

Questions and Answers for Breakthrough-ACTION

RFA-OAA-17-000002

January 31, 2017

*Please note that this is a Request for Applications that will result in one cooperative agreement. Therefore, all references to Request for Proposals have been changed to Request for Applications; all references to proposals have been changed to applications; and all references to offerors have been changed to applicants.

1. What countries will Breakthrough ACTION be working in?

The countries in which Breakthrough ACTION implements core-funded activities will likely be those designated as priorities per EPCMD, PEPFAR, PMI, and other USG initiatives. Please see Section A: Program Description in the full RFA for more information on these initiatives and countries. The countries in which Breakthrough ACTION implements field support-funded activities will be determined by Mission buy-ins to the project and cannot be predicted at this time.

2. What countries can organizations be based in, to be eligible to apply for Breakthrough ACTION?

An organization must be based in a country that is categorized under Geographic Code 937 - as per ADS 310, Geographic Code 937 includes “the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source.” The list of the developing countries included in 937 can be found here:

<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1876/310maa.pdf>

The list of the advanced developing countries excluded from 937 can be found here:

<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1876/310mab.pdf>

3. What types of international organizations are eligible to apply to Breakthrough ACTION? Are public international organizations eligible to apply to this RFA?

Public international organizations are not eligible to apply to this RFA; please see the revisions in Section C: Eligibility Information, which now state: “To be eligible for the CA under this RFA, applicants submitting as prime recipients must meet the requirements stated below. In order to be a Prime Applicant, the applicant must be:

- 1) Be a US or non-US based for-profit NGO, not-for-profit NGO, international organization (excluding Public International Organizations), or private voluntary organization, inclusive of universities.

AND have the following items #2-8:

- 1) Demonstrated capacity in support of implementation of SBC activities across a range of health and related areas in LMICs (this capacity can be achieved across the prime applicant and proposed partner organizations);
- 2) Demonstrated managerial, technical, and institutional capacities to achieve the results outlined in this RFA, including financial systems;
- 3) Documented capacity to collaborate with, and convene, a range of stakeholders to achieve the results outlined in this RFA;
- 4) Demonstrated ability to collaborate with host-country governments, NGOs and other donors to undertake SBC programming and advance policy and advocacy in the substantive areas outlined in this RFA;
- 5) Established financial management, monitoring and evaluation processes, internal control systems, and policies and procedures that comply with established U.S. Government standards, laws, and regulations; and
- 6) Propose to contribute cost share from their own, private, or local sources no less than 10 percent of the amount of funds obligated by USAID for the implementation of this project over the course of the agreement. Specifically, such funds may be mobilized from the recipient; other multilateral, bilateral, and foundation donors; host governments; and local organizations, communities and private businesses that contribute financially and in-kind to the implementation of activities at the country level. Mobilization of funds from outside sources through cost share of project activities is highly encouraged.

Applications from organizations that do not meet the above eligibility criteria will not be reviewed and evaluated. Individuals are not eligible to apply for this RFA.

4. Is it possible to serve as a subcontractor to one prime for ACTION and to another prime for RESEARCH?

Yes, it is possible for an organization to be a proposed subawardee on applications for both Breakthrough ACTION and Breakthrough RESEARCH. As per both RFAs in Section A.1: “Post-award, when Breakthrough-RESEARCH receives a request to evaluate the work of Breakthrough-ACTION or another USAID project, the Recipient must determine if there are potential Conflicts of Interest (COI) due to partners/sub-awardees’ roles on each project. If potential conflicts of interest are identified, the Recipient must submit a plan to demonstrate how these potential conflicts

shall be mitigated. The mitigation plan must: 1) describe the potential conflict of interest; 2) describe the impact these conflicts could have on the Breakthrough-RESEARCH (or other USAID) agreement performance; and 3) describe the procedures that the Recipient would put into place that would resolve the COI. **Any conflicts as identified above will be determined and the mitigation plan approved, or not approved, by the Breakthrough-RESEARCH AO and the other project's AO/CO."**

5. Should the Past Performance Instructions (page 61) be included as an annex to the Cost Application or as a separate document?

As stated in the RFA in Section D.6(f) (page 51), "The Past Performance Short Forms are not included in the 35 page technical application limit, and should be submitted as Technical Application Annexes."

6. Should the Start Up and Transition Plan (page 67) be included as an annex to the Cost Application or as a separate document?

The Start Up and Transition Plan should be submitted as a separate document, and not as an Annex to either the Technical or Cost Application. It can be submitted in the same email as the applications.

7. Funding Restrictions (acknowledgement) is listed as a requirement of the Cost Application (page 56). What should this acknowledgement contain?

