable).

*Finally, a **Mobilization Plan** should be included as a step-by-step outline that concretely demonstrates how the applicant will get the activity underway. The Mobilization Plan must cover the first 90 days of activity implementation and address how the applicant can rapidly launch the activity. The Mobilization Plan shall provide information on how planned interventions might contribute to expected results within the first 90 days. The Mobilization Plan should include the management of identified challenges described in Section I, vii., Management Plan (p. 28)*

III. Delete the paragraph Section I.1.iii (Page 10), USAID COORDINATION and replace it with the following:

iii. USAID COORDINATION

The Women's Empowerment Activity is complementary to other USAID activities, and specifically to much of USAID's Feed the Future (FTF) portfolio, which focuses on improved food security. USAID's activities are striving to identify gender-based constraints and take necessary actions to remove them. USAID's activities also measure gender impacts by collecting sex-disaggregated data to fill critical knowledge gaps in gender-related activity outcomes.

The applicant is expected to harmonize with current USAID activities to avoid overlap, build on lessons learned, and explore future collaborations that expand impact. There are many USAID/Bangladesh activities (including activities outside of the FTF portfolio) focusing on aspects of women's empowerment. The recipient must develop the best approach to reach the results outlined in the Results Framework. This means the activity may or may not work in the same communities and/or with some of the same beneficiaries of other USAID-funded activities. If the applicant chooses to work in the same areas as other projects, opportunities for harmonization and avoiding duplication need to be considered. WEA can only leverage already-developed materials if current implementing partners agree to such an arrangement. This approach could include using existing women's empowerment groups, starting new ones or a combination of both. A few examples of USAID activities are listed below.

IV. Delete the following sentence from Section IV.4.B.G (Page 47), Past Performance in its entirety:

"Applicants must submit a list of the all U.S. Government and other donor-funded contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, etc. involving similar or related programs during the past three years."

Replace with: *"Applicants must submit a list of U.S. Government and other donor-funded contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, etc. involving similar or related programs during the past three years."*

V. Questions and Answers

1) Given that the cross cutting result on the draft FtF Livestock RFA sounds very similar to this RFA, we are wondering whether this RFA will take the place of that cross cutting result (it will be removed or modified when the final livestock RFA is released)? If not, what is USAID's vision for how this program and the livestock program will/should relate to each other vis a vis women's empowerment?

Response 1: The USAID Mission has not released a livestock RFA. The recipient should only respond to the Women's Empowerment Activity RFA.

2) Is the requested Organizational Chart (pg. 46) expected to be embedded into the Management Plan section of the narrative, or included as a separate annex?

Response 2: The organizational chart may either be embedded or provided as an annex. (Please see item II of this Amendment.)

3) May applicants submit additional annexes beyond the five required annexes listed on pg 44.

Response 3: Only 5 annexes are required as noted in the RFA and will be the base for evaluation. The applicant may submit additional annexes within reason as background information.

4) Does the list of professional references count toward the two-page limit for the Key Personnel CVs?

Response 4: No.

5) Although they are listed separately in the suggested outline for the proposal narrative, may applicants combine "Section IV. Past Performance" and "Section VII. Institutional Capacity" into one section?

Response 5: No.

6) Does the requirement to use 12 point font, Times Roman, also apply to tables embedded in the narrative? Does the same font size/type requirement also apply to the annexes (e.g. Illustrative M&E Plan, Organizational Chart)?

Response 6: Tables/organograms, annexes can be in different point font and type as long as they are legible.

7) The evaluation criteria for the technical approach (p. 57) require that the proposal "adequately describes how funding will be allocated into the three project components: targeting beneficiaries, women's empowerment groups, and income generating activities." Since the

technical should not include financial information, please clarify how applicants should comply with this requirement.

Response 7: Recipients can put percentage (%) funding for each project component with a brief narrative of allocation rationale.

8) Page 53 of the RFA, indicates that hard copies of submissions must arrive by the due date and time. Would USAID consider allowing applicants to submit proposals electronically with hard copies to follow within two weeks of the submission deadline?

Response 8: Both hard and soft copies of the applications must be submitted by due date and time (local time).

9) Considering the short timeframe for applicants to prepare their proposals, would USAID consider extending the deadline for submission to allow applicants to adequately respond to the solicitation and integrate considerations based on USAID's responses to questions?

Response 9: The submission deadline has been extended to April 30, 2014.

