



**TO : All qualified Applicants**  
**FROM : Cosmas Apedo, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist**  
**Subject : Job Opportunity Announcement**  
**Date : May 26, 2009**

USAID is accepting applications for the following Cooperating Country National (CCN) or FSN/PSC position:

**SOLICITATION NO : PSC 680-09-004**  
**POSITION TITLE : Senior Accountant**  
**NUMBER OF POSITIONS : One (1)**  
**GRADE : FSN - 10**  
**OPENING DATE : June 1, 2009**  
**CLOSING DATE : June 30, 2009**  
**WORK HOURS : Full-time: 40 hours/week**

**Note: All applicants who are not the Family Members of USG employees officially assigned to post and under Chief of Mission Authority must have the required work permit to be eligible for consideration.**

USAID/BENIN is an equal opportunity organization. We encourage full participation of all qualified and interested persons. Persons with disabilities will be assisted and receive reasonable accommodation.

**I. BASIC FUNCTION OF POSITION**

The Office of Financial Management (OFM)/Benin performs a wide range of functions, including all financial accounting and reporting, financial analysis, internal control management, payables and accounts receivable processing, ICASS budgeting and payment, cashier operations, payroll processing, pre-award assessments and audit management follow up.

OFM provides direction and guidance to Mission technical staff on all aspects of financial management and reporting to ensure successful implementation of Mission goals and objectives while assuring full compliance with USAID financial management policy and other USG statutory requirements.

The Mission’s current portfolio has a life-of-program value of \$200 million. This includes \$112 million for Basic Education, \$85 million for Family Health and \$21 for Governance, USAID/Benin has an annual program budget of more than \$30 millions. In FY08, it includes Development Assistance Funds (DA) for Basic Education (\$6 million), Health Funds for Family Health (\$22), and

for Women Power and Justice Initiatives (WJEI) \$2.2 million. Operating Expenses budget for FY08 was \$1.7 million.

The Senior Accountant position is located in OFM. Under the supervision of the Chief Accountant, s/he supervises the missions accounting section. S/he is responsible for the budgeting, accounting and reporting of activities related to projects and OE at USAID/Benin. The incumbent directs the accounting operations and performs typical supervisory duties, including coordinating workload distribution, monitoring assignments and tasks, and staff development to improve effectiveness of the systems and to establish controls for achieving adequate accountability of resources.

The Senior Accountant is an integral member of the Mission and works closely with the program teams. The incumbent oversees, or personally conducts the analysis of all accounting matters relating to the Mission's activities portfolio, both program and OE, involving a wide variety of implementing documents. The incumbent supports the Chief Accountant in the management of all sections of OFM and assists in strengthening internal controls and processes to improve accounting, financial management and administrative procedures. S/he plays the role of acting chief accountant and from time to time back up for the financial analyst.

## **II. MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. Financial Accounting and Reporting**

Directs the operation of the accounting section and participates substantially in the financial planning and development of Mission program activity and OE budgeting exercises.

Supervises preparation of all financial management reports. Working with the Chief Accountant s/he coordinates the monthly, quarterly, annual and periodic reporting to Washington.

Assists the Chief Accountant, Controller on the financial management aspects of SOAGS and related implementation letters, contracts, grants and cooperative agreements, purchase orders and other procurement documents. The incumbent is expected to stay abreast of, interpret and comment on pertinent rules and regulations as they impact his/her area of responsibility. S/he counsels OFM staff, SO Team members, CTOs and Mission staff in funds management controls recommending appropriate sources of funding and determining the reasonableness of the budgeted amounts as well as the sufficiency of reserved/earmarked funds.

Performs typical personnel management aspects of supervision such as the performance management and evaluations, including the establishment and periodic review of work objectives and work plans, taking appropriate disciplinary action when required. S/he is expected to train (including on-the-job (OJT) training), coach and mentor employees to improve efficiency and performance.

#### **1. Supervises OE activity: 15%**

Using professional knowledge of accounting practices and historical mission operations analyzes OE budget formulation procedures and reviews and revises cash flow projections to achieve efficient management of funds. Advises and provides recommendations to the chief accountant, the controller and the mission Management on OE Budget status and analyzes Missions periodic

OE needs and prepares requests for allowances. Frequently conducts in depth budget reviews and analysis of various cost centers, including ICASS, to identify planning deficiencies, and in consultation with managers and taking into consideration existing problems, constraints and potentially relevant developments, takes appropriate action to alleviate potential budgetary problems.

