



Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Number: 72038621RFA00001, Amendment#1
Project Title: USAID's Trees Outside Forests in India (TOFI) Activity
Amendment Date: February 23, 2021

Revised Closing Date and Time for Submission of Concept Paper: March 23, 2021, 02:00 PM (IST)

1. This NOFO is amended and the changes are reflected in the NOFO in *track changes* mode to:

- a) Extend the Concept Paper submission date to **March 23, 2021**;
- b) Revise section B.1 of the NOFO to read as “Subject to funding availability, successful ongoing implementation and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID in total government funding intends to provide **upto US\$25 Million** through incremental funding over a five (5) year period”;
- c) Insert under section B, Objective 2 “Note: Procurement/purchase of seeds /seedlings/saplings will need USAID approval during project implementation”;
- d) Revise section A.2.8 with “The selection of geographic targets will be conducted during the co-design (Phase 3) stage of the TOFI activity. In their response to the solicitation, offerors will propose criteria they would use to select **seven** states representing key agro-ecological zones of India. The final selection of the states at the co-design stage would be subject to MoEFCC approval;
- e) Revise submission dates in section D.4, Application Submission Procedures.
- f) Add in section D.6(a) Technical Approach, “d. Proposed criteria for selection of states” and “h. Brief plan for leveraging funds and private sector engagement in helping achieve the objectives of the activity”.
- g) Add in section D.6(a) Organizational Management and Staffing Plan, “The applicant should also briefly mention how the skill sets of their proposed key personnel will help achieve the objectives of the project”.
- h) Add under section D.6(b) Phase 2 – Oral Presentation Instructions, “The applicants selected for oral presentation are required to present their detailed leverage plan”.
- i) Delete in section D.6 (b)Phase 3 – Technical and Cost/Business Application, “other than those already submitted during the Initial Application”.
- j) Insert in section E.2(a) Factor 1 - Technical Approach, “The robustness of the criteria for selection of states”.

k) Update section E.2(a) Factor 1 - Technical Approach, “The extent to which the applicant demonstrates ability to leverage funds and engage with the private sector to help achieve the objectives”.

l) Provide responses to questions received as below:

1. Please confirm if CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) centres are eligible to apply for this grant?

OR

Can an Foundation in the USA get this grant and work with a sub grantee partner organization to implement the project in India)?

OR

Are Indian organizations eligible to apply directly-we have partners on ground in India working toward this cause (planning to plant 1 million+ trees as well as cultivating new urban/ rural forest outside forests).

OR

I am a Women Business Entrepreneure having a Staffing and Employment and Sales Force Training Company, by trade my family beck in India in Gujarat has a traditional farm, is there any way I can participate in the program.

OR

We are a Pvt. Ltd. Company, we would like to understand if we can apply for this Grant.

USAID Response: Geographic code for this NOFO is 937 (please see section B.5) , which is defined as the United States, the recipient country (India), and developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source. Hence, organizations registered in these countries are eligible to apply.

2. Is it mandatory to have a registered organization with the state in India?

USAID Response: Non-Indian organizations are not required to be registered in India but should establish a project office in India for project oversight.

3. What are the heads/types of activities covered under the 10% administration budget? Would administration costs associated with implementation come under this?

OR

We do not currently have a NICRA from a cognizant agency (USAID or another U.S. Federal Agency). However, we can submit copies of the financial reports for the previous 3-year period, which have been audited by a certified public accountant or other auditor satisfactory to USAID. Will such reports be acceptable?

USAID Response: Organizations which do not have NICRA too can apply for USAID funding. No extra documentation is required with Concept Paper. USAID will review the documents during the pre-award survey.

If the apparently successful applicant does not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate, the recipient may choose to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (see 2 CFR 200.414(f)). If the prospective applicant

chooses the de minimis rate, the AO must incorporate the 10% indirect cost rate in the award budget and the recipient must follow the requirements in 2 CFR 200.414(f).

4. Is FCRA a requirement for an India entity to receive these funds.

USAID Response: It is the responsibility of the organization applying for USAID funding to ensure that they follow local Indian law and can access foreign funding.

