

SECTION II – INSTRUCTIONS

The instructions are broken into three parts covering A) general issues, B) the preparation of the Technical Application and C) the preparation of the Cost/Business Application.

A. General Application Instructions

The following general guidance is applicable to the submission of applications under the RFA.

1. *Applicants:* USAID will entertain applications from domestic (Dominican) non-governmental entities such as private, non-profit organizations (or for-profit companies willing to forego profits), including private voluntary organizations, universities, think tanks, research organizations, professional associations, and relevant special interest associations. This does not, however, preclude U.S. or other foreign organizations as subgrantees or otherwise being involved. It is USAID's policy not to include profits of any nature under assistance agreements. Reasonable, allocable and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the agreement program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organizations), may be paid under the agreement contemplated by this RFA.
2. *Responsiveness:* Applicants should submit an application directly responsive to the terms, conditions, specifications and clauses of this RFA. As set forth in Section III.B of this RFA, applications not conforming to this RFA may be categorized as non-responsive and eliminated from further consideration. Each applicants shall address all result and subject matter areas in its proposal.
3. *Language:* It is USAID policy that English shall be the official language of all award documents. As a result, it is required that the main parts of the application be in English. Specifically, the Cover Page, Executive Summary and the Application Body specified in Section II.B.1-3 below and the body of the Cost/Business Application specified in Section II.C below must be in English. **However, applicants may submit a Spanish translation of these documents as a supplement to their applications.** In case of conflicting information, the English version will control. However, attachments such as resumes, corporate background information specified as attachments to the Technical Application in Section II.B.4 and any copies of pre-existing documents required with the Cost/Business Application specified in Section II.C can be submitted in the original Spanish. No translation of pre-existing documents is required.
4. *Copies:* One original plus three (3) copies of a technical application, and one original plus one (1) copy of a cost/business application must be submitted. In addition to hard copies, applicants must supply a copy of their proposal on CD-

ROM in Word 2002 or later version. Any graphics/tables must be drafted in or converted to Word 2002 or Excel 2002 (or later version). Technical applications must not make reference to specific costs or detailed pricing data. Applicants should retain for their records one copy of the application and all enclosures that accompany their application. Erasures or other changes must be initialed by the person signing the application.

5. *Envelopes:* All copies of the technical and cost/business applications must be placed in separate sealed envelopes clearly marked on the outside with the following words "RFA No. 517-08-005 Technical Application" for the copies of the Technical Application and "RFA No. 517-08-005 Cost/Business Application" for the copies of the Cost/Business Application. These two individual envelopes must then be bundled together to be received as one complete package.
6. *Point of Contact* - Applications should be submitted in sealed envelopes with the name and address of the applicant and the number of the RFA (RFA No. 517-08-005) on the envelope. Applications are due to Ms. Rosa Jiménez at the address below no later than 5:00 PM (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic time), June 23, 2008.

Applications should be addressed as follows:

If sent via mail within USA:

Rosa Jiménez
Acquisition and Assistance Specialist
USAID/Dominican Republic
Unit # 3470, Box 528
APO AA 34041-0528
Re: RFA No. 517-08-005

If sent via courier:

Rosa Jiménez
Acquisition and Assistance Specialist
USAID/Dominican Republic
Av. Leopoldo Navarro
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Re: RFA No. 517-08-005
Telephone: (809) 731-7048

7. *Delivery:* Telegraphic, e-mailed or faxed applications are not authorized for this RFA and will not be accepted. Applications that are submitted late, incomplete or are non-responsive may not be considered.
8. *Start Up:* USAID anticipates that the successful recipient of the Agreement will begin activities immediately after signing the Agreement. The Agreement will provide support for three years from the date of the Agreement signature. All

program activities, including final reporting and evaluations, are expected to be completed within that period.

9. *Notification of Award:* Applicants should assume notification of an award approximately forty-five (45) days after the date established as a deadline for receipt of applications.
10. *Unnecessarily Elaborate Proposals:* Unnecessarily elaborate brochures or other presentations beyond those sufficient to present a complete and effective application in response to this RFA are not desired and may be construed as an indication of the applicant's lack of cost consciousness. Elaborate art work, expensive paper and bindings, and expensive visual and other presentation aids are neither necessary nor wanted.
11. *Authority to Obligate the Government:* The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the U.S. Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed agreement may be incurred before receipt of either an agreement signed by the Agreement Officer or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

B. Instructions for the Preparation of the Technical Application

The suggested format for the technical application is:

