



Country Specific Information: Madagascar

U.S. Agency for International Development

Office of Food for Peace

Fiscal Year 2014: Title II Request for Applications

Title II Development Food Assistance Programs

Summary

The U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) anticipates that funds and commodities will be available for Title II food assistance programming in Madagascar in fiscal year (FY) 2014. The anticipated funding for this program is approximately \$75 million for five years in support of up to two awards, with \$11.5 million available in FY 2014, subject to the availability of funds and commodities. Applications can include variable annual funding requests, but the total amount funded will not exceed \$75 million over the five-year period. To be eligible for assistance under this Request for Applications (RFA), the program must use Title II food assistance resources, specifically commodities, for direct distribution in Madagascar. Given this eligibility requirement, FFP will not consider applications for 100 percent monetization or those without direct distribution activities. The direct distribution activities should be accompanied by complementary activities that increase availability, access, and utilization/consumption of food and reduce vulnerability to food insecurity. If Community Development Funds (CDF) or other resources become available for Madagascar, then monetization levels should decrease accordingly. This Country Specific Information (CSI) supplements FFP's FY 2014 RFA. Both documents must be used for developing an application for submission.

Policy Environment

The current Madagascar Title II food assistance program operates in a context of enormous political and economic uncertainty, which may continue into the next phase of the Title II development program. Since the 2009 political crisis, reduction in aid from the international donor community has resulted in stagnation or reversal of progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Until the political crisis ends and constitutional rule resumes, the United States Government (USG) is expected to continue the suspension of all non-humanitarian assistance as well as direct assistance to the Government of Madagascar (GoM). The current exceptions to the suspension of non-humanitarian assistance are the USAID Mission's health portfolio and the Title II development programs.

Applicants are encouraged to consult the United States Department of State and USAID guidance regarding how USG-funded projects are to engage with GoM actors, particularly until the political crisis is resolved. The political situation prohibits partnerships with GoM institutions or any of their parastatals until free and fair democratic elections occur. USG sanctions prohibit the USG from providing support in any form to the GoM.

Current Food Security Situation in Madagascar

Since the 2009 coup d'état, food security has worsened in Madagascar. Governance and state investment failures, broad economic deterioration, and the degradation of the natural resource base are undermining the Malagasy people's ability to prevent, mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks such as cyclones, droughts, floods, price and production shocks that they frequently face. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that the prevalence of under-nourishment has increased in Madagascar from 28 percent in 2004-2006 to 33 percent in 2010-2012 (FAO 2013, *Madagascar Review*). Chronic food insecurity is widespread. Important factors contributing to food insecurity in Madagascar include annual cyclones; flooding and drought; limited access to agricultural inputs and credit; poor post-harvest techniques; soil degradation and poor natural resources management along with a lack of access to markets and market information for smallholder farmers; limited off-farm employment opportunities and the more recent locust outbreak. Inadequate water and sanitation coverage and poor hygiene practices; high rates of childhood illness; lack of access to quality health care; and inappropriate infant and young child feeding practices are equally important drivers of food insecurity.

Available data highlights regional differences in the determinants of food insecurity, whereby behavioral determinants play a greater role in the highlands, while poor food access, low agro-ecological potential and frequent shocks play a relatively greater role in the south, southeast and southwest. Across the 22 regions of the country, the prevalence of wasting (an indicator of global acute malnutrition) is 6%, which is considered medium according to the World Health Organization (WHO) classification. However, over half (53 percent) of children under five years of age are stunted, with the prevalence in some regions reaching 72 percent (in the Amoron'i Mania region) and the prevalence of severe stunting reaching 22 percent. The national prevalence of underweight in children under five years of age is at least 30 percent (INSTAT and World Bank, 2012). Chronic food insecurity is widespread, but is most acute in the southern areas of the country and in specific pockets in the highlands. An FAO and World Food Programme (WFP) crop and food security assessment (CSFAM) released in October 2013, provides updated information on the food security situation in the country.

Programming Priorities for Title II Resources in Madagascar

Overview

The over-arching goal of the program is to reduce food insecurity and chronic malnutrition, as well as build resilience among chronically food insecure households in the most vulnerable regions of Madagascar. Applications must address both the root causes of chronic food insecurity as well as chronic malnutrition, with an integrated programming approach. More specifically, FFP seeks applications that will focus on: (1) reducing chronic malnutrition and improving the nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women and children under five years of age; (2) increasing household and microenterprise productivity and income through appropriate market-oriented approaches; and (3) building household resilience to withstand and mitigate the effects of shocks and natural resource degradation.