**2. Supervises Project activities: 15%**

Assuring accounting ledgers, reports and supporting records are current, accurate and complete with respect to unilateral and bilateral projects/programs. Reviews and analyzes files and transaction documents ensuring that they are complete, correct and adequately posted in the financial accounting system. Reviews budget allowances and restrictions, and verifies that the Congressional/Technical notification condition precedents have been met. If these requirements have not been met, alerts and advises the Controller and Mission Management. S/he ensures that adequate controls over the projects resources are provided for in the financial descriptions annexed to the obligation documents. With the Project Accountant, s/he analyzes reservation/obligation documents (e.g. bilateral project agreements, unilateral grants, limited scope grant agreements, etc.) to determine the consistency and reasonableness of the budgets presented in their financial tables. Ensures Conditions Precedent (CP) in the project or grant agreements have been met by the recipients of the grant prior to any disbursements; that cost estimates are reasonable, that the activity being funded is in accordance with the grant, that the project elements assigned by the AO Team are appropriate; that the transactions are earmarked first against the older year Budget Plan Code funds; that the costs involved and the terminal dates do not exceed the un-earmarked funds.

**3. Reconciliation and Reporting: 25%**

Supervises the preparation and analysis of periodic and special reconciliation reports with the USDOs (SF 1221). Handles the reconciliation with Kansas and the Treasury through the SF224 and SF 6652/6653 reports. Analyses also the financial status of current programs and OE budget, including both narrative and statistical reports required by management. Manages implementation and reporting in the IPAC system and analyzes incoming charges for the projects and OE to ensure the propriety of the charges contained therein.

Maintains Data Collection Tool reports accessible in the website to include collecting, updating and verifying the financial data including but not limited to: Non-Expendable Property and Equipment, Accounts Receivable, Expendable Property, Imprest Funds, Payroll Related Accruals, Operating Leases, Cancelled Obligations and Vehicle Inventory. This includes taking necessary actions, preparing and clearing necessary analysis as deemed necessary.

**4. Intervention in Payments section: 15%**

In the absence of the chief accountant, the senior accountant exercises supervisory review of vouchers documents before transmission to the controller. S/he also advises the payment section as a Phoenix system Subject Master Expert.

S/he maintains the integrity of vendor codes data and updates or changes them regularly upon request.

S/he serves as cashier supervisor and conducts unannounced cash counts on a periodic basis. Identifies improvements in procedures to make cashiering operations more efficient and effective. S/he checks periodically the cash reconciliation of the cash statement report.

**B. Financial Analysis: 15%**

The senior accountant is expected to back up the Financial Analyst when needed, and should then have the appropriate background and competencies.

In collaboration with AO Teams and CTOs, s/he analyzes mortgages, pipelines and burn rates at the activity level for his/her assigned AOTs and advises accordingly. Assists and counsels the AO Teams and Mission Management, discussing and analyzing their financial reporting and funding needs, and assists in financial decision making.

Coaches and counsels the program specialists and CTOs in formulating quarterly accruals during the 1311/accrual reviews. Provides consultation services to the Teams and project managers and coordinates resolutions of problems pertaining to close-outs and obligation re-alignments.

Assists teams in designing and implementing a system to identify and clear excess funds in obligation, commitment and earmark documents to effectively and efficiently manage project funds.

Reviews and analyzes procurement instruments and other reports to gain a thorough understanding of program activities and objectives in order to maximize OFM services to teams and minimize financial management burdens and issues.

**C. Internal Control Management and Data Integrity: 10%**

S/he is fully responsible for ensuring the integrity of the accounting system and data therein. S/he ensures that exceptions to prescribed procedures are properly approved and documented. S/he reviews financial information related to obligations, earmarks, commitment and reservation documents. Ensures that the pre-validated transactions do not result in anti-deficiency act violations, and ensures compliance with the project agreements' financial plans and agency guidelines. S/he reviews and evaluates the funding operations and controls related to projects for adequacy and compliance to USAID regulations and financial reporting requirements.

