

Q.I.

1. On the topic of certification for transition awards, with reference to the policy on the process for making transition awards, is it USAID's preference that legal expertise shall handle compliance with the policy as well as the certification in direct cooperation with USAID, or is it expected that the Prime's subject matter experts shall develop their own unique internal processes and tools for evidencing certification for transition awards, according to task type and local context?

USAID Answer: It is the Prime recipient's responsibility to develop their internal processes and tools for tracking progress towards meeting the criteria for a transition award as detailed in Section B (7) Transition awards.

2. Who are the incumbents?

USAID Answer: This is not a follow on, and there are no incumbents.

3. What is the average budget range for tasks assigned?

USAID Answer: We do not have information to share on this.

4. Once on, will USAID prefer vendors compete for opportunities within the preselected pool and then be selected by USAID/USAID missions?

USAID Answer: This is not an IDIQ contract; it is a cooperative agreement.

Q.II.

1. Page 29, Section E, Application Review Information
Three evaluation criteria are listed (Technical approach, Staffing and Management Approach, and Institutional Technical Capacity); however, there is no breakdown of weighing across the three criteria. Will the selection committee consider each of the three criteria equally?

USAID Answer: Technical Approach (40%); Staffing and Management Plan(30%), and Institutional Technical Capacities (30%). This has been amended in the NOFO.

2. Page 29-31, Section E: Application Review Information
How will the Past Performance be evaluated as it is not currently in the evaluation criteria?

USAID Answer: It is to be included in the application, but not part of the evaluation criteria.

3. Page 24-25, Section D, Paragraph 3, General Content and Form of Application
There is an inconsistency in the number of pages allowed for the AMELP. On page 24, it is noted that Annex 2 AMELP must not exceed 3 pages. On page 25 in paragraph c. it is noted that the AMELP can be up to 5 pages.

USAID Answer: This is amended "to not exceed 5 pages."

4. Page 11, Section A, Program Description

Questions and Answers

It appears that the second column of the second row of the table is meant to indicate what the GH Priority is; however, the cell is redacted. Can USAID share the text in that cell? Or confirm there is no text under the black shading.

USAID Answer: There is no redaction, this is blacked out because there is no text.

5. Page 21, Section D, Paragraph 3, General Content and Form of Application
Under “3: General Content and Form of Application”, there is a reference to Subsection 5 for the technical and Subsection 6 for the cost. There is no Subsection 6. Please provide Subsection 6. We also request an opportunity to submit questions related to Subsection 6 once we have reviewed it.

USAID Answer: Subsection 6, will be added in the amended NOFO.

6. Page 22, Section D, Paragraph 3, General Content and Form of Application
The NOFO states that the font must be “...12-point Calibri font, normal character spacing, 1” margins, justification, and headers and/or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and applicant’s name.”

a. Is it acceptable to have small fonts in the headers and footers of each page?

USAID Answer: Yes, it is acceptable.

b. Is it acceptable to use fonts larger than 12-point Calibri font for headings?

USAID Answer: Yes, it is acceptable.

7. Page 22, Section D, Paragraph 3, General Content and Form of Application
The NOFO states, “The technical application must be a searchable and editable Word or PDF format as appropriate.” Do graphs and charts have to be searchable also?

USAID answer: No, they don't have to be searchable.

8. Page 24, 25-27, Section D, subsection 5, Technical Application Format, paragraph (f)
Annex 6: Key Personnel Letter of Commitment (maximum 1 page per person) is listed in the Technical Application format but is not identified in paragraph (f) as a submission requirement. Please confirm Applicants are to provide letters of commitment for the key personnel in an annex as part of the Staffing and Management Plan.

USAID answer: Letters of Commitment should be in the annex, not in the staffing and management plan, and yes, they are required as indicated in the list of required annexes on p. 24.