All of these interventions need to include gender and environmental considerations as stipulated in the RFA.

Development Approach and Sustainability

FFP seeks to implement effective models, build local capacity, and create an enabling environment adapted to the Madagascar context. Therefore, applicants must provide an overall implementation strategy that seeks to create wherever possible, self-financing and self-transferring models that will continue to spread under their own momentum both during and after the program. It is the expectation that these models will be adopted and adapted by a significant proportion of the population. Many examples of this type of intervention exist, but one particularly successful example of this type of model is the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) system that is spreading in Niger. A paper describing this system can be found here:

<http://www.ifpri.org/publication/agroenvironmental-transformation-sahel>

Applicants should place strategic importance on sustainability, replicability and transferability throughout the program design. When working through and with existing structures, institutions and organizations, applicants must develop a capacity building plan for these entities. Applicants should identify linkages with key local stakeholders, and community-based organizations. Community participatory approaches should focus on ensuring community ownership and responsibility. Applicants should propose a set of interventions that are informed by a rigorous analysis of potential impact of proposed livelihood and agricultural (including livestock) interventions using market research, household economy analysis, and economic modeling, such as investment vs. outcome, crop budgeting, or projected household cash flow statements. Interventions must be evidence based and discuss implementation in the Madagascar context taking into consideration the cultural and religious practices of the target population.

To sustainably support the increased production of any livestock and/or agriculture-related or off-farm products, applicants are strongly encouraged to incorporate into the design mainstream market development/facilitation initiatives, and include the early creation of market linkages with key private sector actors. Proposed interventions must be guided by a market analysis. Applicants must have a defined method to rationalize crop selection, livestock selection, and other income-generating interventions based on financial analysis at the community and household levels. Market driven activities must also be complemented by efforts to promote appropriate sustainable and resilient forms of agriculture that will not further undermine the natural resource base or increase vulnerabilities to natural disasters and market fluctuations. While improved quantity and quality of production is important, considerable attention must be directed to the actual impact on income, maternal and child nutritional status, and food security at the household level.

