



USAID | PAKISTAN

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Deadline for the Submission of Applications:

Closing Date: August 30, 2021
Closing Time: 16:30 Pakistan Standard Time

Amendment Date: August 4, 2021
Amendment Number: 000001
Notice of Funding Opportunity: 72039121RFA00002
Title: Economic Recovery and Development Activity

The purpose of this amendment is to provide answers to the questions submitted by the potential applicants and share the amended NOFO. Following attachments are part of this amendment 000001.

- Annex A- USAID's Responses to the Questions
- Amended NOFO
- Annex 12 - Mission Local Compensation Plan Summary
- ANNEX 13 - SMEA Policy Work in KP

Note: Deadline for the submission of applications of the NOFO 72039121RFA00002 is extended to August 30, 2021.

Thank you for submitting the questions and your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Robert
Parnell

Digitally signed by Robert
Parnell
Date: 2021.08.04
14:55:13 +05'00'

Robert Parnell
Supervisory Agreement Officer
USAID/ Pakistan's Office of Acquisition and Assistance



Annex - A
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S.#	QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
1.	Page 10 of the NOFO, USAID describes activities and results related to the policy framework; for example, the NOFO states that “ERDA will work with key GoKP entities to operationalize the policy framework being developed by SMEA.” Later, on page 16, the RFA states that activities “will help establish a viable policy framework for public-private partnerships particularly in social sectors (Health and Education) and services sector (including but not limited to logistics, warehousing etc.) to facilitate private sector investments and improve social service delivery.” To ensure the responsiveness of applications, can USAID kindly provide more information on the status of SMEA’s relevant policy work, and/or clarify how USAID anticipates that ERDA will engage to improve and/or operationalize the policy framework? Annex 9, while very informative, was published in December 2019; we understand that SMEA’s work has continued beyond that date.	USAID Small and Medium Enterprises Activity (SMEA) is working with the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade to strengthen the regulatory oversight and management of the provincial mineral deposits to encourage and facilitate investments in existing and new mines, with a special focus on the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs). SMEA has also assisted KP Information Technology Board in devising the KP Digital Policy along with restructuring support to KP Small Industries Development Board. ERDA will assist the government in operationalizing the existing policy framework and help devise policies and strategies to promote private sector investments in all sectors. Annex 13 is added in the amended NOFO for SMEA Policy Work in KP province.
2.	Page 20, Section C.3, “Cost Share” notes that cost share is required for applicant eligibility. We appreciate the importance of appropriate cost share and leveraging in support of ERDA. Would USAID be willing to make Cost Share preferred but not required? And if it is not possible for the Cost Share to be preferred but not required, can USAID clarify that while a 5% Cost Share contribution is “appropriate”, applicants will still be eligible whether or not they meet the 5% figure?	USAID has revised the Cost Share eligibility requirement. Now, in-kind or/and cash cost share contribution is reduced to 3% of the total award value. Relevant Section C.3. Cost Sharing of the NOFO is amended accordingly.



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3.	Page 22 of the NOFO states that graphs and charts may use 10-point font, while tables must use 12-point Times New Roman. Can USAID please confirm that text boxes within the narrative count towards the “graphs and charts” requirement and 10-point font?	Yes, text boxes within the narrative can use a 10 point font. Relevant Section D.3 General Content and Form of Application of the NOFO is amended accordingly.
4.	Pages 27 and 28, Key Personnel, of the NOFO note the Key Personnel positions of Senior Agriculture Specialist; Micro, Small Enterprise and Private Sector Specialist; and Finance and Grants Manager. Would USAID allow applicants to propose candidates with slightly adjusted titles as long as they meet the same function and skill levels required in the NOFO? For example, the Key Personnel position of “Senior Agriculture Advisor” or “Senior Agriculture Director” instead of “Specialist”, etc.?	The titles of “Key Personnel” could be adjusted as long as the proposed candidates meet or exceed the education and experience required for the position. The applicants must specify the Key Personnel position and its adjusted title in the application.
5.	Page 29 of the NOFO notes “Other Staff”. Can USAID confirm this is not an all-inclusive list, and applicants may propose positions, including potentially additional positions not listed in the NOFO, and an organizational chart that aligns with their approach to the NOFO?	Yes, the list of positions given in the NOFO is not all-inclusive and applicants may adjust or propose additional positions that best suit their technical approach.