9. Page 24, 28, Section D, subsection 5, Technical Application Format, paragraph (f)
Annex 7: Letters of Commitment from Sub-Awardees (if any) is listed in the Technical Application format but is not identified in any of the subparagraphs. Which evaluation criteria are the sub-awardee letters of commitment with?

USAID answer: The Letters of Commitment are not part of the evaluation criteria. The overall Management and Staffing Approach is what will be evaluated. See pp. 25-27 and p. 34 for more information.

Q.III.

Technical Questions:

1. Page 13, Section A.6, Geographic Coverage and Target Populations: The NOFO states, “The award will work at the global level, with efforts that are anticipated to focus primarily on countries supported by programs in maternal and child health and nutrition [MCHN] and family planning and reproductive health [FP/RH] and potentially the countries where the Global Health Bureau is working to accelerate primary health care impact.” Would USAID kindly clarify if “countries supported by programs” refers only to USAID priority countries for MCHN and FP/RH, or if it also includes USAID FP/RH-assisted countries?

USAID answer: It is not limited to the priority countries; it may also include assisted countries.

The list of PRH countries can be found here: <https://www.usaid.gov/global-health/health-areas/family-planning/countries>

The list of MCH countries can be found here: <https://www.usaid.gov/global-health/health-areas/maternal-and-child-health/priority-countries>

2. Page 14, Section B.1, Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated: We understand that USAID will provide two sources of funding for PEARL: core funding provided from USAID/Washington and field support provided from USAID field Missions in the form of buy-ins. We have the following related questions:

. Will USAID please provide an estimated breakdown (%) of how funds will be split between the two sources?

USAID answer: We anticipate roughly 60-70% will be in field support with roughly 30-40% in core funds.

. Further, can USAID kindly provide an estimate of the core funds expected to be available upon award?

USAID answer: \$1,000,000 is estimated to be available for project start up.

2. Page 17, Section B.4(d), Subawards: Will USAID provide approval of sub-awardees at the time of agreement award, if the necessary information/request is included as part of the business (cost) application, or does USAID prefer to evaluate sub-awardee requests subsequent to execution of the GH PEARL agreement?

USAID answer: USAID will provide approval of sub-awardees at the time of agreement award if the required information is included in the proposal.

3. Page 22, Section D.3, General Content and Form of Application: The NOFO states, “10 point Calibri font can be used for graphs, charts, and references in footnotes. Tables however, must comply with the 12 point Calibri requirement.” Will USAID please allow Offerors to use 10 point Calibri font for text boxes?

Questions and Answers

USAID answer: Yes

4. Page 24, Section B.5, Technical Application Format: Page 24 indicates that Annex 2: Draft Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP) “must not exceed 3 pages.” However, Page 25, Section B.5(e), Technical Approach, states that the AMELP should be “5 pages maximum.” Will USAID kindly confirm that the maximum length of Annex 2: Draft AMELP is 3 pages?

USAID answer: The AMELP should not exceed 5 pages.

5. Page 29, Section E, Application Review Information: GH PEARL Evaluation Criteria indicates that a Selection Committee will score the Technical Application using three criteria: 1. Technical Approach; 2. Management and Staffing Approach; and 3. Institutional Technical Capacity. Will USAID please confirm what, if any, weighting will be used, or if there will be a prioritization of importance for the three criteria?

USAID Answer: Technical Approach (40%); Staffing and Management Plan(30%), and Institutional Technical Capacities (30%). This has been amended in the NOFO.

6. Page 30, Section E.2, Staff and Organizational Structure: Per the page limits provided on Page 24, the organizational chart is limited to 1 page. However, the evaluation criteria for the staffing configuration requires that Offerors’ staffing plans show “overall how the full extent of the Program Description can be covered with a broad bench of highly qualified staff.” Will USAID consider expanding the page limit of Annex 3: Organizational Chart to allow bidders to include a consultant matrix that demonstrates/highlights their “broach bench of highly qualified staff?”

