

To: All Applicants

Date: April 12, 2019

Subject: Amendment No. 01 to Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) 72011519RFA00004
USAID/Kyrgyz Republic Deepening Linkages in Civic Participation Activity

The purpose of this Amendment is to incorporate changes in the NFO and provide Questions and Answers as an Attachment. Accordingly, the changes are as follows:

1. Section D.5 Technical Application Format, the reference to a cover letter is changed to a cover page.
2. Section F.10. Non-Federal Audits, is deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:

“Recipients and Subrecipients are subject to audit requirements in 2 CFR 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards,” USAID’s supplement, 2 CFR 700, and any additional requirements found in Section F.

Recipients and Subrecipients must use an independent, non-Federal auditor or audit organization which meets the general standards specified in generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS) to fulfill these requirements.”
3. Section D.5. Technical Application Format, Annexes, page 27, move the following to Section D.5, Annexes, c. Draft Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan:

“The draft plan must provide an overview of the MEL approach in the technical application. This narrative must include the following: a planned staffing structure and resource allocation for the MEL; how data collection, analysis, and reporting of performance data will be managed under the project; how data quality assessments will be undertaken; how gender analysis will be incorporated into the MEL methodology; and how data will be shared and used to inform programming. In addition, given the dynamic nature of the activity and the CLA approach, the MEL outline must also include how the MEL will contribute to the CLA approach.”
4. Section F.6 Key Personnel, first paragraph: change “The Key Personnel team must include monitoring and evaluation expert.” to “The Key Personnel team must include a monitoring, evaluation and learning expert.”

Sincerely,

/s/
Jonathan Chappell
Agreement Officer

Attachment – Questions and Answers:

Question 1: I would like to clarify whether the “Annex 1 IEE Amendments 6, 7, and 8” is up-to-date? It has been dated 2011, which is a bit confusing. I have downloaded this document from - <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=313773>.

Answer 1:

Yes, Annex 1 “IEE Amendments 6, 7, and 8” is up-to-date.

Question 2: I couldn’t find the grant amount on this webpage for a single project proposal.

Answer 2:

As per Section B.1 “Subject to funding availability, USAID intends to provide up to \$14,000,000 in total USAID funding over a five year period”.

Question 3: As stated in the Section C: Eligibility Information any non-US organizations may participate under the mentioned NFO. In the NFO there is a reference to 2 CFR §200.205 “Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants” were financial stability of organization may be considered while evaluating proposals. There is no description provided on evaluation of financial stability, therefore we would like to request information about criteria used (if such) for evaluation of financial stability of the organization. Is there requirement that organization’s annual turnover should be equal or more compared to the grant amount? Are there any criteria not stated in the NFO that used during evaluation of the financial information provided by the organization?

Answer 3:

The review of risk, including financial risk, is separate from the application’s merit review. As such, there are no evaluation criteria related to financial stability.

As stated on page 29 of the RFA: “Prior to award, applicants may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to assess the applicant’s risk in accordance with 2 CFR 200.205. Applicants should not submit any additional information with their initial application.”

Question 4: Page 24 of the NOFO specifies that Technical Applications should be submitted in a Microsoft Word (.docx) format. Would an Acrobat (.pdf) be acceptable as well?

Answer 4:

Yes, an Acrobat (.pdf) version of the application would be acceptable as well.

Question 5: "The applicant must... ensure that its award and any subawards do not support or promote policy themes that undermine or conflict with USG and USAID programs and policies." While USAID articulates its own programs and priorities in this NOFO, it does not articulate the focus of the broader interagency. Will the implementer be responsible for coordinating directly with other USG actors prior and during implementation? If not, how will USAID share that information with the implementer to avoid subawards that conflict with USG priorities?

Answer 5:

USAID will coordinate with the interagency and share information with the implementer to avoid any conflicts. Subawards will require USAID approval as stated in section B.3 “Substantial Involvement.”

Question 6: Page 33 of the NOFO states that for each proposed subaward the applicant must provide a DUNS number. However, the NOFO itself emphasizes the desire to work with nascent, local, and non-traditional organizations, many of which may not have DUNS numbers. Is USAID willing to make DUNS registrations optional for subrecipients or allow those partners to apply for DUNS registration during the project's implementation (rather than prior to the time of the award)?