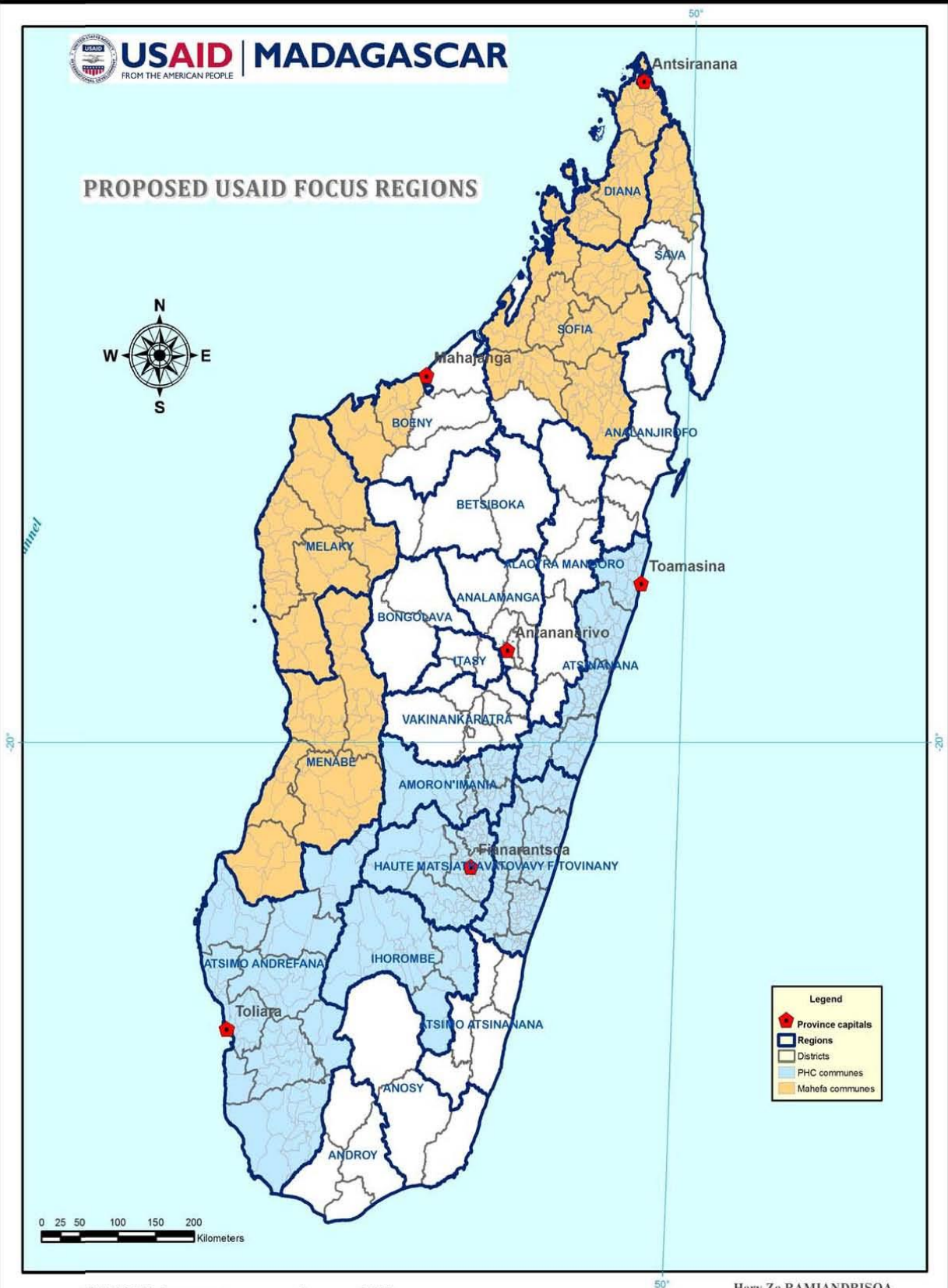
Geographic Priorities

In order to concentrate USAID Health and Food Security projects portfolio with the aim of having coordinated and manageable interventions that produce greater impact, six predominantly rural regions will be considered for the next round of Title II development programming in Madagascar: Atsimo Andrefana in the southwest; Atsinanana and Vatovavy-Fitovinany in the east; and Haute Matsiatra, Amoron'i Mania, and Ihorombe in the central highlands. See map below. Applications should clearly explain the rationale for selecting any or all proposed program target areas. The FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) provides updated and detailed information on the food security situation by geographical regions,



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PROPOSED USAID FOCUS REGIONS



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as may future Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reports.

Within these regions, communes may be selected based on food security and nutritional data, as well as other programmatic factors. It should be emphasized that there is value in working in contiguous areas so that the program is better able to link infrastructure projects (e.g., linking market feeder roads or roads throughout a health clinic or school catchment area) and take advantage of economies of scale. In the event that the application targets areas in which the current FFP-funded *Strengthening and Accessing Livelihood Opportunities for Household Impacts (SALOHI)* program operated or is operating, the applicant should make clear how the proposed activities will build on and scale-up where SALOHI left off, with the aim of graduating communities by program's end.

Applicants should recognize the potential for strategic partnerships and complementarity in all the suggested districts, while being cautious about a duplication of efforts with other programs. Applicants may propose interventions in villages where FFP activities are currently operational in order to build on work done to date. However, FFP would like to see a strong justification for continued work in the same areas, along with a phase out plan linked to plans to ensure sustainability. The applicant must substantiate proposed target areas based on comparative need, activity sequencing, and potential return on investment to the beneficiary household.

Beneficiaries

Targeting of communities should be based on prevalence of stunting and historical need for food assistance, while considering that there is value added in working in contiguous areas particularly at the village/hamlet level so that the program is better able to link infrastructure projects and take advantage of economies of scale. FFP advises that the program targets populations groups that are at greatest risk of malnutrition and food insecurity particularly among pregnant and lactating women and children under two, and, based upon an understanding of the food security shocks they face, the sources of vulnerability, and the capacity to mitigate the effects of shocks. To maximize nutrition impact, households with children under two and pregnant and lactating women should be prioritized for activities beyond maternal and child health and nutrition (MCHN) to prevent long term negative effects of chronic child malnutrition. Where applicable, beneficiary targeting should also focus on young adults (approximately aged 14-24 years), as they make up a large percentage of the population and will likely become parents during the life of the Title II program, but are often marginalized. Applicants must develop a transparent selection process to target food insecure households which have the commitment and the physical means to engage in targeted interventions.

To leverage USG resources and for added value to the program, FFP expects the applicants to focus on an approach that would target the same communities and households for both MCHN and market driven livelihood and value chain interventions with the expectation of building linkages and synergies with other USAID programs such as the new Primary Health Care (PHC) portfolio. Title II applicants will need to identify opportunities to collaborate with the USAID Health activities in the same areas of intervention. Specifically, applicants will need to design programs which demonstrate opportunities for collaboration with the existing USAID Health projects including PHC, Integrated Social Marketing (ISM) and the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI).