USAID answer: Yes, we will allow the organizational chart to be 1-3 pages in length.

Business (Cost) Questions:

1. Page 49, Annex 1, Summary Budget Template: Will USAID please provide a plug figure for Travel?

USAID answer: Applicants should propose based on their program requirements.

Q.IV.

Technical Application

1. On page 10, Section A.5, USAID presents the GH-PEARL results framework. Could USAID provide an approximate breakdown of the agreement award percentage that will be allocated to each of the four objectives?

USAID answer: There is no estimate for this.

2. On page 16, Section B.4, USAID writes, “USAID is expected to be involved in reviewing the planning scope of work for major subpartners”. Could USAID please clarify what they mean by ‘major subpartners’?

USAID answer: This has been amended to “USAID is expected to be involved in reviewing the planning scope of work for sub partners”. Please refer to paragraph (b) subaward

3. On page 24, Section D.5, USAID does not include Past Performance as a designated annex.

Questions and Answers

However, on page 28, USAID writes, “Past Performance (1-2 pages per organization/partner as an annex)”. Could USAID please confirm if Past Performance should be included as an annex and if so, which annex number?

USAID answer: Submit as Annex 8. This has been added in NOFO amendment.

4. On page 24, Section D.5, USAID writes, “Annex 2: Draft Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMELP) (must not exceed 3 pages)”. However, on page 25 USAID writes, “Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (in an annex, 5 pages maximum)”. Could USAID please clarify the page limit for the AMELP annex?

USAID answer: The AMELP should not to exceed 5 pages.

5. On page 26, Section D.5, USAID writes that the position descriptions in the NOFO are illustrative and the recipient may make adjustments to them. Could USAID confirm that the required qualifications stated within the position descriptions are also illustrative?

USAID answer: Yes. as long as the applicant can make a compelling case that the people have the required skills and experience to achieve the results.

6. On page 29, Section E, USAID has provided three evaluation criteria. Could USAID kindly confirm if these criteria are assigned any specific weights?

USAID answer: Please see the answer above.

Cost Application

1. On page 16, Section B.4: Substantial Involvement, USAID states, “International travel that is anticipated at the time that the work plan is prepared may be included and approved as part of the work plan. International travel that is not included in the annual work plan submission and approval is subject to separate approval by the Agreement Officer’s Representative.” However, according to Section M.17 of the Standard Provisions for US NGOs, international travel does not require prior approval if the recipient follows its organization’s written policies and stays within the applicable cost principles and Fly America Act restrictions. Could USAID please clarify whether prior approval for international travel is required?

USAID answer: International travel that is not approved in the workplan will need USAID approval

2. On page 14, Section B.1, USAID writes that the “total funding amount is inclusive of both core and mission field support.” Could USAID provide an estimated amount for the core funding within the total range of \$90M?

USAID answer: This question has been answered above.

3. On page 20, Section C.2, USAID writes, “cost sharing or matching are not required” but in Annex 1 “Summary Budget Template” there is a category for cost share. Could USAID please confirm that cost share is not required?

USAID answer: Cost share is not required and it will be deleted from Annex 1 “Summary Budget Template” of the amendment.

Questions and Answers

4. Section D: Application and Submission Information includes Technical Application Format but does not similarly incorporate Cost Application Format. Could USAID please provide instructions for preparation of the cost application?

USAID answer: We will include cost application instructions in the amendment.

5. Could USAID clarify if there is an anticipated funding amount for the first year of the project?

USAID answer: \$1,000,000 has been set aside for the start up costs for this activity. Additional funds are expected to be added in the course of the first year.

6. Could USAID clarify if applicants are permitted to budget the Key Personnel positions at less than 100% level of effort?

USAID answer: It's anticipated that the key positions will be at 100% LOE, however applicants can address this in the Management and Staffing approach

7. Would USAID allow submission of a detailed budget only for major subrecipients as opposed to requiring it for each individual subrecipient?