As stated in the RFA in Section D.10 (page 70) entitled "Funding Restrictions," "Construction is not an allowable activity under this agreement. Therefore, in the Mandatory Standard Provisions of this RFA and resulting cooperative agreement, the provision entitled "Limiting Construction Activities" (August 2013) will state the following section (d): 'Construction is not eligible for reimbursement under this award.' Also, USAID does not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs under this RFA." Therefore, the acknowledgment statement should reference the unallowability of any construction costs and pre-award costs for this RFA. As an acknowledgement, it should also be signed by the prime applicant.

8. Would USAID accept 10 years of professional experience plus a higher level degree in a relevant field of study in lieu of 15 years of professional experience for any of the following key personnel positions: Director of Programs and Integration, Technical Director, Director for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning?

Given the size and complexity of Breakthrough ACTION, key personnel must possess significant applied experience in SBC/global health programming. The qualifications described in the RFA in Section A.5 should be considered minimum acceptable

standards; key personnel candidates that do not possess the required level of professional experience will not be considered, regardless of academic training.

9. Would USAID consider additional years of experience and a five-year Bachelor's degree in a related field in lieu of a Master's degree for the Director of Programs and Integration?

No, USAID would not consider a candidate without a graduate degree for this position.

10. Does USAID expect key personnel to be based in Washington, DC?

Applicants will not be evaluated on proposed location of their project offices, however USAID's Bureau for Global Health is headquartered in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Locating key personnel in the Washington metropolitan area may better facilitate effective coordination and collaboration with entities, which is essential to the success of Breakthrough ACTION. Co-location of project staff, including staff from partners as applicable, may facilitate coordination and cooperation across the project.

11. Are subawardees required to be registered in the System for Award Management at the time the application is submitted?

No, subawardees are not required to be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) at the time the application is submitted; however, it is very helpful during a pre-award risk assessment for proposed subawardees to be registered in SAM.gov.

12. Are subwardees required to provide a valid DUNS number in the application?

Prior to award, sub-contractors (and all sub-recipients in fact) are required to have a DUNS, as the prime is required to report their sub-awardee information in fSRS if the sub-award is \$30,000 or more. To be reported in fSRS, the sub-awardee, regardless of entity, would need to procure a DUNS.

13. Could USAID please clarify which version of Excel should be used for the budget (page 41 lists Excel 2003; page 44 lists Excel 2013 or later; pages 55 and 57 list Excel 2003 or later)?

Microsoft Excel 2010 or later should be used for the budget submissions; the RFA has been revised accordingly.

14. Could USAID please clarify whether it wishes Technical Applications to be submitted in both Word and PDF (page 44)? May applicants submit the Technical Application Annexes in PDF only?

Yes, the revised RFA now states the following in Section D.5 (page 44):

“The following requirements apply to documents submitted for this RFA, with the exception of Government-issued forms:

- 8.5” x 11” with 1” margins, single column, left justified.
- Written in English.
- No less than 12-point, Times New Roman font for all narratives.
- No less than 10-point, Times New Roman font for graphics/charts and tables.
- Submitted in PDF format for the technical application, and submitted in Microsoft Word 2010 or later for the cost application narrative and Microsoft Excel 2010 or later for the cost application budget. Past Performance Report Short Forms must be submitted in Microsoft Word 2010.
- Budget amounts must be detailed in U.S. Dollars (USD)”

15. As the Start up and Transition Plan is listed as being separate from the technical application and cost application, should applicants submit this plan to USAID in a separate email?

Please see the response to Question #6 above.

16. May applicants submit additional organizational charts as an annex?

The only documents that should be submitted as Technical Application Annexes are listed in the RFA in Section D.6(i). Please do not submit additional documents.

17. Page 57 states that the budget must be submitted as one unprotected Excel file. May applicants submit separate excel files for each partner budget?

To streamline the number of submitted documents, please comply with the revised RFA in Section D.7 (iii) (page 58), which states “The budget must include the following worksheets or tabs, and contents for the **prime applicant and each principal and project partner.**” The principal and project partner budgets should be in the same workbook as the prime budget, but as separate worksheets or tabs.

18. For the cost application, are applicants expected to submit a budget only for the \$51 million available in core funding?

No. The budget should include both core and field work. Levels of core funding and field support described in the RFA are pending availability of funds and operating unit interest, and should be considered illustrative only. Please see the response to Question #20 below for more information on illustrative field work for cost application purposes only.

19. Does USAID expect applicants to provide illustrative information on cost share for the core-funded activities and illustrative cost share information for mission-buy-ins in both the budget and the cost share plan?