Answer 6:

DUNS numbers are required for the approval of any subaward that is part of the application.

During implementation, the Standard Provision “UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM OF AWARD MANAGEMENT (July 2015)” states that the requirement to obtain a DUNS numbers does not apply to “Awards less than \$25,000 to foreign recipients to be performed outside the United States.”

Question 7: Can USAID provide additional information about how it will review the technical approach, as outlined on page 41?

Answer 7:

Please refer to Section E.2.a on the information on how the technical approach will be reviewed.

Question 8: Will organizational past performance be scored as part of the merit review?

Answer 8:

No. The requirement for history of performance will be used in the business review and risk assessment as described on page 42 of the RFA.

Question 9: Can you clarify whether past performance references need to be for completed projects or can we also include ongoing projects? How recent do the past performance projects need to be?

Answer 9:

History of performance may include ongoing and recently completed (past three years) projects.

Question 10: The RFA mentions that we need to submit job descriptions for Key Personnel at this stage. Does it follow that we do not need to have the Key Personnel in place before submitting our proposal?

Answer 10:

Key personnel do not need to be in place before submitting the proposal. As noted in the RFA (pg. 50) Key Personnel must be in place 10 days after the making of the award.

Question 11: On page 27 underneath e. Management Structure, there is a mention of Annexes which references the draft plan must provide an overview of the MEL approach. Is this annex the same annex as referenced under c. page 28 Draft MEL Plan?

The RFA includes language on the bottom of Page 27, listed under “Annexes,” about the requirements of the MEL approach and narrative, “The draft plan must provide an overview of the MEL approach in the technical application...” However, it is not clear whether these requirements apply to the 20-page Technical Approach or the 5-page Draft Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan Annex, described on page 28. Can USAID please clarify which section the MEL approach belongs in?

Answer 11:

The paragraph directly under “Annexes” is incorrectly placed. It is referencing the MEL plan as outlined under “c. Draft Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan” on page 28 and has been moved to that section in the revised RFA.

Question 12: On page 6, in section A “Problem Statement,” USAID mentions the recently announced National Development Strategy 2018-2040. Is this strategy available for interested applicants during the proposal period?

Answer 12:

The National Development Strategy can be found here:

http://www.gov.kg/?page_id=125892&lang=ru

Question 13: On page 19, Section 3. Substantial Involvement, c (i) Approval of Subawards states: “In addition, please note the additional requirements of ADS 303.3.21.a “Subawards to PIOs and Partner Government Entities” will apply to this award.” However, Section K - Funding Restrictions, on page 39, states: “Subawards to government organizations are not eligible for reimbursement.” Could USAID please clarify if subawards to partner governmental organizations are eligible under this NFO?

Answer 13:

Subawards to partner governmental organizations are not eligible under this NFO.

Question 14: Section D.5 on page 24 states that “cover letter, dividers, table of contents, and annexes will not count toward the page limit”, but is followed Section D.5.a, which lays out the requirements the Cover Page. Can USAID clarify whether a cover letter or cover page is required? Can USAID confirm whether the Applicant can submit a cover letter in addition to the cover page?

Answer 14:

The term “cover letter” was used incorrectly. To simplify, the reference to a cover letter was changed to cover page in the revised RFA.

Question 15: Section D.5 Technical application format: Would USAID allow Applicants to provide Acronym List to be not included in the 20-page limit for the Technical Approach?

Is it acceptable to include an acronyms list following the table of contents in the technical application?

Answer 15:

Applicants are not required to submit Acronym Lists as part of the application. If submitted, the acronym list will count against the 20-page limit.

Question 16: Section D.5 Technical application format: Would USAID consider allowing the Executive Summary to be not included in the 20-page limit for the Technical Approach?

Answer 16:

No.

Question 17: Section D.5 states that the technical application must utilize “Times New Roman 12-font size”. Would USAID permit Applicants to use a smaller font size for textboxes and tables?

Section D.5 Technical Application Format (pg 24) instructs that “technical applications must not exceed 20 pages, utilizing Times New Roman 12-font size.” Is it acceptable to use smaller font in tables, text boxes, and graphics as long as it is still easily legible?

