

SECTION III - EVALUATION CRITERIA

A. Overview

The Technical Application and the Cost/Business Application will be evaluated in the following manner.

B. Basic Requirements

Applications that do not comply with the Instructions and the requirements in the Program Description run the risk of not being considered for evaluation. Applicants should follow all requirements and instructions in the RFA. These include, but are not limited to, those listed below.

1. Results And Reform Areas Covered By The Program

All applications should address both results areas (justice reform and transparency and accountability). In addition, all four types of activities must be addressed in the application.

2. Length and Value of Program

Applications must be for programs three years in length. The government's estimated value of the program is between \$4.0 and \$4.5 million over the three years.

3. Forming Consortia

As defined in Section I.B.1.c and explained in Section II.C.5, the formation of a meaningful consortium is required. It is expected that a consortium of organizations or consortium shall consist of a minimum of three organizations.

4. Budget Information

The budget information must include the SF 424 *and* the additional cost matrix and budget notes required by Section II.C.

C. Evaluation Criteria

The selection criteria presented below have been tailored to the terms of this RFA. They are designed to allow USAID to choose the highest quality application to carry out the Program. The relative importance of each criterion is indicated by points. A

total of 100 points are available for Technical criteria; Cost criteria will be worth up to 50 points. Applicants should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant areas that applicants should address in their applications and (b) serve as the standard against which all applications will be evaluated.

1. Technical Criteria (100 points)

The technical evaluation will focus on the applicant's overall ability to achieve results under the framework provided in this RFA. The technical criteria is broken down into three factors totaling 80 points.

a. Proposed Program Approach (50 points)

The proposal will be evaluated on the basis of how well-conceived, technically sound and responsive the approach presented is. Specifically, the following subfactors will be evaluated.

- i) Consortium Skills and Management (20 points): USAID will evaluate the skills, expertise and experience of the consortium, taking into account a) the balance and complementarities of skills and experiences among consortium members to achieve the results defined in this RFA (including the inclusion of non-traditional organizations within the consortium); and b) the consortium's plan for self-management, decision-making, and division of responsibilities. USAID will also consider the degree of participation of stakeholders in the proposed approach. Applications which involve coalitions of all key stakeholders related to the development, adoption, implementation and oversight of key reforms will be more favorably evaluated than those that work with only part of the key stakeholders involved. This evaluation will include a review of how clearly defined the key stakeholders are and of the rationale for their inclusion in each type of result. USAID will pay particular attention to the degree to which the application addresses any special issues related to the incorporation of traditionally marginalized groups (women, the rural poor, and immigrants) into the creation of coalitions of key stakeholders and the definition of key stakeholders.
- ii) Technical Strength (25 points): A strong application will provide convincing evidence of the applicant's understanding of the program of activities it proposes to accomplish, and its relationship to the objectives and performance indicators outlined in the RFA. The application will be evaluated for the coherency and clarity of the description of the activities planned, as well as the level of impact the proposed approach is expected to have on the selected results area. The activities planned should be based on a sound understanding of the current Dominican political situation. USAID will also evaluate the extent to which the

applicant presents an ambitious, but feasible, plan for moving towards the achievement of program results. Applications should address any special issues related to the incorporation of traditionally marginalized groups (women, the rural poor, and immigrants) into the program of activities planned.

- iii) **Geographic Focus (5 points):** USAID will review the extent to which the applicant documents and explains the location of any proposed site specific activities as well as how well they contribute to national level results.

b. Past Performance (25 points)

USAID will evaluate the degree to which the applicant has a demonstrated successful track record. Work which is similar will have more weight in this evaluation. Similarity is defined in terms of the types of program – implementing and monitoring similar or closely related activities to those contained in the program description *i.e.* access to information, providing technical input into policy reform and oversight, and coalition-building – as well as the size and location (meaning, for any non-Dominican institutions involved, work preferably in Dominican Republic or in an overseas (non- U.S.) environment with similarities to Dominican Republic) of the work. As a result, both the relevance of the work performed by an applicant in the past and how well it performed that work will be evaluated.

c. Appropriateness of Proposed Staff (25 points)

USAID will evaluate the capabilities of proposed staff to determine how commensurate they are with the proposed activities and level of assigned responsibilities. This evaluation will focus on the value of the education, experience and specialized skills of the proposed staff in relation to the actual program activities proposed. All key personnel must have Spanish language ability at a 3/3 level. In addition to an analysis of the relevance of the general experience, skills and education of the proposed staff relevant to the activities planned, greater weight will be given to proposed staff who have higher proficiencies in Spanish, experience in Latin America and in USAID-funded democracy programs.

2. Cost

USAID will also evaluate the cost proposed. This evaluation will focus on two subfactors: a. Cost Realism/Reasonableness and Cost Effectiveness; and b. Cost Share. This evaluation will involve consideration of whether the budget notes and narrative provide a clear explanation of each category of estimated costs, including any subgrant or subcontract arrangements and whether the budget aggregation has

been broken-down appropriately and in accordance with the instructions in Section II. Failure to provide clear, sufficient and compliant cost information may negatively impact an applicant's score under **any** of the subfactors listed below.

a. Cost Realism/Reasonableness and Cost Effectiveness

The cost realism analysis is intended to determine whether the costs estimated accurately reflect the costs that would be incurred during the actual performance of the program, and whether those costs are reasonable. In addition, the cost realism analysis will: a) verify the Applicant's understanding of the requirements and regulations; b) assess the degree to which the cost proposal reflects the approaches in the technical application; and c) assess the degree to which the cost included in the cost proposal accurately represents the work effort included in the technical application. Cost effectiveness involves maximizing the percentage of the costs allocated to program delivery.

b. Cost Share

Cost sharing will be assessed based on: a) the percentage of program costs that the applicant will draw from non-US Government sources; b) the ability of the applicant to realistically access these sources and funds and the feasibility of the cost sharing plan; and c) if applicable, the degree to which the applicant has included cost-sharing as a factor in making sub-awards under the program.

D. Agreement Award

The Agreement Officer may conduct negotiations with one or more applicants but reserves the right to make award without discussions. USAID's objective is to award a Cooperative Agreement to the organization or consortium whose application is in USAID's sole discretion the most likely to achieve USAID's goals as described in the RFA. The awardee will be the applicant whose application is determined by the Agreement Officer on a best value basis to be the most advantageous to the United States Government. The point system described Section III.C above is a guide to that determination, but it is not binding on the discretion of the Agreement Officer to make award to the most advantageous application.

END OF SECTION III