

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION: Acquisition and Assistance Specialist – FSN11**

### **I. BASIC FUNCTION OF POSITION:**

The incumbent is a professional Acquisition & Assistance Specialist and has responsibility for managing the procurement portfolio of a large program of the Rwanda Mission. The incumbent shall be required to perform independently in a program requiring complicated and sensitive contracting operations. In this portfolio, most of the acquisition and assistance processes involve complex, multi-million dollar contracts, grants and cooperative agreements, many of which are structured with a prime contractor/grantee having two or more subcontractors/sub-grantees and requiring substantial contract administration. The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist shall be required to apply a broad range of highly specialized acquisition and assistance functions. The Acquisition and Assistance specialist plays a key role in negotiating, administering, and modifying various types of contracts for the acquisition of services, equipment, supplies, materials, and other needs for projects having a strong contracting orientation. While not a warranted Contracting/Agreement Officer, the incumbent must have developed specialized procurement knowledge by completing 75% of the training course requirements necessary for USAID Contracting/Agreement Officers warranted at the \$1,000,000 level.

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

Major duties and responsibilities (100% of the time) are comprised as follows:

- 1) Pre- award duties and responsibilities (60%)
- 2) Post-Award duties and responsibilities. (40%)

The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist is responsible for managing the procurement portfolio and performing acquisition and assistance functions for the Rwanda Mission. Transaction levels for both acquisition and assistance will typically range in size from \$50,000 to \$50,000,000 in estimated value per transaction. All acquisition and assistance methods are employed, including full and open competitive action done through negotiation or sealed bidding, task orders, delivery orders against established indefinite quantity contracts, interagency agreements, cooperative agreements, grants, simplified acquisition, etc. Supervision is provided by the USDH Contracting/Agreement Officer. As a fully empowered representative of the Acquisition and Assistance Office (A&A), The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist is a CORE Team Member on multiple Mission Development Objective (DO) Teams covering different development sectors and advises Mission and DO Team management on the interpretation and application of acquisition policies and regulations to specific acquisition and assistance activities, both operational and project support. The incumbent advises on the need for source origin waivers and non-competitive waivers, and ensures that procurements under each of the DO Teams comply with 50/50 shipping, insurance, source and origin and similar USAID regulations and conditions are observed.

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Sealed bidding is not often used, but the Specialist is sufficiently familiar with the procedure to know it is appropriate and know how it differs from negotiated procurement. The Specialist should also be familiar with Simplified Acquisition procedures. Both cost reimbursement and fixed price contracts are used routinely and the incumbent fully understands and applies the legal and procedural differences between them.

The incumbent is familiar with the procedures applicable to the acquisition of goods. The acquisition specialist duties involve the procurement of personal and non-personal services. The work load involves the award of delivery orders against indefinite quantity contracts (and the award of those basic indefinite quantity contracts themselves), proportionately much more consists of unique, one time purchase of technical assistance, studies, workshops, training, logistical support arrangements, and direct provision of services in a broad range of program areas.

The incumbent will work collaboratively with Development Objective Team (DOT) members/Activity Managers to define contractible, performance-based statements of work or program descriptions incorporating results orientation. Moreover, the incumbent shall prepare all required supporting documentation and manage the entire effort through to completion and closeout of the award. The incumbent must be able to provide authoritative technical guidance to Contracting Officers Representatives/Agreement Officers Representatives (CORs/AORs) in the performance of their procurement related responsibilities.

A comprehensive knowledge of the Acquisition and Assistance process is required since the incumbent is responsible to train Mission staff and partners. The specialist must possess a clear understanding of the differences between acquisition and assistance so that he/she can effectively and accurately represent U.S. Government policy not only to outside organizations but also to programmatic and administrative officials within USAID/Rwanda. Moreover, the acquisition specialist must be able to discuss and assess procurement issues with a degree of expertise sufficient to form the basis of well-founded recommendations to the Contracting/Agreement Officer.

As an Acquisition and Assistance Specialist, the incumbent shall also be responsible for on-the-job training of entry-level FSN acquisition specialist(s) in acquisition and assistance procedures. She/he shall also assist the specialist(s) in completing the mandatory Federal Acquisition Certification – Contracting (FAC-C) Level I and Level II courses and advise the Contracting/Agreement Officer what tasks are still needed to be completed in order to satisfy (FAC-C) Level I and Level II course requirements. The incumbent is also expected to guide, motivate, train, the Procurement Administrative Assistant(s) in handling and completing non-complex procurement actions such as no-cost extensions, incremental funding, etc.