5. Wanted to understand if it will be a single contract of USD19 million or could be multiple contracts.

OR

It will be a single contract of upto \$25 million or could be multiple contracts.

USAID Response: As stated on NOFO cover page (page 2), USAID anticipates one award, but reserves the right to fund any, many or none of the applications submitted.

6. The Eligibility Information in section C of the document mentions –‘applying agency should have a valid DUNS number in the SF-424 form to be submitted along with their application.’ I want to know whether United Nations (UN) agencies as well need this number to apply? If yes, what would be the process and how long does it take?

USAID Response: DUNS number is not required at Concept Paper stage, however, DUNS number is required for USAID to make an award. Getting a DUNS number may take some time hence, USAID encourages potential applicants to apply for the DUNS number at the earliest.

Please refer to section D.6 (page 32). Please refer to links below for your reference:

DUNS number: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

SAM registration: <http://www.sam.gov>

7. Is there a set number of trees we must plant in the given project time?

USAID Response: We would leave it to the applicant to propose an appropriate and yet ambitious number of trees for this purpose.

8. Are we required to plant a certain kind of tree that sequesters more carbon dioxide?

USAID Response: Applicants can make the determination based on the requirements on the ground.

9. What are your expectations of us in educating the local people about the importance of TOFs in India?

USAID Response: Please refer to objective 3. One of the expectations under this objective is dissemination of TOF relevant information to relevant stakeholders.

10. Can irrigation systems be part of the project's budget?

USAID Response: The applicant can make that determination based on the approach they propose for achieving objective 2.

11. As an organization, can we contract independent farmers to take care of the trees over a longer duration?

USAID Response: The broader idea of the project is to create a conducive environment and incentivize the farmers to take care of the trees themselves in the long run.

12. Are we responsible for buying land for tree plantation, or do we work with the state government to provide us with agricultural land?

USAID Response: The applicant is not expected to buy land. Rather it's expected that they will work with farmers, other tree growers, institutions, and state level agencies to establish demonstration plots.

13. What is an example of "strengthening the enabling environment for TOF expansion" as mentioned in objective 1 in section A.2.7?

USAID Response: As mentioned in objective 1 in section A.2.7, this could include, among other things, stimulating demand for TOF products, quality standards and regulatory framework for nurseries, certification of TOF products, mobilizing financial resources, where applicable.

14. Do we involve the private and public sectors to partner with us, or do we present the plan to raise the 25% funds required for the project? If we are partnering with them, what will their control over the project be?

OR

What does it mean that 25% of leverage has to come from private and public sectors?

OR

Page 17 states that "25% of leverage from other sources of funding to implement activities is required". Could you please define leverage for the purpose of this solicitation? The USAID website defines leverage as: Resources that a non-traditional USAID partner brings to a public-private partnership, ie. the portion not being borne by USAID. These non-traditional resource partners are typically NOT receiving USAID funds. It can be a variety of forms - anything of value that is measured, financial contributions, third party contributions, donated services or property, or intellectual property. It can NOT be audited. Reference: <https://www.usaid.gov/india/partner-resources/infographic-cost-share-program-income-leverage> Does the leveraged amount need to reach \$4,750,000 and should it be included in the proposed notional budget with the Concept Paper?

OR

Regarding the 25% leverage component, can an applicant leverage all the 25% from public source funds?

OR

Can USAID clarify on the level of documentation required for leveraging component for the applicant that is selected? How does USAID want the lead applicant, who gets selected, to report on the 25% leverage commitment?

OR

Does leverage include all cash and in-kind commodities or services, to include third party contributions, donated services/time or property, training, licenses, and intellectual property, from any source that is non-U.S. Government.

OR

Does USAID require any document from private and public entities on the leverage component at the concept note stage? If not, can you share at which stage the lead applicant has to share those documents?

OR

Can you elaborate on what can be counted towards the leverage requirement? For example, would funding from other donors be considered?