USAID answer: Applicants must submit a detailed budget for all sub recipients that are included in the proposals

8. Would USAID allow submission of supporting cost documentation for major subrecipients only?

USAID answer: Yes

Q.V.

1. Are there specific focus countries for GH PEARL?

USAID answer: This question has been answered above.

2. Is there a possibility to extend the deadline past June 16th?

USAID answer: No

3. What is the projected breakdown of funding streams between Core funding and Field Support?

USAID Answer: This question has been answered above.

4. Can USAID detail the breakdown of the investment anticipated across the four IRs?

USAID Answer: This question has been answered above.

5. Can USAID please confirm if government entities are eligible for sub-grants under GH PEARL?

USAID answer: Please see section B.4 (d) subawards.

Q.VI.

1. Would USAID consider granting an extension?

USAID answer: No

2. Can a different management structure and key personnel be proposed?

USAID answer: Yes, but it must align with the instructions stated in the NOFO

3. What proportion of funding is expected to come from MCH and PRH?

USAID answer: Please refer to the information on core funds vs field support. We cannot provide more details at this time.

4. What proportion of the funds does USAID anticipate being from field/mission buy in?

USAID answer: This question has been answered above.

5. Can USAID confirm that text boxes may use 10 point Calibri font?

USAID answer: Yes

6. Can USAID confirm their preference on sub-awardee exclusivity?

USAID answer: No preference

7. Section D.5 (h) Past Performance states to include "1-2 pages per organization/partner as an annex", however, past performance is not listed as a Required Annex on page 24. Can USAID confirm past performance should be added as an Annex 8 of the proposal?

USAID answer: Yes

8. Section B.7 Transition Awards, can USAID clarify if there is an expected percentage of the award to transition by end of project?

USAID answer: No specific expectation.

9. Can USAID clarify if there is an expected percentage or pass through for local partners outside of the transition awards?

USAID answer: While this is not a pass through, USAID estimates that at least 20% of the GH PEARL funds will go to local organizations and institutions, noting that this estimate is subject to the prime awardee's approach as this is an assistance award.

10. This award includes implementation research focused on family planning. How will GH-PEARL be expected to collaborate (or delineate scope) with R4S, another PRH-funded project supporting implementation research to strengthen FP services?

USAID answer: The AOR team will coordinate the research project level activities to ensure there is no duplication of effort.

Questions and Answers

11. USAID has provided the summary budget template in Annex 1. May USAID confirm if additional cost application documents are required for submission, such as SF-424 forms, detailed budgets, budget narratives.

USAID answer: Instructions will be added in the cost application format in the amended NOFO.

12. Section A.6 of the solicitation states that this award will work at the global level, with efforts that are anticipated to focus primarily on countries supported by programs in maternal and child health and nutrition and family planning and reproductive health and potentially the countries where the Global Health Bureau is working to accelerate primary health care impact, (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Nigeria per the press release). May USAID define which USAID-partner countries to assume buy-in for, for budgeting purposes?

USAID answer: This is not known at this time.

1. Section B.1 (page 14) indicates: USAID intends to provide \$90 million in total USAID funding over a five-year period. This total funding amount is inclusive of both core and mission field support. Given the nature of the mission field buy-ins and evolving scope, can USAID provide some budget assumptions, such as an assumed number of missions to buy in over life of project, or size of field buy-ins?

USAID answer: We can estimate this as roughly 15, but we cannot confirm a number at this time.

2. Would it be sufficient for bidders to present core vs. field amounts as one detailed budget and one summary budget, or must applicants present separate budgets for core and field support?

USAID answer: Yes, it would be sufficient to present them in one budget.

Q.VII.

3. Could USAID please confirm the preferred format for Annex H. Past Performance? Should applicants provide a narrative description of experience highlighting the elements described on page 28 of the NOFO, or should applicants complete a past performance form indicating individual references who can speak directly to the applicant's performance?