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6.	Will USAID allow applicants to submit CVs for Key Personnel as an Annex?	Yes, Applicants are allowed to submit CVs for the “Key Personnel” as a separate Annex that will not be counted towards the page limit. Relevant Section D.5 Technical Application Format of the NOFO is amended accordingly.
7.	Pages 34 and 35 of the NOFO note that the applicant must have an active registration in SAM.gov, and Page 35 of the NOFO notes that the applicant and sub-applicants must not have active exclusions in SAM.gov. Can USAID clarify if, at the time of award, sub-applicants specifically must have an active registration in SAM.gov?	Yes, sub-applicants are required to have active SAM registration for approval and will be added in the award only after obtaining SAM registration.
8.	Page 35, Section VIII: History of Performance. Can the applicant also include proposed sub-applicant program information within the 5 awards limit?	Yes, sub-applicants program information can be provided in response to “History of performance”, within the 5 awards limit”. Relevant Section D.7.VIII. History of Performance of the NOFO is amended accordingly.
9.	Can USAID kindly confirm whether it will provide advanced financing or letter of credit for this award?	Letter of Credit method will be used for payment in this award.
10.	On page 9, the third paragraph of the description of requirements under Component 2 of the section entitled, “Technical Components of ERDA”, states, “This will be achieved through provision of technical assistance and, where needed, providing challenge grants to potential investors”. In addition, page 18, Section B. Federal Award Information, Sub-Section 3. Substantial Involvement, b.	Applicants will determine grants range based on their proposed technical approach. The subgrants will be reviewed and approved as part of the conditions stated in the recipients grants manual.



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	Approval of the Grants Manual and Grants states, “All grants must receive USAID approval or no objection depending on the value of the Grant Agreement”. Would USAID please clarify the preferred range for the ERDA grants portfolio?	
11.	Page 23, Section D. Application and Submission Information, Sub-section 5. Technical Application Format allows for 20 pages for the Technical Application, plus an organizational chart and a MEL plan. The Merit Review Criteria on pages 41-43 indicate that applicants will be selected based on the 1) Technical Approach and Understanding; 2) Management Approach and Organizational Capacity; and 3) Personnel. Would USAID please allow 2 additional pages to the Technical Application or an additional annex for a staffing matrix that includes roles, responsibilities, and required qualifications for each position (or actual qualifications for proposed candidates)? Alternatively, would USAID please confirm that applicants may include a staffing matrix in the Organizational Chart Annex to describe roles, responsibilities, and required qualifications for each position (or actual qualifications of proposed candidates)? If an additional staffing matrix is not allowed, would USAID please allow applicants to include CVs of the proposed Key Personnel to be submitted as part of an additional eligible annex to the Technical Application?	No additional pages are allowed to the Technical application. Detailed staffing matrix and information about candidates can be included as a separate annex that will not be counted towards the page limit. Please see answer to the question no. 6. Relevant Section D.5 Technical Application Format of the NOFO is amended accordingly.



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	Would USAID please revise Section D. Application Submission Information, Sub-section 5. Technical Application Format and Section E. Application Review Information, Sub-section I. Merit Review Criterion to reflect any revisions to the RFA?	
12.	Page 20, Section C. Eligibility Information, Sub-section 3. Cost Sharing states “USAID has established that Cost Share is required for the applicant to be eligible for this activity. A total 5% of in-kind or/and cash cost share contribution is appropriate in the ERDA.” Given Pakistan’s uncertain post-pandemic economic outlook, as well as the potential for further instability in Afghanistan given the withdrawal of U.S. forces and its repercussions in the NMDs, would USAID please consider revising the cost share requirement so it could be either cost share or leverage? This would facilitate the participation of MSMEs and lead firms with reduced earnings and limited access to bank loans.	Please see answer to the question no. 2.
13.	Page 50, Section F. Federal Award Administration Information, Sub-section Special Agreement Provisions II. Security Reporting Requirement states “The Recipient has sole responsibility for anticipating, scheduling, budgeting, receiving country clearance and securing required AOR and Agreement Officer approvals for all travel for its employees and/or his/her dependents traveling to post if accompanied by dependents is allowed by the Recipient’s personnel internal policies.” The regulatory updates and changes codified in 2 CFR 200 and the Standard Provisions eliminated the international travel approval requirement under Assistance.	Applicants are required to follow MANDATORY STANDARD PROVISION M.17 TRAVEL AND INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORTATION (DECEMBER 2014). Relevant Section F. Special Agreement Provisions. II. SECURITY REPORTING REQUIREMENT of the NOFO is amended accordingly.