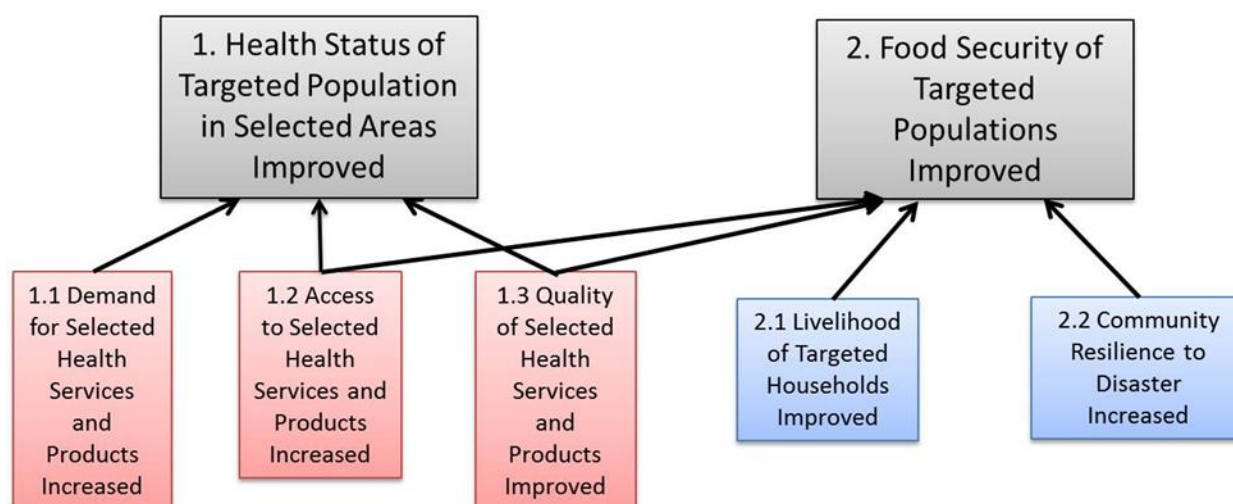
Note: USAID/Madagascar would like Title II applicants to consider food-insecure disabled populations in the implementation areas of the program, if appropriate, and detail, if necessary, in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan how this serves to expand the reach and outcome of the program.

Programmatic Priorities

To achieve sustainable reductions in food insecurity and chronic malnutrition in Madagascar and increase resilience among chronically food insecure households, the applicants should address the underlying factors of food insecurity and under-nutrition. The applicants should design accordingly an integrated set of activities that aims to increase and sustain household production and income, while bolstering resilience and improving health and nutrition. Applicants may identify, prioritize, and design project activities, with a corresponding results framework that complements the Mission's results framework for health and food security that includes FFP assistance (see Figure 1) that they believe will most effectively reduce chronic food insecurity and malnutrition in a specific setting.

The applicants should ensure that the interventions are context specific to households, communities and the particular region. By promoting diversity in agricultural productivity and income generation, rural households will experience a shorter lean season, reduced exposure to food security shocks and decreased reliance on rain-fed agriculture. For maximum impact, cross-cutting issues such as integrated programming, geographic and vulnerable group targeting, national nutrition policy strengthening, capacity building, behavior change, gender equality, market development, local governance, land access, resilience, sustainability and exit strategies should be incorporated and fully integrated into the program across all components.

Figure 1. USAID Madagascar Results Framework



The Title II food assistance program in Madagascar should encompass activities that are designed to synergistically achieve priorities and could include but are not limited to:

A) Improving maternal and child health and nutrition (MCHN) with emphasis on the following:

For MCHN interventions, please refer to the RFA on the “First 1,000 Days Approach: Preventing Chronic Malnutrition” as a guide while also taking into consideration and conforming to the GoM policies and practices:

- Supporting efforts aimed at preventing growth faltering and chronic malnutrition with a focus on the critical 1,000 day window of opportunity from conception through a child’s second birthday;
- Addressing Essential Nutrition Actions (ENAs) and Essential Hygiene Actions (EHAs) that need to be reinforced at local levels;
- Strengthening behavior change communication to address the specific local determinants of malnutrition;
- Creating community involvement and commitments to encourage and enable pregnant women and lactating mothers to seek preventive care and treatment for illness and improving behaviors pertaining to feeding practices and care of children under two;
- Developing or strengthening links with existing family planning services through coordination with other donors and the GoM health services; and the USAID-funded PHC, which has a strong family planning component;
- Developing a multi-layered social and behavior change communication (SBCC) approach that targets both men and women with information regarding the use of family planning methods with the aim of improving knowledge of, and referrals to family planning methods and services.
- Empowering women and engaging men and other persons of influence in support of improved MCHN.