USAID Response: Per section A.2.10 of the NOFO in addition to leveraging resources from the private sector for activity implementation, TOFI will also leverage resources from the public sector. The resources leveraged from both the sectors will enable the activity to engage in interventions that are of shared interest and will enable the interventions to be continued after the TOFI activity ends. At a minimum, the applicant is required to leverage 25% of the award amount from other sources. This should be included in the notional budget.

The organizations that provide leverage will have no control over the project.

Both cash and in-kind contributions are counted as leverage. Leverage amount should be verifiable. Per Examples of in-kind contribution includes but is not limited to:

- Training or other purpose-specific facilities contributed by other organizations for the program's implementation.
- Value of time donated by technical consultants or company employees whose work and expertise is necessary to a project.
- Value of salaries for staff dedicated to a project by contributing organizations.
- Technology, communications and capital assets that are utilized/donated by contributing organizations.
- Intellectual property rights.
- Leverage from other donors.

USAID would not require documents from private and public entities on the leverage component at the concept paper stage. However, the applicants selected for oral presentation are required to present their leverage plan. Applicants are to decide on the level and extent of partnership with the leverage partners.

15. Is there a limit on numbers of consortium members with which lead applicant can partner under this NOFO?

OR

If USAID asks two or more applicants to work collaboratively on a program description, does it mean that two or more applicants will share the project's responsibility?

OR

Does the applicant need to submit the letters of support from consortium members at the concept note stage? If yes, request USAID to share the format for the same.

USAID Response: USAID will sign the award with the lead organization and this organization will be responsible for the award administration and success of the activity.

There is no assigned limit to the number of consortium partners but potential applicants should recognize that they will be responsible for managing the consortium partners.

The letters of support from the consortium members are not required at the concept paper stage. Applicants are encouraged to submit the letter of support during the Oral Presentation, if not they must submit at the Co-creation stage.

16. Must we stick to the states mentioned in the grant, or do we have the freedom to choose other states? If I am permitted, I can consult the forest department contacts I have to attain statistics to guide our planning.

OR

Should Concept Papers suggest the five target states, or should the concept notes just include criteria for selection?

USAID Response: Please see Section A.2.8 (Proposed Geographic Targeting Criteria). The NOFO does not mention any specific states. The applicant is required to propose in their concept note the criteria to select the states. The states would be finalized during phase 3 (co-design) in consultation with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

17. Are there any specifications for sub-awardees?

USAID Response: Please refer to section D.6 Content and Form of Application Submission, under Organizational Management and Staffing Plan, (page 23) for details on subawardees. Applicants can also refer to ADS 303.3.21 for more details.

18. If I understand this right, are we allowed to establish a school for the underprivileged children and an orphan home?

USAID Response: No, establishing schools and orphanages does not fall under the scope of this project.

19. The lands allocated under Community Forest Rights (CFR) lands can be included in the TOF proposal

USAID Response: CFR lands do not come under the scope of this NOFO.

20. Given the time it will take to establish nurseries and outplant trees, often on sites of low soil productivity, many of the trees planted during the project period will not be of harvestable size until after the TOFI program is completed. In light of this, does USAID anticipate program activities oriented towards managing already established tree plantings in target areas?

USAID Response: While USAID requires establishment of new demonstration plots for the purpose of the project, applicants may propose other options also.

21. There is an emphasis on setting up of high tech nurseries, but would support for other allied activities starting from nursery to the plantation covered?

USAID Response: Please refer to results under objective 2 and to the response to question 20.

22. Medicinal plants, herbs etc can also be considered under TOF project as they may be important for carbon sequestration and can provide economic opportunities for the communities

USAID Response: Sole planting of herbaceous medicinal plants is not encouraged under this project. It should be noted that procurement/purchase of seeds /seedlings/saplings will need USAID approval during the implementation. The NOFO has been amended accordingly.

23. Can community certification be a solution work rather than external certification for wood and forest produce (so that illicit product does not enter value chain)?

USAID Response: The applicant is free to propose innovative and workable ideas which they deem appropriate for achieving the results.