1. *Cover Page:* Title, name of organization(s) submitting application, contact person, telephone and fax numbers, address, and e-mail, plus an identification of all partner organizations.
2. *Executive Summary* (not to exceed 2 pages): Briefly describe the proposed activities, goals, purposes, and anticipated results. Briefly describe technical and managerial resources of your organization. Describe how the overall program will be managed. State the *bottom line* funding request from USAID and the *bottom line* funding secured from other sources (state sources and amounts) for the proposed program.
3. *Application Body* (not to exceed 30 pages – 12 character pitch or larger, Times Roman font, minimum one-inch margins): The application's structure should reflect the evaluation criteria listed in Section III. This means that the application must include sufficient information for USAID to analyze and evaluate the application completely and fairly under all of the evaluation criteria specified. The body of the technical application should have the following sections, preferably in the following order:

a. Proposed Program Approach:

The application must present a well-conceived, technically sound and responsive approach. To be considered under this RFA, a program must promote the adoption and implementation of reforms in these areas. All four types of activities must be included and both result areas must be addressed in the application. Below is more specific guidance on the contents of this section of the Application Body.

i) Relevant Political Context

This section in the Application Body should start with a brief description of the issues and problems resulting from the relevant political context in Dominican Republic. Specifically, the application must address the issues and problems that will be faced in addressing sensitive key democratic policy reform issues implicated by the proposed program. The application also should incorporate this understanding into their approach to the proposed program.

ii) Basic Technical Approach

Following the discussion of the relevant political context, the applicants should describe their approach to the reform result areas that will be addressed in the proposal. Applicants should use Section I.B of this RFA to provide parameters and a framework for this part of the technical application. Section I.B lays out the work on two results areas along with the four main types of activities to be performed. Most importantly, all four types of activities described in Section I.B (increased access to information, the provision of technical input, oversight, and coalition-building) must be addressed in detail under the reform result areas addressed by the proposal.

Section I.B includes examples of the types of approaches that could be used under each reform area. These examples are meant to show the range of approaches that could be taken; **USAID encourages applicants to develop their own approaches based on their understanding of needs, their prior institutional experience, and their own determination of the approaches that would be feasible.** In all cases, the applicant should clearly explain the rationale for the proposed approaches chosen.

Within each result, USAID has also defined more specific outcomes or sub-results that the applicants' activities are expected to contribute to over the three-year period. The applicant will be held responsible for specified results in the relevant program result areas.

Using the above information as a guide, the applicant should submit a coherent, clear and detailed description of the activities that will form its

program. The applicant should address the results and objectives that will be accomplished through the program of activities. All indicators that are relevant to the proposed program should also be identified. The recipient under this RFA will be expected to collect performance indicator information related to the stakeholders and beneficiaries reached through their activities.

In addition to identifying results, objectives and indicators, the application should explain the links and relationship of the specific activities described to the relevant results, objectives and indicators. The level of impact resulting from the proposed activities should also be addressed.

iii) Stakeholders

This section of the Application Body should also include a narrative that defines the results applicants expect to achieve in terms of stakeholder and beneficiary participation and impact. All relevant stakeholders in the approach proposed must be identified in the application. The relationship of each stakeholder to the activities and results proposed must be addressed. The application must also describe the degree of participation of these stakeholders in the processes involved. Applicants must identify the degree to which stakeholders and beneficiaries include women and other groups traditionally marginalized from the political process.

iv) Implementation Plan

This section of the Application Body must also include an implementation plan that provides convincing evidence of the applicant's understanding of the program of activities it proposes to accomplish, and the specific results USAID would like to support. More specifically, this part should also address: (i) the identity of all involved coalition members *and* the specific role played by each such member with respect to each result/reform area; and (ii). the use of existing local and regional expertise and experience in the program approach for each result/reform area, including an identification of all significant outside partners and an explanation of how such partners will be utilized.

v) Geographic Focus

This section of the Application Body should also identify the location of any proposed site-specific activities. Applicants should include a clear and adequate rationale for the choices made in this respect.

b. Past Performance:

The applicant must provide evidence that it has a demonstrated, successful track record in 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, oversight, and coalition-building). The applicant must submit a list (i) of all contracts, grants and cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs over the past three years for the applicant and/or partner organizations and (ii) of all contracts, grants and cooperative agreements with USAID over the past three years for the applicant and all key partners. The applicant must include the following information for all required references: the location; current telephone numbers /e-mail address (if applicable); points of contact (both technical and administrative (contractual); award numbers if available; and a brief description of work performed. The basic description of relevant contracts and the required reference information must be included in this section of the technical application body. Additional background information regarding the applicant and its key partners can be included as an attachment to the Technical Application.

c. Appropriateness of Proposed Staff:

The application should address the capabilities of the proposed staff. The proposal must identify those individuals that are considered to be key personnel for the performance and achievement of the program. Information regarding all relevant experience, education, language skills and other technical skills should be provided for each key personnel. This information should be in the form of a resume, or an equivalent document, which should be included in the Attachment Section of the Technical Application. The Attachment Section should also include binding letters of commitment from every proposed key personnel who is not currently an employee of the applicant or a partner organization. In addition to providing information regarding the capabilities of the staff, this section of the Application Body should address why and how the staff capabilities and mix are commensurate with the proposed activities and level of assigned responsibilities.