10) Page 47 of the RFA states, "Applicants must submit a list of all U.S. Government or other donor-funded contracts, grants cooperative agreements, etc. involving similar or related programs during the past three years."

a. Will USAID please consider recommending a maximum number of programs for which to provide past performance information in lieu of "all relevant programs in the past 3 years," as is currently stated in the RFA?

Response 10.a: If an applicant has a list of more than five similar programs in the past three years, that organization may submit the most recent five. (Please see item IV of the amendment).

b. Can USAID please clarify whether USAID prefers this information compiled in list form to include all relevant information rather than traditional PPRs, or would USAID like full PPRs in addition to a consolidated list?

Response 10.b: Past information may be supplied either traditional Past Performance report or as a list, however the information should adequately demonstrate past performance. (Please see item IV of the amendment).

11) Page 54 states, "Applications submitted electronically must be in either Microsoft Word (for narrative text) or Excel (for tables), unless you are providing scanned copies of pages that include signatures or forms." Would USAID please consider allowing applicants to submit full technical and cost applications in PDF format?

Response 11: No. MS Word & MS Excel are required. The applicant additionally may submit a PDF copy if desired.

12) Page 46 of the RFA asks for a “plan for effective rapid launch of WEA interventions” to be included within the Technical Approach (Section C) of the proposal. Page 47 asks for the Mobilization Plan to be included as part of the Management Plan (Section E) in the technical proposal. Page 48 of the RFA asks for the Mobilization Plan to be included as Annex D. Can USAID please clarify 1- the difference between a “plan for effective rapid launch” and the Mobilization Plan; and 2- where in the proposal this information belongs?

Response 12: The “plan for an effective rapid launch” is a brief summary of the Mobilization Plan. The “plan for an effective rapid launch” belongs in the Technical Approach. The Mobilization Plan should be included as Annex D.

13) Will USAID consider allowing the titles of Key Positions to be altered by applicants, as long as the expected roles, responsibilities, and minimum qualifications of the each position remain unchanged?

Response 13: Yes. If an applicant changes any titles of Key Personnel there should be an accompanying justification.

14) Page 10 of the RFA indicates that “The applicant is expected to harmonize with current USAID activities to avoid overlap, build on lessons learned, and explore future collaborations that expand impact. There are many USAID/Bangladesh activities (including activities outside of the FTF portfolio) focusing on aspects of women’s empowerment.” Does this harmonization imply we should work in the same communities and/or with some of the same beneficiaries of other USAID-funded programs? Can WEA leverage already-developed materials?

Response 14: The recipient must develop the best approach to reach the results outlined in the Results Framework. This means the activity may or may not work in the same communities and/or with some of the same beneficiaries of other USAID-funded activities. If the applicant chooses to work in the same areas as other projects, opportunities for harmonization and avoiding duplication need to be considered. WEA can only leverage already-developed materials if current implementing partners agree to such an arrangement. (Please see item III of this Amendment.)

15) Similarly, does USAID expect WEA to use existing women’s empowerment groups, start new ones, or a combination of both?

Response 15: The recipient must develop the best approach to reach the results outlined in the Results Framework. This approach could include using existing women’s empowerment groups, starting new ones or a combination of both. (Please see item III of this Amendment).

16) The RFA places a strong emphasis on M&E, and states what the M&E Plan must include and measure. Would USAID be willing to provide some indication of how thorough and detailed they expect the Illustrative M&E to be? Is there a page limit suggestion?

Response 16: Please provide a detailed illustrative M&E plan. There is no page limit.

17) Page 35 of the RFA states that "An IEE of the USAID/Bangladesh's Feed the Future Project that includes this activity will be approved by the BEO before funds are sub-obligated into this activity. USAID/Bangladesh will provide a copy of the IEE to the recipient, who must follow the conditions outlined therein. The recipient shall be responsible for implementing all IEE conditions, as established in the BEO-Approved IEE, pertaining to the activities (including sub-contracts and grants) to be funded under this Agreement." Therefore, can applicants assume a very short discussion of Environmental requirements will suffice in the proposal?

Response 17: That is correct.

18) Section C of the RFA (sub-sections D & G) make reference to submission of an accounting manual for applicants (or sub-applicants) that 1) do not have a NICRA and/or 2) those that have never received a grant, cooperative agreement or contract from the US Government. For entities that may not have a specific accounting manual, would USAID accept a memo explaining the accounting practices and standards followed by the organization?

Response 18: Yes for initial evaluation.