There is not a requirement for a cost share plan. Per the RFA in Section D.7(iii) (page 61), “Cost share must be detailed (who is providing the cost share, how will the cost share be used, how does the cost share contribute to the objectives, etc.).” The total estimated amount of cost share for the life of the project should be included as a figure in the overall budget summary. The budget justification should appropriately detail the cost share in narrative form.

20. On page 57 of the RFA, point “2. Detailed Budget,” the instructions say “Detailed budget must include a breakdown by year, by budget category and budget line items for all federal funding (core and field support) and cost share for the entire implementation period of the project.” Can USAID clarify how applicants should budget field support without knowing what the mission buy-ins will be?

For the field support element in the project budget, applicants should provide an illustrative cost structure of working in multiple countries simultaneously. For purposes of budgeting only, applicants should assume a range of 20-25 field buy-ins of varying periods of performance over the life of the project. USAID cannot guarantee any field buy-ins.

21. What role does USAID anticipate playing in helping to ensure missions buy into this new mechanism?

USAID will ensure that Breakthrough ACTION is publicized to USAID Missions, and will support interested Missions in developing scopes of work and undertaking other necessary steps for a buy-in based on Mission needs. USAID/Washington cannot guarantee levels or types of Mission buy-ins.

22. Have there been any commitments to buy-in by any missions to date?

USAID/Washington has discussed potential buy-ins with a number of Missions. No buy-ins may be confirmed or guaranteed at this time.

23. Would USAID consider limiting the list of contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements requested for past performance information on page 61 either to awards over a certain dollar value (e.g., \$10 million) or to a certain number of awards?

Per the revised RFA in Section D.8 (page 63), “The applicant must provide a list of all its cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving **similar or related programs** active or awarded during the past three years. For purposes of this application, USAID considers “similar or related programs” to mean SBC projects or

projects with significant SBC components, such as integrated service delivery-SBC projects or social marketing projects.”

24. Is the list of contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements requested on page 61 of the RFA restricted to USG-funded awards?

No, it is not restricted to USG-funded awards.

25. Could USAID provide the relative weighting of each of the merit review criteria (Technical, Management, Key Personnel and Staffing)?

Per the RFA in Section E.5 (page 72), “In terms of relative importance, the Technical Merit Review Criteria is weighted more than the Management and Key Personnel and Staffing Criteria. The Management and Key Personnel and Staffing are weighted equally. Each main merit review criterion will be assigned an adjectival rating. Sub-criteria are in descending order of importance within each main criterion.”

26. Could USAID provide additional guidance on what is required of the transition plan?

Other than the description in Section D.10, USAID does not have additional guidance on the Start Up and Transition Plan. It is meant to be brief and only include the first three months of the project. It will not be evaluated and will only be used post-award for the successful applicant.

27. Is there a page limit to the transition plan?

No.

28. With consideration of cultural context and health situation for designing and implementing national or sub-national SBC interventions, the target populations’ (direct beneficiaries and any special target segments) socio-economic status and their ability and willingness to pay are key considerations, along with household decision-making/power relationships. Socio-economic status is also key for designing and implementing innovative SBC interventions to effectively address gender and social norms or gender inequalities and related behaviors. In least-developed through low middle-income countries, ability to pay will always have a substantial influence in healthcare uptake and behavior change. Studies have shown that women with a secure or more secure asset base are more likely to have an increased willingness to pay. Is there scope within Breakthrough ACTION to incorporate/link to economic strengthening programming to address these demand-side constraints created by poverty?

The mandate of Breakthrough ACTION allows for economic empowerment activities if research demonstrates that ability to pay is a primary barrier to the desired behavior change and Mission funding and interest allow.

29. Will the recipient be able to approach missions and encourage them to buy-in to this program?

USAID practice discourages implementing partners from soliciting Missions or other Agency operating units in order to achieve buy-ins. The successful applicant may negotiate agreed-upon parameters for promoting Breakthrough ACTION during the project kick-off and subsequent management discussions.

30. Can USAID provide more information on the expected budget presentation, particularly on budgeting for buy-in countries?

For the requirements for the cost application, please follow the instructions in Section D.7 of the full RFA. Please see the response to Question # 20 above for information on illustrative field work in the cost application.

31. On page 47, the RFA states that budgets are not required for the three scenarios, but the applicant should identify main categories of cost in the narrative response to the scenario. Is USAID expecting applications to list the main cost categories included in the proposed scenarios, or is USAID expecting the applicant to include estimated percentages or figures for the proposed scenario cost categories?

The accompanying budget figures would represent the major line-item budget summary including cost categories and illustrative figures. This information should be included at a high, summary level to demonstrate proportion of total cost by budget category.