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	Would USAID please clarify if it is requiring the implementer to obtain international travel approval, which appears inconsistent with 2 CFR 200?	
14.	Page 5, Section A. Program Description states “The activity will promote sustainable economic growth by improving agriculture sector capacity and supporting allied MSMEs in the non-agriculture sectors. Additionally, the Activity will leverage planned public sector development initiatives and will support policy reforms to create an enabling environment for private sector investments in high economic-growth potential sectors, like mines, trade, transport, health and education.” Would USAID please confirm that “allied MSMEs in non-agriculture sectors” are MSMEs whose products and services benefit the agriculture sector indirectly (e.g. MSMEs in transport or water sectors)?	Yes, that is correct. The term “allied MSMEs in non-agriculture sectors” includes MSMEs whose products and services benefit the agriculture sector directly or indirectly.
15.	On pages 5, 10, and 16, Section A. Program Description, the target sectors mentioned include Tourism and Minerals (pages 10 and 16), health and education (pages 5 and 16), and other non-agricultural sectors. Page 16 states “On the policy side, the activity will work closely with public and private sector stakeholders to improve policy framework to promote private sector investments in key sectors including Mineral, Trade and Agriculture.” Would USAID please confirm that Components 1 and 2 focus on the agriculture sector (farm and off-farm) and the allied MSMEs in non-agriculture sectors (transport, water, etc.), whereas component 3	Component 1 of the activity is focused on on-farm agriculture development. Component 2 focuses on non-farm MSMEs development including MSEs that directly or indirectly benefit the agriculture sector development. The non-farm sectors mentioned in the Program Description are illustrative and are not all-inclusive. The applicants may propose working in other sectors that offer high potential for MSMEs development. Component 3 focuses on promoting business enabling environment and provision of technical assistance to the public



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	will focus on activities that promote private sector investments in any sector in the NMDs? Would USAID please clarify the degree to which contractors are expected to work outside of the agriculture sector?	sector to improve economic growth programming and policy framework. Please refer to Section A. Program Description for the relevant details.
16.	Page 7, Section. A. Purpose and Scope of ERDA includes the Goal, Purpose, and Sub-Purposes of ERDA. Page 8, Section A. Program Description includes these as Technical Components. Then on Page 24, Section D. Technical Application states “I. Technical Approach and Understanding: Demonstrated understanding of the ERDAs program description goals, objectives and results, landscape, and sustainability of the proposed approach” and “The overall technical approach must demonstrate understanding of the ERDA program description and propose innovative, feasible, realistic and directly relevant activities to achieve the expected objectives and high-level results.” Would USAID please replace the term “sub-purpose” and “components” in the above sections with “objectives” for clarity and consistency? Would USAID please clarify if “results” and “high-level results” in the sentences above are the same results that are included under “Expected Result Component 1” (Page 8), “Expected Result Component 2” (Page 10), “Expected Result Component 3” (Page 10)?	Sub-purpose and objective are used interchangeably, each component has an objective with outputs and outcomes. Expected results are immediate outputs while high level results are medium to longer term outcomes expected to be achieved under the award. High level results refer to expected outcomes. Relevant Section A of NOFO is amended accordingly.