19) Can USAID provide clarity on what areas are considered the "zone of influence" for FtF in Bangladesh? Is it in the same areas as current FtF programming or somewhere else?

Response 19: Same areas.

20) Will the applicant be allowed to work in the same area and with the same households as that of other programs implemented by USAID partners?

Response 20: Yes.

21) What kinds of overlaps will be allowed (geographic, groups etc.) with current USAID programs in Bangladesh?

Response 21: The recipient must develop the best approach to reach the results outlined in the Results Framework. There are no restrictions on the level of overlap with other projects.

22) Since the RFA has been designed for complimenting the work of FTF, what kinds of arrangements are needed as pre-requisites to demonstrate possible partnerships with existing FTFs implementers?

Response 22: No prior arrangements are necessary. The applicant should describe possible partnerships that will expand impact.

23) The RFA explains that the activity overview is divided into 3 components: Targeting beneficiaries; women's empowerment groups; and income-generating activities (p 15). There is a

subsequent discussion of “targeting beneficiaries” which is then followed by a subheading “Women’s Empowerment Groups” but then the RFA moves directly into discussing the IR 1 (p 16). Later there is a discussion of “income-generating activities” after IR 6 (p 17), but before IR2 and IR3. Is there any additional information about “women’s empowerment groups” that USAID would like applicants to be aware of? It seems like there may have been a formatting issue with the text and we would just like to be sure that there isn’t any information USAID intended to provide missing from the RFA.

Response 23: No, there is no other information that applicants need to be aware of.

24) P 47 says “The Mobilization Plan should include the management of identified challenges described in Section I(7)(M).” Could USAID please clarify what the reference to Section I(7)(M) is? We do not find such a section clearly labeled in the RFA or attachments.

Response 24: Corrected. “Section I, vii., Management Plan (p. 28)”. (Please see item II of this Amendment.)

25) Does USAID envision applicants to this call to follow FTF targeting criterion or can the bidders define their own targeting criterion?

Response 25: Applicants can define their own targeting criterion.

26) Would it be possible to extend the due date of the application?

Response 26: Please see response no. 9

27) When is the anticipated start date for the award?

Response 27: The period of performance anticipated herein is three (3) years, beginning on the effective date of the cover page of the Cooperative Agreement.

28) When is the anticipated notification date for the award applicant?

Response 28: Please see response 27.

29) We just a concern whether through this Request of Application will provide award to only one NGO or Two or more than that.

Response 29: USAID reserves the right to fund any one, none, or several of the applications submitted.

30) There are any plans for a similar Women's Empowerment Activity in the East Africa Region.

Response 30: The Women’s Empowerment activity (RFA-388-14-000001) is designed for Bangladesh.

31) Would you be so kind to tell me what does it mean not to be a non U.S. entities and individuals?

Response 31: Non US entities and individuals mean organizations that are not legally registered in USA and/or not an American Citizen.

32) Whether we can drop the hard copy of the application by our office transport to your office or do we have to send it by courier/postal services?

Response 32: Hard copies can also be submitted by hand carry or courier/postal service at the American Embassy – Dhaka.

33) Do we have to provide the name of the staff and provide CV of who will be fill the four key positions?

Response 33: Applicants must submit key personnel's CV and Letter of Commitment as annex b.

34) List of Items, Schedule of Requirements, Scope of Work, Terms of Reference, Bill of Materials required.

Response 34: Please see the RFA-388-14-00001 on www.grants.gov.

35) Soft Copy of the Tender Document through email.

Response 35: Please see the RFA-388-14-000001.

36) Names of countries that will be eligible to participate in this tender.

Response 36: There are no such country restrictions.

37) Information about the Tendering Procedure and Guidelines

Response 37: Please see Section IV of the RFA.

38) Estimated Budget for this Purchase

Response 38: Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Bangladesh intends to provide approximately \$5,500,000 to \$6,000,000 in total USAID funding for this activity to be allocated over a three-year period.

39) Any Extension of Bidding Deadline?

Response 39: Please see response no. 9

40) Any Addendum or Pre Bid meeting Minutes?

Response 40: All amendments pertaining to this RFA will be posted in grants.gov. USAID does not anticipate a 'pre-bid' conference and thus no meeting minutes available.

41) I noticed the grant for women empowerment in Bangladesh and I was wondering if you would like to provide a quote for my story. I'm interested in what specifically the grant will do and why you think it is beneficial for these women.

Response 41: USAID cannot comment on this procurement until after it's awarded.

[END OF AMENDMENT 1]