32. On page 20, the RFA states that scale is defined as "reaching the proportion of primary and secondary audiences required to achieve and sustain population-level behavior change within target populations." Does USAID have standards for the measurement for scale by health area?

USAID does not have defined standards for scale per health area, but relies on applicants to determine what may be required given past experience and existing research.

33. Under Breakthrough-ACTION, does the recipient have freedom to test strategies, methodologies and approaches that evolve from its work, or must this research go through Breakthrough-RESEARCH? Who makes that determination?

Breakthrough ACTION has the latitude to develop and test innovative approaches to social and behavior change, but it is anticipated that large-scale evaluations of such innovations will be conducted primarily through Breakthrough RESEARCH. The

management teams of Breakthrough ACTION and Breakthrough RESEARCH, together with the AOs for both projects and funding Missions, will determine which mechanism(s) are best suited to implement a particular scope of work.

34. On page 20 USAID refers to “effective expansion of priority interventions (as defined by the SBC community of practice).” Would USAID please share the list of interventions that has been defined?

USAID encourages interested applicants to review key documents produced by USAID and its central SBC implementing partners in recent years (see list of such projects and initiatives in Annex A to the Breakthrough ACTION RFA) to understand priority interventions and research needs as defined by the Agency. USAID cannot provide a list of organizations that are currently working on SBC projects, as they are numerous.

35. The RFA drops the traditional last “C” in SBCC. What is USAID’s vision of where communication begins and ends?

USAID defines SBCC as the integrated use of a range of communication approaches—mass media; “new” and social media; community-level activities; and interpersonal communication (IPC)—to influence norms and behaviors pertaining to health. SBC is understood to encompass a broader spectrum of activities or interventions, which may be grounded in a number of different disciplines, including social and behavior change communication (SBCC), marketing, advocacy, behavioral economics, or human-centered design.

36. The RFA stresses the importance of scaling up and implementing innovative approaches. Many innovative approaches are not yet proven. Please clarify the extent to which Breakthrough-ACTION can test innovative interventions, or is this the exclusive work of Breakthrough-RESEARCH?

Please see the response to Question #33 above.

37. Is mental health an eligible category for work under this RFA?

Mental health is an eligible area for work under this RFA. It should be noted, however, that mental health is not a priority area for USAID investment, and Mission investments in this area have been minimal to date.

38. What is the scope of this project? Regional or local?

Please see Section A: Program Description of the full RFA on grants.gov for the scope of this project. It is intended to provide assistance worldwide, so applications should focus on working globally.

39. Who are working on this project? Who are the project leaders?

This project is still in the RFA stage and is therefore not yet awarded, so no organization is working on it yet.

40. Who are the stakeholders of this project in Dominican Republic? Who are the partners?

This project is intended to be global in nature and it is up to the applicant to determine the relevant stakeholders for this work. Again, this project is still in the RFA stage and is therefore not yet awarded, so no organization is working on it yet.

41. What level of evolution does this project have? How many years?

Per the RFA in Section B.1, USAID intends to award one Cooperative Agreement with a five (5) year period.

42. Does this project have been evaluated?

Again, this project is still in the RFA stage and is therefore not yet awarded, so it has not been evaluated yet. For information on how this project will be evaluated once awarded, please see Section B.9 (page 37), “Management Review and External Evaluations.”

Breakthrough-RESEARCH will likely conduct process, performance, or impact evaluations of Breakthrough-ACTION interventions.

43. Does this project have a base line? If yes, what is this baseline?

Please see the response to Question #42 above.

44. What are the institutions or partners that are actually working with the SBC projects that we could link identified priorities in our investigation proposal?

Please see the response to Question #34 above.

45. Please confirm that the reference to Excel 2013 on page 44 is a typo. Other places in the document refer to Excel 2003 and later versions.

Please see the response to Question #13 above.

46. Please differentiate/define the categories of expected or anticipated partners. The RFA refers to principal, local and just “partners” throughout the document. For example, page 50 asks for strategies for optimal use of proposed partners as well as a list of local partners with justification. Are these “local partners” developing

country partners (of which there could be many) or the anticipated and named sub-awardees (proposed partners)?

- a. Page 45 asks for signed letters from any stated partners or sub-awardees (all proposed partners, not just principal partners). Would these be letters of support or intended collaboration from country partners?**
- b. Please note that we feel it is awkward to ask for letters of support or collaboration from country partners without the guarantee of work in their particular country. We would prefer to provide lists of current or anticipated country partners.**

Please see the revisions to the RFA in Section D.4 (pages 43-44) that addresses partners: “For the purposes of the technical and cost application for this RFA, partners should be grouped into three categories:

1. “Principal partners” which have an intended or proposed role across multiple buy-ins, whether core or field funded. Principal partners are those funded at 15% or more of the total project budget, which should be reflected in the cost narrative and budget. Past performance forms and signed letters of intent to collaborate are required for partners in this category.
2. “Project partners” which have an intended or proposed role across multiple buy-ins, whether core or field funded, who will be funded at a level less than 15% of the total project budget. Signed letters of intent to collaborate are required for partners in this category. Past performance forms are not required - and will not be accepted - for partners in this category.
3. “Resource partners,” likely country-level organizations, which may have a role in one specific field buy-in, and do not have a proposed budget in the application. Signed letters of intent to collaborate and past performance forms are NOT required for partners in this category.