Answer 17:

Applicants may vary the font and font size for tables, text boxes, charts, graphs, ext. Such use should be infrequent and not substantial. If USAID determines that the tables, text boxes, ext. are being used for the purpose of avoiding the font size requirement, it may reject all or part of the application as not being in accordance with the NFO.

Question 18: Section D.6 (i), page 34, states that Applicants must provide information regarding its recent history of performance involving similar or related programs. Can USAID clarify whether there is a preferred template for history of performance, and whether the related programs described must fall in a certain window of time?

Answer 18:

There is no preferred template nor specific window of time.

Question 19: Can USAID provide a recent FSN scale or Local Compensation Plan for applicants?

Answer 19:

Guidance related to local salaries is included as an attachment with this amendment.

Question 20: Page 44, Section a. Financial Reporting states: “The Recipient must submit the original and two copies of all final financial reports to USAID/CA/FMO, the Agreement Officer, and the AOR. The Recipient must submit the final financial report no later than 90 calendar days from the end of the agreement.” Could USAID please confirm that electronic submission of the final financial report is acceptable?

Answer 20:

Guidance for submission of the final financial report will be provided during closeout of the award.

Question 21: Page 55, Section 10. Non-Federal Audits states: “In accordance with 22 CFR Part 226.26 Recipients and Subrecipients are subject to the audit requirements contained in the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 (31 U.S.C. 7501–7507) and revised OMB Circular A–133, “Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.” Could USAID please confirm that Non-Federal Audit requirements of 2 CFR 200 subpart F apply instead?

Answer 21: USAID confirms that Non-Federal Audit requirements of 2 CFR 200 subpart F apply, and the RFA has been updated to reflect this.

Question 22: Pg. 11 of the RFA states that implementer should identify “six to eight issues it would prioritize over the life of the project.” Can USAID clarify whether the implementer should propose six to eight issues total, or six to eight issues per target community?

Answer 22:

This activity would identify six to eight broad issues over the life of the project. It is expected that similar issues would appear across multiple communities, with permutations depending on each community’s needs. Please note that the issues do not need to be proposed at the time of the application.

Question 23: Page 17 states that “this activity will provide targeted financial support. However, traditional grants must be given sparingly.” Can USAID confirm that in-kind grants (for instance, for equipment or software) are acceptable and are not considered ‘traditional grants.’

Answer 23:

In-kind grants are acceptable and not considered “traditional grants.”

Question 24: Page 17 of the RFA states “The Recipient will have a small number of learning objectives that are limited in scope and specifically designed to address important gaps in existing knowledge.” Will USAID provide these learning objectives, or does USAID expect the applicant to propose objectives for inclusion in our proposal and discussion/agreement post-award?

Answer 24:

USAID will not provide learning objectives under this cooperative agreement. The applicant will develop and propose the learning objectives most relevant to the overall goals of the activity, as designed and proposed by the applicant.

Question 25: Page 17 of the RFA mentions reflection points where stakeholders come together to review progress in a way that is “more robust than evaluation of performance indicators.” Is this envisioned process in addition to the “semiannual evaluation and impact assessments” mentioned as illustrative interventions on page 14 or the same thing?

Answer 25:

These can be the same activity. The applicant may want to consider different approaches to reflection points; the illustrative example under page 14, is intended to provide ideas but not direct in how the applicant can apply approaches to adaptive management for the purposes of learning from and responding to new approaches.

Question 26: Impact assessment can take many forms. In challenging environments, like the Kyrgyz Republic, civic engagement and advocacy work is influenced by many factors and complexity aware monitoring techniques may not allow causation to be shown, but can help document contribution of interventions to expected results. Clarity on USAID expectations regarding how “impact” is expected to be demonstrated is appreciated.

Answer 26:

USAID expects to see a learning approach that regularly considers whether interventions are bringing about their desired effects. The applicant should consider this a question of plausibly attributing an outcome to a USAID-funded intervention.

Question 27: Section B.5 Authorized Geographic Code (pg. 20) is both 937 and 110. Can USAID please describe how the project should operationalize an award with two geocodes? If an implementer wanted to procure from one of the independent states of the former Soviet Union that is also an advanced developing country, which geocode would apply?