B) Agriculture and natural resource management:

Diversifying and improving crop production by promoting appropriate technologies and best practices with a focus on gender equality and appropriate inclusion of men and women in proposed activities:

- Improving opportunities for income generation and adding value through livestock, fisheries, agroforestry, bee keeping, dairy, poultry and egg production, improved seed production and multiplication; and drying, processing and storage of harvested crops;
- Strengthening existing community structures and governance in part by developing integrated watershed approaches for improved natural resource management and increased soil and water conservation to improve water infiltration and storage, and prevent soil erosion;
- Minimizing soil disturbance through direct seeding, use of cover crops and diversification of crop species;
- Promoting economically valuable agro-forestry, reforestation, and conservation of natural vegetation; and
- Demonstrating and promoting Climate Smart agricultural technologies such as soil and water conserving practices appropriate to the ecosystem (e.g. mulching, ridging, new seed varieties, enhanced soil fertility etc.), and promoting diversified cropping systems.

C) Increasing market access, information and orientation:

- Developing partnerships with private vendors for improved seeds and pesticides and extension information;
- Strengthening partnerships with universities, researchers and technical service providers;
- Establishing and strengthening economic opportunities for communities, including on and off-farm income-generating activities and access to markets with a specific inclusion of women;
- Promoting the use of mobile technology for mobile banking, market information services; agriculture extension services, and other innovative uses of technology;
- Supporting village-based, informal savings groups to assist with market access and small scale initiatives. An effort should be made to assist members of the group, especially women, to make strategic investments and diversify livelihood opportunities as well as develop basic literacy and numeracy;
- Developing linkages to formal micro-finance services including access to credit;
- Strengthening, training and formalizing producer groups in key aspects of marketing; and
- Conducting market analysis of feasible, sustainable and potentially profitable value chains and linking of producers with value chains and non-traditional marketing channels.

D) Enhancing resilience and risk management:

Supporting activities that promote Disaster Risk Reduction, such as community emergency response planning that includes gender considerations:

- Promoting community-based sustainable resource management and land use planning;
- Promoting community-led efforts to improve use and access to quality seeds, including better seed production and seed storage techniques;
- Assisting and supporting communities and districts in establishing and managing early warning systems;
- Using Food for Assets or Cash for Assets interventions to support community asset creation. This could include the use of mobile money systems for cash transfers. If cash for assets is proposed applicants have to demonstrate that participants have suitable access to markets;
- Developing a crisis modifier mechanism that facilitates responses to shocks such as providing temporary employment through Food for Assets or Cash for Assets program or if appropriate, a time limited non-conditional transfers;
- Improving and rehabilitating small irrigation schemes while establishing mechanisms to sustainably pay for the recurring operational costs of these systems;
- Promoting water point development for livestock and fisheries;
- Improving roads and trails with a special focus on market feeder roads;
Promoting food processing such as drying cassava or drying fish as examples to conserve food longer during the lean season while offering more market value and ease of transport for the product;
- Constructing crop storage facilities; and
- Building soil and water conservation structures.

Program Linkages

Applicants should articulate how proposed activities complement and link with other USG investments including the USAID Mission's current health care portfolio and other donor activities and basic services to create a package of interventions that will focus on food security, health and nutrition, and malaria prevention, education, and economic opportunities.

Applicants should also explain how the proposed activities complement the aims, activities and investments of other development actors, including the WFP, other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, the private sector and the Malagasy communities. Proposals should describe the means through which the development program will contribute to and encourage an enabling environment for promoting gender equity, enhanced governance, household resiliency and scaling up of interventions.

Strategic Partnerships

The Madagascar Title II program places a high priority on strategic partnerships. Applicants should consider partnering with local entities and have a well-developed plan for capacity building of these entities to ensure sustainability of interventions. Applicants may engage a range of partners in different roles in their programs, based on their own assessments of capabilities required to maximize program impact and sustainability.

At this time, USG sanctions prohibit the USG from providing support in any form, i.e., technical, financial, etc., to the GoM or any of its parastatals. Applicants should seek to link with on-going development activities funded by the United Nations and other donors whenever possible.

Should USAID be able to fully re-engage with the GoM, FFP will expect partners to develop plans that work with and build the capacity of local government actors in order to improve the sustainability of activities.

Gender

Please refer to the RFA for information on gender.