December 10, 2009

Reference: **Request for Application (RFA) USAID Nicaragua No. 524-10-002 for the implementation of the Democratic Leadership Development Program (DLDP)**
Subject: **RFA Amendment Number One**

Dear Potential Applicant:

The purpose of this RFA amendment number one is to:

1) Provide questions with answers; and
2) Extend the closing date to January 15, 2010.

Answers to the questions are as follows:

1. Allocation of Project Funds by Objective: In light of the RFA's request for development-focused budgeting, does USAID have a desired breakdown or allocation of the project's $10.2 million by objective, such as X% for Objective 1, Y% for Objective 2, etc.?

ANSWER: USAID expects that each applicant will provide a fresh set of ideas on what the priorities will be in the next 5 years. The applicant should take into consideration key electoral dates, but also have a parallel strategy looking into a more sustainable future to help local organizations in the areas and objectives mentioned in the RFA.

2. Request for an Extension to the RFA: Given the requirement to include financial information from local partners—along with a copy of the legal relationship between the Prime Applicant and its local groups—in applicants' cost proposal submissions, we respectfully request an extension to the RFA's due date. Upcoming national holidays, Christmas vacations, and New Year's celebrations in Nicaragua will severely limit access to local organizations and their senior staff. An extension of a week or two would allow applicants additional time to secure the necessary commitments and documentation required in the RFA.

ANSWER: USAID has agreed to grant an extension to the RFA due date until January 15, 2010.

3. Rapid Response Fund: Given that the rapid response fund could be used to respond to unforeseen and unexpected events, should the $200,000 associated with the rapid response

U.S. Agency for International Development
American Embassy, Managua, USAID
Unit 2712, Box 9
APO AA 34021

Tel: +(505) 2252-7100
Fax: +(505) 2252-7324
http://nicaragua.usaid.gov

Embajada Americana
Km 5.5 Carretera Sur
Apartado Postal C-167, ZP 13
Managua, Nicaragua

fund be assigned to a particular objective, or could it be allocated across all three project objectives?

ANSWER: Each applicant should propose or plan a strategy for the use of this specific fund allocation. This fund should remain a separate line item in preparation for unforeseen and/or unexpected events and could be used for any of the three objectives.

4. Use of Sub-grants: Can USAID confirm that the use of the $750,000 available for sub-grants is primarily to support possible sub-grants under Objectives 2 and 3, as other project funding can be used to support the local consortium's delivery of training under Objective 1, both during the Applicant's active involvement in Objective 1 (years 1–3), and afterwards (years 4–5).

ANSWER: USAID expects the applicant to mainly use the $750,000 sub-grant fund mainly for objectives 2 and 3 unless there is a need to also allocate or support a group working with Objective 1. This is a general guideline for applicants, not a hard and fast rule.

5. Technical Evaluation Criteria: Can USAID provide the specific number of points assigned to the four evaluation criterion for the technical proposal (technical approach, management/staffing plan, PMP and organizational experience)?

ANSWER: No. As stated, the evaluation criteria are listed in descending order of importance. Numerical ratings will not be used instead an adjectival rating system will be used.

6. Due Date for Application Hard Copies: With proposals due on Friday, January 8th, does USAID want to receive hard copies of the applicants' proposal by Monday, January 11th (three days after the due date) or can applicants have three business days to send their materials by international courier, with materials arriving by Wednesday, January 13th?

ANSWER: USAID will allow applicants to send their hard copy materials by January 20, 2010 since the deadline for submitting the proposal electronically has been extended to January 15.

7. Technical Application Page Limit: Can USAID confirm that the page limit for the Technical Application does not include the Implementation Plan, PMP, Institutional Capacity and Annex sections, which are separate sections with their own page requirements? In addition, is the page limit for the technical application 20 pages, as suggested by item E.3 on page 20 of the RFA, or 40 pages, as suggested in the description of the PMP on page 29?

ANSWER: Yes, the page limit for the Program Narrative does not include the Implementation Plan, PMP, Institutional Capability and Annex sections. The page limit for the Program Narrative is 20 pages, please disregard the sentence: "Each plan shall be separate and neither plan contributes to the 40-page limitation," under page 29.

8. Technical Application and Cost Application Formats: On page 21, item 6 in the Cost/Business Application Format section mentions including “a chart containing the main activities of the program, which is similar chart to the one requested under the Technical Application, but also including cost.” Can USAID confirm that the similar chart referenced in the technical section is the Implementation Plan/Work Plan document?

ANSWER: No, the Work Plan should be submitted in narrative form and not in a chart, please disregard the sentence: “Note that this is a similar chart to the one requested under the Technical Application, but also including cost,” under page 21.

9. Number of Past Performance References: On page 20, the RFA requests that applicants provide a list of all similar or related programs performed for USAID and other donors over a four year period. As opposed to providing a list of all programs, can applicants provide a list of the most relevant or related programs, limiting the number of references to 10, or perhaps 20 if a larger sample of references is desired?

ANSWER: Yes, applicants can provide a list of the 10 most relevant or related programs.

10. Quarterly Financial Reports: NDI respectfully notes that accruals are not included within the quarterly financial reporting requirements stipulated in 22 CFR 226.52. Therefore, the financial reporting requirements for a resulting award should not reference a requirement to submit accruals, as this would constitute an additional reporting requirement.

ANSWER: Please be aware that in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, specifically 22 CFR 226 *Administration of assistance awards to U.S. non-governmental organizations*, recipients are required to submit accrual information. Please reference 22 CFR 226.21(b)(1): "....While USAID requires reporting on an accrual basis, if the recipient maintains its records on other than an accrual basis, the recipient shall not be required to establish an accrual accounting system… recipients may develop such accrual data for their reports on the basis of an analysis of the documentation on hand." Similar information is found under 22 CFR 226.52 *Financial Reporting* (a)(1)(ii).

11. Annual Reports: NDI respectfully notes that 22 CFR 226.51 states that recipients may be required to submit quarterly or annual reports. While the RFA states that the annual report would be provided in lieu of a quarterly report, this would still constitute an additional reporting requirement as it would require the recipient to report on information that has already been reported to USAID. However, to respond to the missions need for cumulative fiscal year data to include in its reports to USAID/Washington, the recipient could be suggested to include an annex in its July to September quarterly report that would summarize the F indicator data for the fiscal year and provide a summary of program impact for the year. Therefore, NDI respectfully requests that the resulting award require either quarterly reports or annual reports due 90 calendar days after the award year for consistency with 22 CFR 226.51.

ANSWER: The resulting award will only require quarterly reports, not both quarterly and annual reports. Please disregard the section "Annual Reports" under "Other Project" on page 30.

The length of this amendment is 4 pages

Sincerely,

David Brown
Director
Regional Office of Acquisition and Assistance
for Central America and Mexico