For all principal and project partners that have a proposed budget, the prime applicant needs to provide a budget tab and narrative for each of these organizations in the cost application. All named partners with budgets in the cost application, including principal and project partners, will be considered sub-awardees, and may be approved at time of award if they meet all pre-award requirements AND have a budget tab and narrative included in the cost application.”

47. For key personnel, can the references be on a separate page or should they be included in the four pages?

The references provided for each key personnel can be listed on a separate page outside of the four page CV limit; please limit references for up to three per key personnel.

48. Please elaborate on the acknowledgement of funding restrictions required for the cost proposal? Are these just restrictions on construction and pre-award costs (page 68) or are there more. Does this need to be signed?

Please see the response to Question #7 above.

49. Should the start-up/transition plan be an annex in the Technical Proposal? Or in another place?

Please see the response to Question #6 above.

50. Page 50 of the RFA indicates an organizational chart is requested under the *Management Sub-criterion B.1: Management Plan* heading. Can this organizational chart be included in the C.1 Key Personnel and Staffing Sub-criterion section?

No. The organizational chart should be included within the maximum of nine pages of the Management section, and not in the Key Personnel and Staffing section of the Technical Application.

51. Can margins be both left and right justified?

Per the RFA in Section D.5 (page 44), application documents must be “8.5” x 11” with 1” margins, single column, left justified.”

52. Can the font style – not size – be changed?

Per the RFA in Section D.5 (page 44), application documents must be “No less than 12-point, Times New Roman font for all narratives; and No less than 10-point, Times New Roman font for graphics/charts and tables.” The font style must comply with the RFA requirements.

53. On page 50, the second to last bullet point asks for a list of proposed local partners and justification for their selection and contribution to achieving the project purpose and successfully implementing the proposed technical approach to fall under B.1 Management Plan – narrative. May this information be placed under B.2 Institutional capability and Past Performance instead? Section B.2 asks for a

description of technical skills and characteristics of the prime and partners, experience, etc., which the requirement point flows much more with than B.1.

No, this information remains under Section B.1. The RFA has been revised on page 51 under B.1(2), so that this second to last bullet now states: “A list of proposed principal and project partners and justification for their selection to contribute to achieving the Breakthrough-ACTION purpose and successfully implementing the proposed technical approach. The narrative will also describe the agreed-upon roles and responsibilities of these partners in executing the proposed technical approach, and strategies for providing oversight and support through the prime and its principal and project partners. Signed letters of intent to collaborate from each proposed principal and project partner shall be provided in a Technical Application Annex (not within the 35 page limit of the technical application). A list of potential resource partners with whom the prime or other partners have a current or recent (three years) relationship must be included in the Technical Application Annex.”

Please see the response to Question #46 for explanation of different cadres of partners.

54. On page 32, paragraph 1, it states that a 10 percent cost share is required for the award. In the instance the award is not fully funded, please clarify if the cost share is to be based on the obligation provided (as stated throughout the RFA) or the overall value of the award.

The cost share is based on the total amount of obligated federal funds. USAID only intends to obligate funds in the amount needed for expenditures.

55. On page 33, Substantial Involvement Section 3.a, international travel plans is noted as an item requiring approval. In implementation of the Super Circular (2 CFR 200/700), international travel prior approval was removed as a requirement. Could you please clarify international travel plans inclusion as part of the substantial involvement of this program?

The international travel referenced in the RFA in Section B.3(a) (page 33) is included in the annual workplan, not a separate document for approval. USAID requires the approval of implementation plans annually to ensure alignment with stated goals, milestones and outputs.

56. On page 45, the Start up and Transition Plan is identified to be a piece of the application however it is not indicated as to what part of the application it should be

included with. Should it be an annex to the Technical or Cost Application, and is there a page limit?

Please see the response to Question #6 above.

57. On page 47, it is stated that the main categories of cost should be identified as part of the scenario responses. While a budget is not required to be prepared, what level of detail is expected to be provided with regards to financial information in the scenarios? Should it be high level and only make mention of cost element costs or is more detail expected to be provided?

Please see the response to Question #31.