Answer 27:

Both geo codes apply to any purchase. A procurement that falls under either geocode would meet the requirement.

Question 28: In order to ensure that submitted files are received by USAID’s server, can USAID clarify if there is a size limitation on each submission email?

Answer 28: There is no file size limitation. However, USAID encourages applicants to keep emails under 8MB.

Question 29: Section D.5 Technical Application Format (pg 26-27): Below the Annexes subheader, there is a description of the MEL approach that should be included in the technical narrative. On the following page, there is guidance for the MEL Plan Annex. Can USAID clarify whether applicants are required to address the MEL approach within the 20-page technical narrative or whether the MEL Plan Annex is sufficient?

Answer 29: The description of the MEL approach must be incorporated into the MEL Plan annex, and the revised RFA reflects this.

Question 30: May letters of commitment from proposed sub-awardees be submitted as an additional annex?

Answer 30:
No

Question 31: Page 29 requests that applicants submit the required Certifications and Assurances. Does USAID also require that this information be provided for proposed sub-awardees?

Answer 31: No. The information for subaward approval is found on page 33, Section g. "Approval of Subawards."

Question 32: Section F.6 (pg. 50) states: "Applicants must not submit individuals for the designated Key personnel positions and must not submit CV/resumes and other similar documentation related to key personnel."

- a. Can USAID confirm that it will support the budget realignment process, if necessary, if the final approved candidates don't reflect the initial budget assumptions regarding local/TCN/expat hire and the associated allowances of those positions?
- b. Can USAID confirm that we can provide names for non-key personnel in the technical and cost proposals?

Answer 32:

- a. The award budget will follow regulations in 2 CFR 200 and allow for flexibility, including the ability to move 10% of the total cost of the award between individual budget lines of the award. As such, there should be no need to realign the budget if initial budget assumptions are incorrect.
- b. No. Per Section D.5 Annex b, "Job Descriptions for Key Personnel" the reference can be made to the position titles only.

Question 33: Are subawardees who are not considered "major subcontractors" (25%) required to submit detailed budgets?

Answer 33:

Page 31 Section d.5 states the requirements for including budget information for subawards. Specifically, it states that these “budgets must align with the same requirements as the applicant’s budget, including those related to fringe and indirect costs.”

Question 34: Page 27 instructs the applicant to identify up to three positions that will be filled by key personnel. Page 50 indicates that one of these positions should be filled by a monitoring and evaluation expert. Can USAID confirm whether one of the three key personnel positions must be filled by a M&E expert or whether the applicant is free to propose all three positions?

Answer 34:

Due to the importance of Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) for the activity’s success, one of the key personnel must be a monitoring, evaluation, and learning expert.

Question 35: In light of the changes to financial reporting and the tracking and limitations that are now being applied to obligated funds in the HHS Payment Management System (as announced in Implementing Partner Notice #7: LOC Payment of October 30, 2018), it would be helpful to understand the anticipated distribution of funds across the Operating Units (OU) and Program Areas (PA) for this award as we design the programmatic approach.

- a. Can USAID provide the anticipated categories and amounts for each OU and PA for the life of the program, and if available, per year?
- b. If USAID is unable to project these data points at this time, how will USAID introduce this during implementation if proposed program descriptions are already incorporated into the award document but differ from available funding categories?

Answer 35:

- a. USAID anticipates that all funds will be from the Kyrgyz Republic Operating Unit and the Civil Society Program Area.
- b. USAID will use the annual workplan process to ensure that the activity follows the OU/PA that will fund the award.

Question 36: Recent reports from the Collaborative Governance Project do not appear to be available in the DEC. Can USAID please share the most recent quarterly and annual progress reports so that bidders can ensure that we are appropriately building on this work?

Answer 36:

The reports will be uploaded and available on the DEC in the next few days.

Question 37: The most recent report available on the DEC for the Community and Municipal Governance Initiative is from January 2018. Can USAID please share the most recent quarterly and annual progress reports so that bidders can ensure that we are appropriately building on this work?

Answer 37:

The reports are attached to this Amendment.