S/he administers the comprehensive computerized accounting system and assists the Chief Accountant in establishing and maintaining the working procedures. Like the chief accountant, s/he serves as the second SME (System Master Expert) whose role is to assist all OFM section in system posting issues before they are submitted to regional support centers.

**D. Other duties as assigned. 5%**

Such duties are directly related to the overall statement of work of the position as described in Section II above.

### **III. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:**

#### **A. Education and Training.**

At least a university degree in accounting from an accredited institution is **required**. Additional degrees in other relevant field (business administration, law etc) are **preferred**. Relevant knowledge in audit and internal control management is also **preferred**.

#### **B. Prior Work Experience**

Three to five years of progressively responsible experience in public or private accounting is **required**. A minimum of two to three years of supervisory experience is **required**.

#### **C. Knowledge**

Must have a thorough and expert level knowledge of professional accounting principles, theories and terminology as well as follow the principles of accepted procedures of US and host country (government and business) accounting, budgeting and reporting.

Must have, or be able to gain, a thorough knowledge of Automated Directives System (ADS) and of USAID organization and operations in general, must also gain a good working understanding of USAID's project planning and implementation procedures. Must have, or be able to gain, an expert knowledge of laws, regulations and procedures applicable to USAID and U.S. Government financial management and accounting procedures including Standardized Regulations, FAMs, FAHs and Controller General's Decisions.

Voucher examination and payables notions should be understood to be able to analyze and reconcile data and resolve problems involving Prompt Pay Act and other issues such as travel regulations, and allowances. It is also necessary to assist voucher section in the absence of the chief accountant.

#### **D. Language Proficiency**

Level IV (fluent) English and equivalent French ability is **required**.

#### **E. Skills and Abilities**

Must possess a high level of analytical and computer skills. Must have the ability to analyze financial statements and prepare the necessary reports, including adhoc budget reports, for use both within and outside of the Mission. Must also have the ability to analyze a myriad of project transaction documents, ensure that the documents follow regulations and accounting principles, make appropriate adjustments when necessary, and ensure the transactions are properly maintained in the Mission's complex records system.

#### **IV. OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTS:**

##### **A. Supervision Received**

Reports to the Chief Accountant but work should be performed independently with finished work receiving periodic spot-checks for accuracy and conformance with policy and procedures. Consults with supervisor on cases of exceptional difficulty, or where guidelines are not applicable.

##### **B. Available Guidelines**

Guidelines include, but are not limited to, USAID Automated Directive System (ADS) and other guidelines issued by USAID, Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM), Foreign Affairs Handbooks (FAH), Federal Acquisitions Regulations (FAR), OMB Circulars, Standardized Regulations (SSR), Comptroller General's Decisions, Prompt Pay Act, and Federal Travel Regulations.

##### **C. Exercise of Judgment**

Exercises considerable judgment in applying experience and guidelines to supervision and preparation of special reports, analyzing and maintaining the accounts in the accounting system American Institutes for Research, and in explaining deficiencies. Should be in a position to serve as a back up to the chief accountant to supervise all the financial sections.

##### **D. Authority to Make Commitments**

The incumbent's authority is limited to giving appropriate financial information to other members of the Mission and officials outside of the Mission.

##### **E. Nature, Level and Purpose of Contacts**

Contacts are with other members of the Mission staff, especially mission senior management staff for budget explanations or to discuss the transaction documents being handled by Phoenix. Contacts also with GOB officials and counterparts, grantees, and contractor organizations during Partners meeting and when assisting teams in their activity planning, the purpose of this relationship is to discuss the financial status of the projects, or to provide information or reports. Contacts also with USAID/Washington, USDO's and other foreign missions' staff for reporting and reconciliation issues.

##### **F. Supervision Exercised**

Exercise first-level supervision over the project and OE accountant, but also exercise indirect control over the voucher section consisting of two voucher examiners and an administrative assistant in the absence of the chief accountant.

##### **G. Post Entry Training**

Formal and on-the-job training in USAID financial management systems and relevant ADS series and USAID accounting and fiscal management systems and procedures will be provided. Training in USAID Financial Management Overview, Accounting, Voucher Examination, US

Government Standard General Ledger Basics, Prompt Pay Act, Basic Governmental Budgeting and Accounting Concepts and Appropriations Law will also be required.