58. On page 55, it is stated that a “breakdown of all costs according to each partner organization” should be included. Is this to mean all partners or just those identified as primary partners (15% of the budget share)?

Please see the response to Question #46 for explanation of different cadres of partners in the revised RFA. This bullet on page 57 now states: “The breakdown of all costs according to each principal and project partner organization involved in the program.”

For all principal and project partners that have a proposed budget, the prime applicant needs to provide a budget tab and narrative for each of these organizations in the cost application. All named partners with budgets in the cost application, including principal and project partners, will be considered sub-awardees, and may be approved at time of award if they meet all pre-award requirements AND have a budget tab and narrative included in the cost application.

59. On page 57, it is noted that annual salary escalations that exceed current inflation rates should be supported by sharing of company policies. It is requested that USAID identify what metric is being used to determine what are current inflation rates, both in the US and in the field.

For US based salaries, the rate is based upon the average inflation rate in the US and GS salary scale. For field based salaries, the rate is based upon the average inflation rate worldwide and local compensation plans.

- 60. On page 68, Section D.9, the link is unable to be opened. Please provide the “Guidance on Funding Foreign Government Delegations to International Conferences” in full text for review.**

Apologies for this error; this has been corrected in the revised RFA. Here is the new link: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/350maa.pdf>

- 61. In Annex B, the links for the USAID Research Policy and FP2020 Overview were unable to be opened. Please provide the full text for review.**

The links have been tested and do work. Please copy paste the links in full into your browser, rather than clicking on them.

- 62. Are there any blanket waivers, USAID-HQ or mission-specific directives that may have an impact in the implementation of this project that applicants should be aware of? Can USAID provide copies of these waivers and directives, if any?**

The award will be administered according to the applicable standard provisions: (i) for U.S. organizations, 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 700 and ADS 303maa, the Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-Governmental Recipients (<http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa>) are applicable; and (ii) for Non-U.S. organizations, the Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-Governmental Recipients (<http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab>) are applicable. This agreement will follow Agency policy, such as many applicable chapters in the ADS 300 series. This includes any universally-approved blanket waivers, such as the Blanket Waiver for Right-Hand Drive (RHD) Motor Vehicles and Lightweight/Mediumweight Two-Wheel and Three-Wheel Motor Vehicles in ADS 312. At this time, there are no specific Agency directives that may be noted.

- 63. Page 29: The RFA indicates that it is expected for both the Project Director and Deputy Project Director positions to have more than 20 years of experience with similar areas of responsibility between the two positions. We respectfully request USAID to please clarify the differences between both positions and if it would consider decreasing the required years of experience in support for other qualifications, less than 100% level of effort, or other shifts to the staffing requirements as recommended by potential bidders?**

USAID envisions the Project Director will focus on questions of vision, strategy, and external engagement, with attention to leadership and change management as needed. It is expected that the successful candidate will be a recognized technical leader with a

depth of expertise in SBC programming. The Deputy Project Director is envisioned as a more operational and inward-facing role, to oversee and ensure granular elements of budgeting; contracting; staffing and performance management; and award compliance. The successful candidate may or may not have extensive experience in SBC, but will have demonstrated capacity to successfully lead operational aspects of large, complex projects. Both the Director and Deputy Director are expected to uphold quality standards in project work at all levels, proactively identifying, communicating, and generating solutions for challenges as they arise. Per Section D.6(g) of the RFA (page 53), applicants may propose an alternate staffing structure, including different configurations of key personnel positions, if all requirements of key personnel described in the RFA are met across the proposed structure. Given the size and complexity of Breakthrough ACTION, a high level of effort will be required for all key personnel; if an applicant proposes that either the Project Director or Deputy Project Director will not be covered at 100%, a strong justification must be provided.

64. The start date for BREAKTHROUGH ACTION is July 1st. The end date for HC3 is September 30th. Is it the expectation that during that overlap period there will be handover of all HC3 tools resources and platforms to the winning organization?

USAID anticipates that the prime partner of HC3, JHU-CCP, will continue to host the Springboard and Health COMpass platforms during the life of Breakthrough ACTION. It is further expected that JHU-CCP and the organization(s) selected to implement Breakthrough ACTION (and to a lesser extent Breakthrough RESEARCH) will work together to determine how best to promote and host other tools developed under HC3. While a clear date for this transition has not been identified, USAID expects that the implementers will make every effort to minimize disruption in services.

65. Page 46: One of the items to be listed on the cover page is the following: Name(s) of the Author(s) of, and the percentage of effort by, section of the application; What is the purpose of this requirement? Naming the author of the proposal and the percentage of effort by and section of the application may be considered unnecessary as the application is prepared on behalf of an organization or consortium.