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	Page 8, Section A. Program Description, Sub-section Expected Results Component 1 lists “small dams command area development and production niches establishment, and watersheds improvement” as one of the expected results. However, page 40, Section D. Application and Submission Information, Sub-section 7. Business (Cost) Application Format, X. Funding Restrictions states “Construction will not be authorized under this award”. Would USAID please confirm that dam work and watershed improvement is not considered construction, or please distinguish the type of work that is anticipated under Component 1 to not be considered construction? Would USAID please clarify the meaning of “production niches”? In case there is no construction allowed, would USAID please clarify if this substantial involvement clause is necessary?	Small construction work on irrigation channels, storage tanks, land development, command area development under already constructed small dams, markets and watershed management is part of the description. Production niches are small geographic areas suitable for certain crops, fruits and vegetables. Construction work is allowed and the relevant Section D.7.X. Funding Restrictions of the NOFO is amended accordingly.
17.	Page 9, Section A. Program Description. Technical Component of ERDA, Component 2, states “The interventions will facilitate private sector investments to establish Common Facility Centres (Processing Units, Storages, warehousing, packaging etc.) to promote value addition and processing of agriculture and livestock produce. This will be achieved through provision of technical assistance and, where needed, providing challenge grants to potential investors.”	Applicants may name the grants as appropriate to achieve desired objective and results.



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	Would USAID please confirm that applicants may name the grants program to best reflect their technical approach, rather than naming them “challenge grants”? Would USAID please confirm the following definition of Common Facility Centres proposed by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority: “CFCs are support initiatives that involve a physical infrastructure for the development of small and medium enterprises, belonging to one or more clusters, by providing them access to those facilities which would not otherwise be available to individual SME”?	The Common Facility Centres (CFC) refers to physical infrastructure for the development of small and medium enterprises, belonging to one or more clusters, by providing them access to those facilities which would not otherwise be available to individual SME. The CFC is an illustrative example. The applicant may propose a different set of interventions to achieve activity objectives.
18.	Page 11, Expected Reporting Indicators of Component 3 use the term MSMEs, whereas the term MSEs is used throughout the remainder of the NOFO. Would USAID please confirm that we can use the term MSME instead of MSE in order to include medium enterprises in our target groups (i.e. enterprises with 36-99 employees and productive assets of 20-40 million PKR)?	The term MSEs is replaced with MSMEs and all relevant sections of the NOFO are amended accordingly.
19.	Page 18, Section B. Federal Award Information, Sub-section 3. Substantial Involvement, b. Approval of the Grants Manual and Grants states “1) For Grant Awards below \$5,000: The Agreement Officer Representative shall provide approval, a no-objection or reject the grant. 2) For Grant Awards \$5,000 and above: The Agreement Officer shall provide approval, a no-objection or reject the grant.” Would USAID please clarify the differences between "approval" and "no-objection" as used here?	The term “no-objection” is removed.



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		Relevant Section B.3. Substantial Involvement of NOFO is amended accordingly.
20.	Page 19, Section B. Federal Award Information. Sub-section 3. Substantial Involvement, b. Approval of Term Technical Assistance states “Consultants for Short Term or Long Term Technical Assistance of this Cooperative Agreement will require Agreement Officer’s approval.” Would USAID please define what it considers to be "technical assistance" as used here? For example, would a consultant providing administrative support be considered as "technical assistance," or Does this approval requirement only apply to consultants supporting the Recipient in the performance of Program Description objectives?	This section refers to approval of consultants supporting the recipient in the performance of program description objectives only.
21.	Page 19, Section B. Federal Award Information, Sub-section 3. Substantial Involvement, e. Approval of sub-recipients and partnership agreements: Would USAID please define what it includes to be "partnership agreements" as used here? Page 19, Section B. Federal Award Information, Sub-section 3. Substantial Involvement, f. Agency, and Recipient Collaboration or Joint Participation, 2. Concurrence on the substantive provisions of sub-awards. Would USAID please clarify what it requires to concur to the "substantive provisions" of sub-awards?	The term partnership agreement refers to the Recipient's agreement with partners from the public and private sectors.



