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The Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA)

Questions and Answers posting date: April 3, 2015

Amendment 1 issuance date: April 3, 2015

Subject: Request for Applications (RFA) Number RFA-669-15-0000001 for Liberia Media Development (LMD) Program

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) hereby posts, pursuant to the above-referenced RFA, Amendment 1 (Attachment 1), questions and answers received during the question period.

Cordially,

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Part A. Specific changes to RFA-669-15-000009 as stated below:

1. **In Section IV: Application and Submission Information**

Under **Cost Application Contents and Format,** 3. Budget Narrative Contents and Format, decrease indent for last four bullets, starting with "The breakdown of all costs according to each subpartner organization, if any, involved in the program" and ending with "Procurement plan for commodities, goods, and services (if applicable)" to indicate these four requirements are for the entire Budget Narrative and not only the explanation of salaries.

Part B. Questions and Answers

1. Will the anticipated program be active in all counties of the country or does USAID plan on targeting certain counties? If so, could you please kindly let us know which ones?

   Answer: We are anticipating nationwide coverage for radio stations.

2. Could you please kindly elaborate on what "qualitative outcome-oriented objectives" mentioned in the "Monitoring and Evaluation Plan" section on page 18? Is it possible that these are intended to be "qualitative outcome-oriented *indicators*"?

   Answer: These were intended to be outcome-oriented indicators.

3. Page 18 of the RFA notes "The **Recipient** shall include a Branding and Marking plan, with a budget (in the Cost Application) as part of the application package." And on page 28 of the RFA the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan is listed as a technical annex. Could you please clarify whether the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan are indeed required with the application as an annex to the technical application or whether it will be the responsibility of the recipient of the award?

   Answer: Please do include the Branding and Marking Plan as an annex to the technical application.

4. Should the Level of Effort Table (pages 27 and 30) reflect short and long-term technical assistance as well as full time staff, or only the latter?

   Answer: Yes, the LOE should reflect anticipated STTA and LTTA.

5. The RFA instructs that Past Performance Short Forms are to be submitted separately by March 20, 2015 (page 25). They are also listed as a technical annex (pages 26 and 28). Could USAID please kindly advise whether this means that the Past Performance Short Forms are to also be submitted as part of the Technical Application on April 12?

Answer: The Past Performance short forms were due on March 20, as per the RFA.

6. Is submission of Past Performance Short Forms (page 28) limited to three, or may the applicant submit more than three?

   Answer: Please submit only three Past Performance Short Forms.

7. Please kindly confirm that salary history is not required for personnel whose salaries do not exceed $167,000 (page 30).

   Answer: The instructions in the RFA are as follows:

   For any salaries over $167,000, please provide the salary history of the last three years to include dates of employment, place of employment, position held, and annual salary.

8. How and what is the exact extent to who can apply for this grant.

   Answer: This is a full-and-open competition. Submission instructions are in the RFA, specifically Section IV: Application and Submission Information.

9. Do co-applicants also need to submit the Past Performance Short Forms by March 20 as indicated in the RFA's cover sheet? Or is this meant for lead applicants only?

   Answer: USAID will be evaluating one (1) application from each applicant. Proposed sub-awardees are not considered applicants.

10. If the Forms do need to be submitted by co-applicants: can this be done by email to the same addresses?

    Answer: Please see answer to Question #9.

11. Given that the upcoming Easter holiday, and the festivities that lead up to it, may make it difficult to meet with and establish effective partnerships with local partners and key personnel, would USAID consider extending the submission due date by a week or two?

    Answer: Unfortunately, USAID/Liberia is running up against some very real deadlines, thus will not be able to extend the submission date.

12. On page 18 of the RFA, USAID states that "*the recipient should plan to collect detailed, in –depth baseline data for all relevant components in order to track impact of the LMD activities over the life of the program.*" Later on USAID states on the same page "*By having the initial baseline data from the studies undertaken by previous USAID-funded activities and from the implementing partner, there will be a strong basis from which to measure changes, as well as evidence-based data to make informed decisions about*

future activities and interventions." Can USAID please confirm our understanding that applicants should propose new baseline studies and not rely solely on previously completed surveys and research?

Answer: Given that this is a new project, USAID would expect that baseline data to be collected would be relevant to the new activities. While there are many resources from outside sources, including the current CSML project, it should not be assumed that all baseline data will be available from pre-existing data.