This requirement helps USAID to understand which individuals are responsible for developing and articulating the strategic vision described in the application, and how they will be involved (if at all) in the project itself.

- 66. Page 47: The RFA requests, “...use of existing USAID-funded knowledge management and capacity strengthening resources, including the Springboard, the HealthCOMpass and IKits to the greatest extent possible.” Can USAID please provide a copy of the platform architectures, operating system platform version, size, current hosting platform, and other relevant data to assist in the migration of the platform, database, and operating system, from the current host site to the on-line platform of the winning consortium? This information would aid in determining realistic costs for platform migration and management.**

Please see the response to Question #64 above. USAID expects that the HC3 prime, JHU-CCP, will continue to host and manage the Springboard and Health COMpass platforms with support from Breakthrough-ACTION. Other virtual resources, including online implementation kits (i-kits) developed through HC3, may be migrated to a new partner’s site as needed.

- 67. It is requested that USAID consider removing this requirement for all applicants and only request it from the apparently successful applicant as part of their revised application.**

This question does not reference a specific requirements; therefore, USAID cannot provide a response.

- 68. Page 70 Merit Review Criteria: Can USAID provide clarity of the rating weight breakdown to be employed in judging or scoring the Merit Review Sections detailed on pages 70-74. Is there a scoring or weighting system that will be employed?**

Please see the response to Question #25 above.

- 69. Page 76 Reporting Requirements: The RFA states: “In addition to reports below, the AOR may request additional information to contribute to internal USAID project reviews.” The production of these reports have cost implications to the recipient organization in terms of time and materials. Can USAID please provide an estimation of the volume of reports for budgeting purposes?**

Such requests may include provision of information for additional quarterly and annual financial management reports; Mission-, Office-, and Bureau-level results reporting; external performance evaluations; and other purposes as needed. Costs involved in the provision of such information typically include staff time (finance and/or technical), but not printing.

70. Will there be a common working group to look at key indicators for cross project indicators? How will Breakthrough-ACTION and Breakthrough-RESEARCH collaborate in the communication and dissemination of baseline data and results?

USAID expects that Breakthrough-ACTION and Breakthrough-RESEARCH will collaborate closely to determine how best to measure their shared success; the projects may determine how best to do so in consultation with each other and their respective USAID management teams.

71. For SIR 2.4 page 28: What is the current transition plan for Springboard, Health COMPass, and the Implementation kits? Does transfer include handing over the rights to the websites and their content/structure?

Please see the responses to Questions #64 and #66 above.

72. Please clarify that the “compliance plan” is in fact developing an FP compliance monitoring plan? Or are there other policy areas where awardees have to show compliance?

Yes, the compliance plan is referring to a FP compliance plan. Please see the link to ADS 303mav in Section D.7.v (page 62) for other required **Certifications, Assurances, and Solicitation Provisions**. Other documentation of policy compliance may be required post award.

73. It appears that the RFP’s requirement for a PMP and PMEP is outdated as USAID has recently been moving toward Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plans for projects. Please clarify if your applications are to include Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plans or PMEPs in alignment with older guidance?

Thank you for identifying this oversight. The RFA has been revised to refer to the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan, instead of project PMP, based on recently revised [Agency Automated Directives System \(ADS\) Chapter 201](#) guidance. Please refer to section 201.3.4.10 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning on pages 100-104 of ADS 201. Applicants must submit an *illustrative* Activity MEL plan with their application, which will include:

- The activity’s monitoring approach, including relevant performance indicators of activity outputs and outcomes, which details how data will be disaggregated, with attention to SBC-specific measurement concerns;
- Plans for collaborating with any external evaluations planned by the Mission or Washington Operating Unit;
- Any proposed internal evaluations;
- Learning activities, including knowledge capture at activity close out;
- Estimated resources for these monitoring, evaluation and learning activities that are a part of the implementing partner’s budget;
- Roles and responsibilities for all proposed monitoring, evaluation and learning actions; and
- A plan for compliance with voluntarism and abortion legislature and policy requirements.

This information is in the revised RFA under Section D.6(h). After the award of Breakthrough-ACTION is finalized, the illustrative Activity MEL Plan will be expanded into the activity MEL plan for the entire period of performance, in concert with the USAID management team, and must be finalized within 90 calendar days of the award. The activity MEL plan must demonstrate familiarity with the program areas and demonstrate how each task relates to indicators and targets.

74. On page 16, the RFA states that it is expected that 17% of project funds will come from the Global Health Bureau. Will this input from the Global Health Bureau be strictly core funds?

Yes.

75. Page 54 of the RFA references principal partners as completing 15% of the total budget share as a proportion of the activities. Is USAID defining total budget share based on core funding or both core plus field funding?