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		Under Section B. Federal Award Information, Sub-section 3. Substantial Involvement, concurrence on the substantive provisions of sub-awards will allow USAID to review and provide its concurrence to the provisions included in the sub-awards.
22.	Page 25, Section D. Application and Submission Information, Sub-section 6. Technical Application, III. Personnel, Key Personnel, Chief of Party states “An advanced degree from an accredited university in a relevant discipline, such as International Development, Business, Conflict Stabilization, Economics or Agriculture”. Given the requirement for a candidate with the Chief of Party experience, supervisory and highly technical skills and expertise, the preference for experience in the NMDs, to maximize inclusion of local personnel, would USAID please consider amending this requirement to include an advanced degree from an accredited university in any discipline, in combination with relevant professional experience?	The Chief of Party Requirements are revised. Relevant Section D.6.III. Key Personnel of the NOFO is amended accordingly.
23.	Page 28, Section D. Application and Submission Information, Sub-section 6. Technical Application, III. Personnel, Key Personnel, Finance and Grants Manager states “Five or more years of experience administering all budgetary aspects of a small grants or sub-grants program, where both financial transparency and supportive beneficiary relationships are absolutely essential” for the Finance and Grants Manager position. To ensure inclusion and diversity, and given that proposed candidates need specific capacity in the NMDs, would USAID	The requirement for the Finance and Grants Manager position remains unchanged as required in the NOFO.



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	please consider changing this requirement to a minimum of 3 years of experience administering budgetary aspects of a small grants or sub-grants program, as long as applicants include sufficient staff to support this role?	
24.	Page 29, Section D. Application and Submission Information, Sub-section 6. Technical Application, III. Personnel, Other Staff states “The award recipient has the discretion to determine the appropriate number and composition of additional personnel, including personnel from local organizations, short-term technical staff, and others needed to meet the project requirements described in the technical proposal.” Further down is states “The non-key personnel positions are expected to be” and lists the positions. Would USAID please confirm that "expected" does not mean they are required and that applicants will be evaluated unfavorably if some of these positions are not included in the proposed staff composition?	Other expected positions are illustrative to achieve program objectives, Applicants may form their teams as appropriate to implement all components of the activity mentioned in the program description.
25.	Page 29, Section D. Application and Submission Information, Sub-section 6. Technical Application, III. Personnel, Other Staff lists the expected non-key personnel positions to be composed at the discretion of an award recipient. To align with the Mission Local Compensation Plan 2020 and an applicant’s proposed management approach, would USAID please confirm applicants are allowed to propose higher-level positions, i.e., a director instead of a specialist?	Please see answer to the question no. 4.



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26.	Page 20, Section C. Eligibility Information, Sub-section 3. Cost Sharing states “USAID has established that Cost Share is required for the applicant to be eligible for this activity. A total 5% of in-kind or/and cash cost share contribution is appropriate in the ERDA.” Would USAID please confirm that this 5% does not refer to the entire award value; rather it refers to assistance provided to each grantee?	Please see answer to the question no. 2.
27.	Page 31, Section D. Application and Submission Information, Sub-section IV. Budget and Budget Narrative, first bullet point states “Summary Budget, inclusive of all program costs (federal and non-federal), broken out by major budget category and by year for activities implemented by the Applicant and any potential sub-applicants for the entire period of the program.” Would USAID please confirm that Applicants are to include one summary budget that includes costs incurred by the Applicant and sub-applicants, and not multiple summary budgets for sub-applicants?	Summary budget will include costs incurred by applicants and sub-applicants. The detailed budget of the prime applicant must be provided in the unprotected Excel file format as detailed in the Budget Template that is attached as Annex-1 to the NOFO. Sub-applicants detailed budgets must also be provided using the same format by adding the additional tabs in the excel sheet. Detailed Budget narrative for prime and all sub recipients must also be provided in word/PDFdocument.
28.	Page 24 states, “Applicants are required to provide a one-page description of innovative approaches to leverage private sector resources and expertise to achieve ERDA’s objectives as part of the technical approach.” Would USAID please confirm that this is a minimum requirement of one page?	One-page description of proposed plan for private sector engagement and leveraging is a requirement. This is a maximum limit for innovative approaches for private sector inclusion.