4. *Attachments* - As set forth above, the application body is limited to a total of 30 pages. This page limit does not include the following authorized attachments: (a) Resumes; (b) Letters of Commitment for key personnel; and (c) Background information relating to the general experience and capabilities of the applicant or its partners.

C. Instructions for Preparation of the Cost/Business Application

The Cost/Business Application should be prepared following the guidance provided below. All information discussed below should be included in the application in the manner and format described below.

1. *Separateness*: The Cost/Business application must be completely separate from the applicant's technical application. The application must be submitted using SF 424 and SF 424A "Application for Federal Assistance. "
2. *Cost Information Submission*: The cost information submitted must include three distinct parts: a) the SF 424; b) the cost matrix; and c) budget notes.

a. SF 424

The cost application should be for a period of 3 years using the budget format shown in the SF 424A. If there are any training costs to be charged to this Agreement, clearly identify them.

b. Cost Matrix

The information to be presented under Cost/Business Application must also indicate the amount of funds to be spent by Result Area and activity. Stated another way, the budget should relate to results while also showing the inputs and type of cost for each result as well as overall. Applicants should include an overall summary budget and a detailed annual budget defined by result area, general program activities and specific activities consistent with the suggested formats provided in Attachment 4. It is possible that slight changes will be made to the suggested format based on discussions at the pre-applications conference.

c. Budget Notes

To support the costs proposed, please provide detailed budget notes/narrative for all costs that explain how all costs were derived. The combination of the cost data and breakdowns specified above and the cost notes must be sufficient to allow a determination whether the costs estimated are reasonable and realistic. If the information described below is provided in the cost matrixes described above, then the information need not be included in the Budget Notes. The following section provides guidance on issues involving specific types of costs.

- i) **Salary and Wages** - Direct salaries and wages should be proposed in accordance with the applicant's personnel policies.

- ii) **Fringe Benefits** - If the applicant has a fringe benefit rate that has been approved by an agency of the Government, such rate should be used and evidence of its approval should be provided. If a fringe benefit rate has not been so approved, the application should propose a rate and explain how the rate was determined. If the latter is used, the narrative should include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., unemployment insurance, workers compensation, health and life insurance, retirement, FICA, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in dollars and as a percentage of salaries.
- iii) **Travel and Transportation** - The application should indicate the number of trips, domestic and international, and the estimated costs per trip. Specify the origin and destination for each proposed trip, duration of travel, and number of individuals traveling. *Per diem* should be based on the applicant's normal travel policies (applicants may choose to refer to the Federal Standardized Travel Regulations for cost estimates).
- iv) **Equipment** – Specify all equipment to be purchased, including the type of equipment, the manufacturer, the unit cost, the number of units to be purchased and the expected geographic source. Goods and services provided by the Recipients under this USAID-financed award are expected to be subject to the 000 Geographic Code (United States).
- v) **Materials and Supplies** – Specify all materials and supplies expected to be purchased, including type, unit cost and units.
- vi) **Communications** – Specific information regarding the type of communication cost at issue (*i.e.* mail, telephone, cellular phones, internet *etc.*) must be included in order to allow an assessment of the realism and reasonableness of this types of costs.
- vii) **Subcontracts/Consultants** – Information sufficient to determine the reasonableness of the cost of each specific subcontract and consultant expected to be hired must be included. Similar information should be provided for all consultants as is provided under the category for personnel.
- viii) **Allowances** – Allowances should be broken down by specific type and by person. Allowances should be in accordance with the applicant's policies and the applicable regulations and policies.
- ix) **Direct Facilities Costs** – Specific information regarding the cost of any facilities needed to perform program activities. The information provided should include the unit cost (rent), the time period the facilities are needed and the number of facilities. Only facilities that directly

benefit the program activities should be included in this category; all other facility costs should be included in the indirect cost category.