Question 38: Can USAID provide more information about the number of communities it would like the project to target?

Answer 38:

The number of communities will be dependent on the implementation approach and plan as proposed by the applicant.

Question 39: Per page 33 of the solicitation, it is stated that the applicant must “Provide a valid DUNS number for the applicant and all proposed sub-recipients.” Will the applicant need to provide DUNS numbers for sub-recipients at the proposal stage?

Answer 39:

Yes, if the applicant wants the subaward to be approved at time of the awarding of the cooperative agreement.

Question 40: Per page 33 of the solicitation, it is stated that, “The applicant must submit information for all subawards that it wishes to have approved at the time of award.” Can USAID please confirm that the applicant does not need to submit the information for all proposed sub-awardees at the proposal phase?

Answer 40:

The information must be submitted if the applicant wants the proposed sub-award to be approved at the time of the awarding of the cooperative agreement.

Question 41: Per page 34 of the solicitation, it is stated that, “The applicant must provide information regarding its recent history of performance for all its cost-reimbursement contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs, not to exceed 5 awards...” Can USAID please clarify if the Applicant should include these as an annex to the proposal? If so, should the annex be attached to the technical or cost proposal?

Answer 41:

History of performance must be provided as part of the business (cost) application. See section I “History of Performance” for the specific information required.

Question 42: What is the weight of the evaluation criteria? To what degree will experience/past performance be taken into consideration?

Answer 42:

Applications will be reviewed in accordance with the following criteria shown in descending order of importance:

*Technical Approach
Management Structure and Staffing
Implementation and Monitoring.*

Experience/past performance is not an evaluation factor, but it will be reviewed as part of the risk assessment of the apparently successful applicant.

Question 43: The NFO states a requirement for identification of three key personnel positions, one of which is a Monitoring and Evaluation expert. Does USAID envision any specific roles or specifications for the other two positions?

Answer 43: No. The other two positions should be outlined as relevant for the application and approach identified by the applicant.

Question 44: On page 27 of the NFO under “Management Structure and Staffing Plan” (to be submitted with the proposal) it states that up to three key personnel positions must be named. On page 50 under “Key Personnel” it states that “Within 10 days of making the award, the Recipient will propose a combination of three key personnel.” To confirm, USAID is not requesting names of proposed key personnel in the proposal submission (and as such will not be considered in the evaluation criteria), but rather the positions and position descriptions only for three key personnel project slots?

Answer 44:

Correct, USAID is not requesting the names of key personnel at the application stage.

Question 45: On page 10 of the NFO there is mention of “target communities.” On page 16 there is mention of the need for geographic balance. Does this approach also reflect a desire for ethnic balance in communities selected, I.e. does the Mission prioritize working in the sizeable ethnic minority communities in Osh, Jalal-Abad or Batken?

Answer 45:

The USAID/Kyrgyz Republic CDCS emphasizes inclusion in its program approaches, including ethnic minorities, women, youth, and people with disabilities. Exact locations should be determined following an assessment or opportunity to better understand capacity, issues, and opportunities in communities across the country.

Question 46: What is USAID/Kyrgyz Republic’s policy on working with communities in or around enclaves in Batken, given the importance of land usage as an issue in this region?

Answer 46:

USAID has no policy regarding working in Kyrgyz Republic communities in/around Batken.

Question 47: Is there a cost share requirement for this opportunity? On page 42 there is mention of cost share, but it is unclear whether this is mandatory or optional. If the latter, can it be assumed that proposals offering cost share will be regarded more favorably?

Answer 47:

There is no mandatory cost share requirement, and cost share will not be evaluated directly. However, if proposed cost share increases the likelihood of the activity's success, this will be reflected in the merit review.

Question 48: Have we understood correctly that the application does not require the inclusion of a description of the qualifications of key personnel and this will not be included in the criteria for evaluating the application?

Answer 48:

Correct. The Application must have a description of key personnel positions, not the specific personnel.

Question 49: Can one organization participate in two applications – one as prime and the other as part of a coalition?

Answer 49:

Yes.

Question 50: Is there a ceiling to the total number or value of sub-awards allowable?

Answer 50:

No.