13. On page 20, USAID suggested that the budget is for a 5-year $11,000,000 award. Would USAID/Liberia be willing to share with all applicants the breakdown between international costs and local sub-grantees in the current Civil Society and Media award?

    Answer: USAID/Liberia anticipates a plug figure for grants to Media organizations to be approximately $2.5 million. We are unable to share this information for the currently implemented Civil Society and Media Strengthening program implemented by IREX.

14. On page 24, USAID states that cost sharing or matching is not required. Could USAID/Liberia confirm our understanding based on this statement that cost share will not be factored into the evaluation and/or grading criteria for making an award?

    Answer: This will not be factored into the evaluation criteria. Please see the evaluation criteria upon which the applications will be judged.

15. The RFA instructs applicants to include an illustrative monitoring and evaluation plan and illustrative risk assessment in both the technical approach (page 27) and as technical annexes (page 28). Should applicants include these elements in both sections of the proposal?

    Answer: Please include a summary (no more than one page each) of both the M&E Plan and the Risk Assessment in the Technical Approach, as well as full descriptions of each in their respective Annexes.

16. On page 25, USAID states that Past Performance Short Forms are to be submitted by March 20, 2015. However, on page 26, the RFA includes Past Performance Short Forms as one of the Technical Annexes. Should applicants re-submit their past performance forms to USAID along with the rest of the annexes as part of their final technical proposals?

    Answer: As stated in the RFA, Past Performance Short Forms were due March 20. As directed on page 26 of the RFA, Past Performance Short Forms are to be submitted separately.

17. On page 30, USAID states that when explaining salaries, applicants must provide "*the breakdown of all costs according to each subpartner organization, if any, involved in the*

program." Can USAID please clarify whether this means applicants should include a detailed sub-grant and/or sub-contract budget for each subpartner involved in the program? And can applicants assume this applies only to major subpartners identified in the proposal?

Answer: Applicants need not include a detailed budget for each sub-award, but the estimated total costs of each sub-award.

18. On page 30, USAID states that when explaining salaries, applicants must provide a "*procurement plan for commodities, goods and services (if applicable)."* Can USAID please clarify when this plan would be applicable, and what specifically is required to be included in the plan?

    Answer: This requirement is not specifically related to the explanation of salaries (See Part A. Specific changes to RFA-669-15-000009 of this amendment). A procurement plan for commodities, goods and services is applicable if procurement of commodities, goods and services is part of the application. A procurement plan will include the anticipated commodities, goods, and services to be procured, the estimated vendors, and the estimated costs.

19. On Page 31, under "Detailed Budget Contents and Format," USAID states that "*the budget shall identify any goods and services being procured through a contract mechanism*." Does this include goods and services procured through sub-grants and/or sub-contracts?

    Answer: This includes goods and services procured through contracts. Grants are not a procurement mechanism.

20. On page 31, USAID states that applicants should include in the excel spreadsheet the estimated types of equipment to be used on this project, including "*equipment model number, cost per unit and quantity*." Can USAID confirm that applicants should include that level of detail for equipment in the budget, since including the model number would seem to preclude open bidding for different makes of equipment?

    Answer: Applicants are not expected to provide the model numbers of items for which they have not identified a specific model.

21. On pages 32-33, USAID requires applicants to propose a cost ceiling on indirect cost rates, final reimbursement for indirect costs, and indirect costs. Can USAID confirm that this applies only to applicants who do not have a NICRA with USAID?

    Answer: In accordance with ADS 303.3.12:

    If the apparently successful applicant has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, the recipient may choose to charge a de minimus rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (see 2 CFR 200.414(f)). If the prospective applicant chooses the de

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

22. Please confirm USAID expects the Liberia Media Development Activity program area to be solely comprised of the same counties as CSML.

    USAID Liberia intends this project to have nationwide coverage, especially for radio. Thus, the LMD project is not limited to the counties identified in the CDCS.

23. Given the activities of Objective 5, would USAID consider extending its expectation of non-exclusivity to international organizations as it has to Liberian organizations and potential Liberian staff?

    Yes, USAID is willing to extend expectation of non-exclusivity to international organizations as well.

24. Does USAID have a plug figure for sub-grants to local organizations?

    Answer: The plug figure for sub-grants to local organizations is $2.5 million.

25. Is this the grant that previously had been awarded to IREX. If so, I have been a visiting teacher in that media training program and am familiar with the expectations.

    Answer: Please see the annexes with the quarterly reports for the current CSML project, implemented by IREX.