- x) **Other Direct Costs** - This includes report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, insurance (other than insurance included in the applicant's fringe benefits, as well as any other miscellaneous costs which directly benefit the program proposed by the applicant. The narrative should provide a breakdown and support for all other direct costs. If seminars and conferences are included, the applicant should indicate the subject, venue and duration of proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs.
 - xi) **Indirect Costs** - The applicant should support the proposed indirect cost rate with a letter from a cognizant U.S. Government audit agency or with sufficient information for USAID to determine the reasonableness of the rates. (For example, a breakdown of labor bases and overhead pools, the method of determining the rate, a description of all costs in the pools etc.).
3. *Cost Sharing*: In addition to USAID funds, applicants are encouraged to contribute resources from own, private or local sources for the implementation of this program. Contributions can be either cash or in-kind and can include contributions from the local counterpart organizations, project clients, the Government of Dominican Republic, and other donors (not other USG funding sources). Information regarding the proposed cost share should be included in the SF 424 and the Cost Matrix as indicated on those documents. The cost share should be discussed in the Budget Notes to the extent necessary to realistically access these sources and funds and the feasibility of the cost sharing plan. The minimum cost share will be 25% of the total program costs. Cost shares less than 25% will automatically disqualify an application; a cost share of greater than 25% will be considered favorably. The cost share will be evaluated as indicated in Section III.C.2.b of the RFA.
4. *Management Costs*: The cost information described above in Paragraph 2 of this Subsection should include detailed cost information regarding the management of the program. Applicants should minimize their administrative and support costs for managing the project to maximize the funds available for project activities.
5. *Forming Consortia*: **The formation of a consortium is required under the RFA.** The formation of a consortium is required because the breadth of the program described above is likely to be beyond the capability of any one organization to perform. In addition, combinations of more than one organization will increase

the probability that the stakeholder participation activities funded under the RFA will be as representative as possible.

Every application must combine the efforts of different organizations in a significant manner in putting together a proposal under the RFA. This means that every Cost/Business Application must contain information showing *either* (a) that the applicant is some type of joint venture *or* (b) that the applicant has binding and significant agreements or contracts with other organizations to perform a significant amount of the work anticipated.

If the applicant is a group of organizations that has actually formed a separate entity – *i.e.* a joint venture -- for the purposes of this application, then the Cost/Business application must include a copy of the documents that set forth the legal relationship between the partner organizations. If no joint venture is involved, the Cost/ Business Application should include a complete discussion of the relationship between the applicant and its partner organizations, how work under the program will be allocated, how work will be organized and managed and copies of all agreements between the partner organizations

In all cases, the cost information provided in part 2.b of this subsection should indicate the amounts committed to each member of the consortium. The Budget notes described in part 2.c of this subsection should discuss which consortium member is bearing a particular cost where appropriate to justify and explain the cost in question.

6. *Certifications:* Certifications included in RFA Section IV should be included with the cost proposal.
7. *Financial Reporting:* The Cost/Business Application should discuss the management information procedure the applicant and the partner organizations will employ to ensure accountability for the use of U.S. Government funds. Describe program budgeting, financial and related program reporting procedures.
8. *Financial Resources:* The Cost/Business Application should include information on the applicant's financial status and management. All applicants should submit information relating to whether there has been approval of the organization's accounting system by a U. S. Government agency, including the name, address, and telephone number of the cognizant auditor. If , the applicant has made a certification to USAID that its personnel, procurement and travel policies are compliant with applicable OMB circular and other applicable USAID and Federal regulations, a copy of the certification should be included with the application. If the certification has not been made to USAID/Washington, the following should be included, as applicable.

- (a) Audited financial statements for the past three years,
- (b) Organization chart, by-laws, constitution, and articles of incorporation, if applicable,
- (c) Copies of the applicant's personnel (especially regarding salary and wage scales, merit increases, promotions, leave, differentials, etc.), travel and procurement policies, and indicate whether personnel and travel policies and procedures have been reviewed and approved by any agency of the Federal Government. If so, provide the name, address, and phone number of the cognizant reviewing official.

Similar information should be submitted for all partner organizations.

9. *Responsibility:* The application should include information that substantiates that the applicant:

- (a) Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the Agreement.
- (b) Has the ability to comply with the Agreement conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the applicant, non-governmental and governmental.
- (c) Has a satisfactory record of performance. In the absence of evidence to the contrary or circumstances properly beyond the control of the applicant, applicants who are or have been deficient in current or recent performance (when the number of grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements, and the extent of any deficiency of each, are considered) shall be presumed to be unable to meet this requirement. Past unsatisfactory performance will ordinarily be sufficient to justify a determination of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance. The Agreement Officer will collect and evaluate data on past performance of applicants.
- (d) Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics.
- (e) Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a cooperative agreement under applicable laws and regulations (e.g., EEO).

Applicants may submit any additional evidence of responsibility considered necessary in order for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility.

Similar information should be submitted for all partner organizations.

END OF SECTION II