24. Can city and state administrations that are involved in the project receive any USG funds?

OR

Can the Department of Forestry in an Indian state become partners?

USAID Response: Applicants are encouraged to partner with Indian city and state administrations as well as State Forest Departments. However, USAID does not anticipate transfer of project funds to these agencies.

25. In reference to the bottom of Page 6, does USAID consider bamboo to be categorized as trees.

USAID Response: For the purposes of this project, bamboo can be considered as trees.

26. Acronyms on Page 11 – What do FPO and FDC stand for? Farmer Producer Organizations and Finance Development Corporations? At the top of the same page, does CSR mean Corporate Social Responsibility?

USAID Response: FPO Farmer Producer Organization; FDC Forest Development Corporation; CSR Corporate Social Responsibility

27. What types of positions for key personnel does USAID envision in the program?

USAID Response: The applicant should propose an appropriate number of key personnel who are directly responsible for management of the activity and whose professional and technical skills are essential for the successful implementation of the activity.

28. What level of detail is expected in the one-page notional budget? Should the line items found on Page 28 be used? Should the notional budget contain any type of budget justification? Can a 10 pt font be used in the budget table?

OR

Is there a budget format for sharing the notional budget?

USAID Response: There is no specific format for notional budget but applicants may use the budget format provided under section D.6 (on Page 28). The notional budget narrative is not included in the one page limit.

29. Is there a format for annexe document on past performance sub-awardee /partner) documentation?

USAID Response: The format of past performance questionnaires should be used for sub-awardees.

30. Do we need to submit the resume of the team as annex or as organization management and staffing plan at the concept note stage? As on Page 26, it is mentioned to share Curriculum Vitae of Key Personnel (other than those already submitted during the Initial Application).

USAID Response: The applicant can briefly mention skills of the key personnel in the organization management and staffing plan at phase 1. Resume/Curriculum Vitae can be submitted as part of the final Technical Application at phase 3.

31. From the objectives 2, appears that demonstrating plots on industrial land is a priority. Are private lands also a priority area for demonstration?

USAID Response: Yes, both are required. Please see Result 2.8 in Section A of NOFO.

32. We are not able to apply towards this grant as the 'Apply' button seems inactive in the link - <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=331255>. Please let us know if we are missing something here.

USAID Response: The link is just to view the NOFO. Please refer section D.3 (page 19) for details on submission.

33. We are interested in submitting a proposal for the "Trees Outside Forests in India" initiative and wished to get a small clarification. Can Miyawaki dense forests be included in the proposal? Also, do let us know what other kinds of plantations (Agroforestry, Permaculture, Fruit tree plantation, Bamboo plantation, Grassland restoration, etc.) is the program looking for.

USAID Response: As mentioned in Section A.2.1, the purpose of the Trees Outside Forests in India (TOFI) activity is to expand the planting of trees outside of forests in India for enhanced provision of ecosystem services, especially carbon

sequestration, and increased inclusive economic opportunities. Given this, applicants may submit their approach they deem appropriate and sufficient to achieving the objectives of the project.

34. Could you clarify the expectations around result 1.5? Given the dispersed nature of TOF plantations, and the wide range of associated products, there will be significant challenges in establishing a full surveillance system. Would a small pilot to test such a system be sufficient?

USAID Response: The focus of this result is on timber. The expectation is to demonstrate any technology as a pilot that would give sufficient evidence and confidence to scale up across wider geographies.

35. I wanted to understand if the concept paper to be submitted should be geographically specific to some place in India or does it have to detail a more general approach applicable to mostly anywhere in India?

USAID Response: It is for the applicant to decide on what approach they want to adopt.

36. Kindly provide detailed guideline, We plan to facilitate rural tribal communities of Barage/ Dam affected in Sadar Hills District, Manipur State. The program will uptake trees conservation and protection of green biodiversity. It will increase the role and responsibilities of village communities through institutions and capacity building.

USAID Response: This does not fall under the scope of this NOFO given in Section A.2.1

-----End of Amendment#1-----