#### **H. Time Required to Perform Full Range of Duties**

One year.

#### **V. EVALUATION FACTORS**

Applicants will initially be evaluated based on the documentation submitted with the application. Then competitively ranked applicants will be tested and interviewed. The results of the testing and interview, along with the reference check results, will be considered in the selection process.

The evaluation criteria provided below serve as the standard against upon which all applications will be evaluated:

##### **A. Education and Training.**

Initial screening is Yes/No scoring. An applicant will not be considered if s/he does not meet the minimum requirement.

- At least a university degree in accounting from an accredited institution is required.
- Any additional degrees in other relevant field (business administration, law etc) are **preferred**.
- Any relevant knowledge in audit and internal control management is also **preferred**.

##### **B. Language Proficiency**

Initial screening is Yes/No scoring. An applicant will not be considered if s/he does not meet the minimum requirement.

- A minimum professional fluency in French is **required**.

This includes the ability to read technical documents and reports with complete understanding; ability to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on professional topics, ability to discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with relative ease; ability to participate effectively in meetings with complete comprehension for a normal rate of speech; strong writing skills in French are **preferred**.

- A minimum of full professional fluency in English is **required**.

This includes the ability to use the language fluently and accurately on all professional levels needed with a high degree of effectiveness, reliability, and precision. This means that s/he can understand and participate in conversations within the range of his/her personal or professional experience, can respond appropriately even in unfamiliar situations; can read and fully understand regulations and policy; can write with sufficient skill for professional purposes to produce documents which do not require extensive editing and generally are free from errors in usage and sentence structure. English skills at the ability of a bilingual proficiency are **preferred**.

### **C. Other Skills and Abilities**

Initial screening will entail an examination of the application package for discussion of how the skills described below have been demonstrated in the applicant's professional experience. Applicants who do not include a discussion of these skills and abilities in the application will not receive further consideration.

- Must have a thorough and expert knowledge of professional accounting principles, theories and terminology, as well as the principles of accepted procedures of host country (government and business) accounting, budgeting and reporting.
- Must have ability to use personal computers effectively. Proficiency in word processing and expert skills in using spreadsheets and excel is **required**.
- Fully functional in using internet to research information is **required** and will be assessed.

### **D. Prior Experience**

Initial screening is Yes/No scoring. An applicant will not be considered if s/he does not meet the minimum requirement:

- Three to five years of progressively responsible experience in public or private accounting is required.
- A minimum of two to three years of supervisory experience is required.

### **CONDITIONS OF ELIGIBILITY:**

Applicant must be a Cooperating Country National from Benin or Foreign Service National from the region. US Citizens are not eligible to apply for this position. All compensation will be in accordance with the local compensation plan and payment will be in local currency (FCFA).

### **INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS**

Please reference the subject position title when sending your application.

Applicants must submit curriculum vitae (CV) which contains information about education, professional experience, language and skills. If desired, Candidate may complete the Optional Form 612, which can be obtained from the USAID website <http://www.usaid.gov/forms/pf-612.doc>. CVs must include a discussion of each of the qualification requirement. Applicants are encouraged to prepare a cover letter which provides details of how skills for this position were demonstrated in previous professional experience. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to submit copies of the application in both French and English.

Applications must include the names and contacts information for 3 references. At least one should be or have been an immediate supervisor. USAID will contact current employers for references. Candidates who do not wish to have current employers contacted must state this in the application.

Consideration and selection will be based on evaluation of the qualifications and evaluation criteria by a recruitment committee. After candidate applications have been initially reviewed, only those which give evidence of meeting minimum requirements for education, professional experience and

relevant skills will receive further consideration. The recruitment committee will identify a short list of candidates who will be invited to complete a written exam and interview. After reviewing all results, the recruitment committee will make a determination of candidates which have the requisite qualifications and experience to successfully fulfill the position. The references for these candidates will be contacted. The results of the testing and interview, along with the reference check results, will be considered in the selection process.

**How to apply:** Applications must be submitted in a sealed envelop addressed to the American Embassy in Cotonou, to the attention of Cosmas Apedo at USAID/Benin/OAA and marked "Application for the position of Senior Accountant". The closing date and time for receipt of applications is June 30, 2009 at 12:00 am, local Benin time.