USAID answer: Applicants are only expected to provide a narrative description.

4. Please clarify the page limit for Annex 2. Draft Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMELP). Page 24 of the NOFO indicates a page limit of three pages, and page 25 indicates a page limit of five pages.

USAID answer: This question has been answered above.

5. Section D.3. (page 21) indicates, "Please see subsections 5 and 6, below, for information on the content specific to the Technical and Business (Cost) applications." However, there is no subsection 6 included in the NOFO.

USAID answer: This question has been answered above.

Questions and Answers

- a. Could USAID please provide detailed instructions about the required Business Application format?

USAID answer: This question has been answered above.

- b. Specifically, what are the requirements for the prime and sub-grantee budgets, budget narratives, and supporting documentation from the prime applicant and sub-grantees?

USAID answer: This question has been answered above.

- c. Should applicants include illustrative budgets for illustrative buy-ins serving specific USAID missions? If so, how many? Or should the full \$90 million budget be provided in a single budget inclusive of both core and field funds?

USAID answer: This question has been answered above.

6. Can USAID please estimate what percentage of the \$90 million ceiling is likely to be supported by core funds?

USAID answer: This question has been answered above.

7. Please provide guidance if and how the applicant's budget should designate core funds and illustrative buy-ins.

USAID answer: This question has been answered above.

8. The NOFO includes a section about Transition Awards. Does USAID anticipate making transition awards to local and regional organizations to carry on work initiated as part of GH PEARL? If USAID does make direct transition awards, can USAID please confirm that the value of these awards is not included in the GH PEARL award ceiling?

USAID answer: USAID does not anticipate a specific number of transition awards but keeps the option available. The value of those awards is above the award ceiling.

Q.VII

1. Page 14, Section B.1, "This opportunity will be able to accept funding from a variety of foreign assistance accounts [...]" "USAID provides funding through two sources: core funding provided from USAID/W Offices and field support provided from USAID field Missions. USAID field Missions use Mission-based funding sources to "buy in" to centrally based projects to implement country-level activities."

Could USAID clarify what proportion of the \$90M award is core funding vs. buy-in?

USAID answer: This question has been answered above.

2. Page 18, section B.7 Transition subawards

Could USAID clarify what is the expected amount to be allocated to Transition awards?

USAID answer: This will be determined during the implementation of the program.

Questions and Answers

3. Page 15, section B.4(a), substantial involvement requires approval by the AOR of international travel.

Neither the provisions in 2 CFR 200, nor the standard provisions in ADS 303 requires prior approval of international travel. Would USAID consider removing this requirement from the NOFO?

USAID answer: no

4. Page 15, Section B.4(d), Subawards, states “USAID is expected to be involved in reviewing the planned scope of work for major subpartners”.

Could USAID clarify who is considered a major subawardees as there is no definition for major subawardee in 2 CFR 200 or ADS 303?

USAID answer : This question has been answered above.

5. Page 29, Section E, Evaluation Criteria

- a. Could USAID clarify if the three criteria are equally weighted?

USAID answer: This question has been answered above.

- b. Does this award have already buy ins to get started? If so, which countries have already bought into the mechanism offered to them via this project?

USAID answer: No, there are no buy-ins yet.

- c. What role does USAID give in the context of their localization strategy to institutions in LMICs that operate at a regional or sub-regional level?

USAID answer: As part of [USAID's commitment to localization](#), this activity will incorporate efforts to shift power to local actors and to the extent possible, channel funding directly to local partners. The definition of a local entity can be found in USAID's ADS 303: “A local entity means an individual, a corporation, a nonprofit organization, or another body of persons that—is legally organized under the laws of; has as its principal place of business or operations in; is majority owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of; and managed by a governing body the majority of who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of a country receiving assistance from funds appropriated under title III of this Act.” We recognize that regional partners are critical to localization efforts and partnership with regional entities is encouraged.

[End of Questions and Answers]