Please see the response to question #46 for the revisions to the categories of partners. USAID defines total project budget based upon both core funding and field support, and expects that applicants will plan to make strategic and substantive use of “principal partners” in all project activities, including Mission buy-ins as appropriate.

76. On page 57, the RFA states: “Budget items with the total zero value should not be included in the budget. Files must not contain any hidden or otherwise inaccessible

cells. Budgets with hidden cells lengthen the cost analysis time required to make award, and will result in a rejection of the cost application.” Does USAID have any concerns about using formula links to visible cells within the budget file?

No, formula links to visible cells are allowable.

77. Per RFP page 32, a 10% cost share is required. Depending on final budgeted amount, cost share for this opportunity could have a maximum of \$30 million which is very challenging for non-profit, small, and local organizations to achieve. Will USAID consider reducing the cost share requirement?

USAID will not consider reducing the cost share requirement for this project. Please note that the cost share requirement can be met across the consortium of partners, not just by the prime recipient.

78. What is the anticipated funding level in each year of the project year?

USAID cannot predict with confidence annual funding levels for the project, as they are subject to both shifts in the Agency’s overall budget and Mission decisions regarding buy-ins.

79. Can USAID please describe the volume and nature of buy-ins that might be expected in Year One so as to allow for more responsive budgeting?

Please see the responses to Questions #20 and #78 above.

80. On page 57, it states that the summary and detail budgets must be inclusive of all project costs including all federal funding including core and field support. Could you please provide guidance on how applicants should budget for field support costs without knowing what countries will buy in and with what scope?

Please see the responses to Questions #20 and #78 above.

81. On page 59, the RFA states, "Program Costs may include meeting costs, training sessions, workshops, etc. A detailed cost buildup for each element must be included in a separate worksheet or a tab to specify the number of events and the costs per one event (such as facility rental, audio visual rental, meals, local travel for

participants, etc.)" Would USAID please confirm that providing unit costs for individual costs would meet this requirement?

The language in the RFA has been revised (page 60) to clarify: “**Program Costs** may include elements such as meeting costs, training sessions, workshops, etc. Detailed costs for each element need not be included in the budget as separate line items. Any meeting, workshop, training costs etc. included in the budget may be aggregated to one line item by element (i.e. all workshops in one line, all trainings in one line, etc.). However, a detailed description of cost buildup for each element must be included in the budget narrative to specify the number of events and the cost categories per one event (such as facility rental, audio visual rental, meals, local travel for participants, etc.) Explain all assumptions in the budget narrative, including the proposed number of items in each element (such as meals, number participants, etc.) and annual escalation factors (if any).” Meals and local travel must not be duplicated for the applicant’s staff in travel and transportation, but must only cover non-applicant or non-partner employees attending the meetings/trainings.

82. On page 56, the RFA states "The Cost Application must contain [...] v. Funding Restrictions (acknowledgement)" but does not provide further detail of this requirement in the following instructions. Would USAID please either provide a template for this acknowledgement or confirm that a signed memorandum would be sufficient? Please also confirm that the Funding Restrictions that require acknowledgement are wholly contained within Section D.10 "Funding Restrictions" on page 68 of the RFA.

Please see the response to Question #7 above.

83. On page 34, the RFA states, “These activities include facilitating partnerships with other key organizations and approval of external meetings and meeting agendas related to this project and its partnerships. All such activities must be included in the program description, negotiated in the budget, and made part of the award. Note: the AOR will provide review of the proposed change, and the AO is the only individual who can provide approval for this element of substantial involvement.”

Due the nature of this cooperative agreement, with potential for buy-ins from around the globe, it does not appear to be feasible to have applicants plan and budget for these meetings upfront so that they may be made part of the award. It is requested that USAID consider removing the requirement for inclusion of these meetings in the program description. Should this requirement not be removed,

could USAID please explain what benefit will be gained by obtaining approval for each external meeting held with partners and key organizations?

Section B.3(c)(4) has been removed from the revised RFA (page 34) in its entirety.

84. "On page 41, number 3, "General Submission Instructions," the RFA states that the technical application be submitted in Microsoft Word 2010 format. However, on page 44, the RFA states that the technical application should be submitted in Microsoft Word 2010 and PDF format, excluding Excel budget files. We respectfully request that technical application, excluding PPR short forms, be accepted in PDF format only.

Please see the response to Question #14 above.

85. Please clarify how to budget for expected field support costs in the cost application.

Please see the responses to Questions #20 and #78 above.

86. Given the uncertain size, scope and location of the work under the project, would USAID consider reducing the cost share to 5%?

Please see the response to Question #77 above.