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29.	This NOFO requires a 5% cost share as per Section C.3. Given our experience operating in the NMDs, we believe this requirement places too high of a financial risk on offerors given the security, logistical and administrative challenges of operating in the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs). Local organizations active in the NMDs have limited operational capacity and minimal unrestricted funds and/or in-kind resources to contribute to a program of this size. Additionally, there is a high level of risk aversion among private sector companies to enter this highly insecure environment. We kindly request USAID to consider removing the requirement of a cost share from the NOFO.	Please see answer to the question no. 2.
30.	Could USAID kindly confirm that Annexes to the Technical Application do not count towards the Technical Application 20-page limit (per page 23)? And if so, would USAID kindly confirm such Annexes can include, but are not limited to: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (Annex A) Organizational Chart (Annex B)	Please refer to Section D.5 Technical Application Format of amended NOFO for details.
31.	Section D, Number 4, under “Application and Submission Information”, p. 23: What is the maximum file size for the submission email?	Applicants must limit each email submission to less than 25 MB. Relevant section of the NOFO is amended accordingly.
32.	Section D, Number 6, under “Technical Application”, page 24. Are offerors to submit CVs for each of the five key personnel? If so, please confirm that they can be included as Annexes to the technical proposal that do not count toward the 20-page limit.	Yes Please see answer to the question no. 6.



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33.	Section D, III Personal, B. Deputy Chief of Party page 26. Would USAID please consider revising the minimum set of qualifications from Ten or more years of experience managing multi-year development programs in conflict areas...” to “Ten or more years of experience managing multi-year development programs (preferably in conflict areas, preferably in NMDs or the region)...”?	The Deputy Chief of Party requirements are revised. Relevant Section D.6.III. Key Personnel of the NOFO is amended accordingly.
34.	Section D, III Personal, Other Staff, page 29, in the NOFO states: “The award recipient has the discretion to determine the appropriate number and composition of additional personnel...” Later, in the same section, under “The non-key personnel positions are expected to be,” 13 positions are listed in bullet points. Can offerors propose additional, alternate or a fewer number of non-key personnel as we see fit to achieve the NOFO objectives, or is the expectation we should follow the list of 13 positions?	Please see answer to the question no. 24.
35.	Section D, Number 7, under “Business (Cost) Application Format” (Section IV Budget and Budget Narrative), on page 31, third bullet point regarding “Detailed Budgets for each Sub-recipient”: Please kindly confirm whether detailed budgets will be required to be submitted even for subrecipients with fixed price deliverables-based budgets or whether fixed price subrecipient budgets showing the cost per deliverable will be sufficient for subrecipients with fixed price deliverables-based budgets?	Detailed budget for all the sub-recipients identified at the application stage is required.



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36.	In Annex 1 of the “Sample Budget Template”: Under the Summary tab, line number 23, it indicates “Fee-Profit”. Would USAID please advise if offerors may delete this line, given guidance under page 39 for section D on Funding Restrictions states that “Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award”?	Yes, profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award. “Sample Budget Template” is for illustrative purposes and must be edited as required.
37.	Would USAID kindly share the most recent Local Compensation Plan for Pakistan?	“Mission Local Compensation Plan Summary” document is added and attached as Annex 12 of the NOFO.
38.	Given the Eid al Adha holiday from July 19 to July 21 has severely limited the availability of Pakistani colleagues, potential partners and government stakeholders, would USAID kindly consider extending the original August 23 deadline to August 30 to allow offerors to recover these working days?	Deadline for the submission of application is extended to August 30, 2021. Cover page of the NOFO is amended accordingly.
39.	NOFO does not read any requirements/instructions with regard to CVs and CV for format for Key/Non-key staff. Does an offeror need to submit CVs for the proposed Key/Non-key staff? If required, can CVs be annexed to Technical Application (Proposal)? And would these be counted towards specified page limit of 20 pages?	Please see answer to the question no. 6.
40.	Reference to Part III of Section- D (Required Certifications and Assurances), our organization has never been issued a “Certificate of Compliance” for any of previous contracts delivered to USAID.	



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	Can we use a copy of CPAR, containing the “Regulatory Compliance” statement, instead? The referenced statement under CPAR reads as QUOTE, “The contractor complied with all contract clause requirements, reporting requirements and the quality assurance plan.” UNQUOTE	Submission of Certificate of Compliance is required only if the applicant has received any such certificate. Applicants can submit CPARs for reference.
41.	For Indicator #7, does this mean national policies? Does “advanced” imply implemented or just approved? “Number of economic growth policies advanced as a result of USG assistance (3.1.1a.)”	This means policies related to the program focused areas. Advanced should be read as policies designed and implemented with USG assistance.