**1) Pre-Award Duties and Responsibilities: (60%)**

Participates in procurement planning functions which may include reviewing strategic objective agreements/results frameworks, participating in program planning meetings and identifying components of the plans that should be accomplished through the participation of outside provider organizations.

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Advise DOT members/Activity Managers of the selection of appropriate acquisition and assistance mechanisms of accomplishing agency programmatic objectives; identify acquisition issues/potential problems requiring guidance from the Regional Legal Advisor; make choice of instrument recommendations to the Contracting/Agreement Officer

Collaborate with DOT members/Activity Managers in the preparation of advance procurement planning documents for each proposed action which reflect the steps required by regulation or policy in the selected mechanism's process, realistic estimates of the time required to accomplish each step and a commitment to maintain the agreed-upon schedule. Keep the Contracting/Agreement Officer informed of anticipated workload demands.

Assist DOT Activity Managers in the preparation of required descriptions of the proposed activity including, as appropriate, statements of work, specifications, program descriptions, program announcements, evaluation criteria, etc. Such assistance may take the form of participation in the original drafting process, review of drafts, training in the preparation of such documents or on USAID regulations as contained in AIDAR, ADS, and AAPDs, and in the Federal regulations under FAR, CFR, OMB circulars, Executive Directives, and the statutes. Such documents must adequately reflect and protect U.S. Government interests in the accomplishment of the programmatic objectives and comply with pertinent statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements.

Review incoming GLAAS requisitions and supporting documents to ensure compliance with all agency and mission requirements and appropriateness for the proposed action. Ensure proper recording and processing of A&A award information in the Agency's Acquisition and Assistance Information Systems.

Prepares all required pre-solicitation documents, including determinations and findings, synopses, justifications, IFBs, RFPs, and/or RFAs. When necessary, conduct pre-award conferences with potential offerors. Advise the Contracting/Agreement Officer concerning such matters as the adequacy and choice of evaluation criteria, type of contract, the extent and mechanisms of advertising, the appropriateness of the time permitted for bid or pre-proposal preparation, the need for a pre-solicitation or pre-proposal conference, and any special terms and conditions that may be required, particularly if their use would require a deviation from governing regulations. Most importantly, the incumbent shall ensure that procurement integrity is upheld and maintained for all actions and by all members who participate in the evaluation of those actions.

Prepare solicitation/application documents which reflect Federal Grant Law and USAID regulations governing assistance instruments or federal acquisition and USAID regulations, policies and procedures, as applicable. Issue necessary amendments to answer questions concerning such topics as specification changes, language ambiguities, clarification of contract clauses, etc...

Control the flow of information from the Mission to the offering community during the proposal preparation stage ensuring that all requirements of full and open competition are met and that the integrity of the procurement process is upheld.

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Evaluation and In-depth Cost Analysis of bids/offers: Evaluates bids and offers for responsiveness to the particular solicitation and documents the relative strengths and deficiencies of each proposal. Guides the DO/Project team in best practices of 'best value' selection, and performance-based technical approaches. Obtains reports and references, ensuring that offeror's past performance has been relevant and of a high quality.

Ensures that offerors have adequate management, accounting, personnel, and procurement systems, corporate leadership, available resources, and quality control to satisfactorily carry out contracts. Requests audit reports or pre-award surveys from the Office of the Inspector General, Defense Contract Audit, Agency and obtains clearance from the U.S. Department of Labor and/or the Small Business Administration on a variety of EEO and workplace issues.

Analyzes cost proposals and technical scores from the technical evaluation committee, and based on this analysis, establishes the competitive range and presents documentation for signature to the Contracting/Agreement Officer.

Performs extensive analysis on cost issues with consideration to economic conditions & factors of material, labor, and transportation costs. Closely examines cost and pricing data submitted by offerors to substantiate direct and indirect costs and profit. Determines reasonableness of costs submitted. Ensures that data provided is consistent with all USAID requirements on eligible geographic sources, and that salary structures are consistent with Agency policies. Identifies circumstances that will call for a waiver.

Coordinates issues of technical weakness and excessive costs with the Project team prior to the commencement of negotiations. Clarifies, and, as necessary, instructs the members of the Project team, host country counterparts, and other Mission staff on the USAID procurement process as implemented in the Agency.

Formulates the negotiation strategy, identifies areas subject to negotiation, and consults with technical specialists concerning data submitted by offerors. Conducts extensive negotiations on cost and technical issues prior to contract award, presenting USAID issues of concern and persuades offerors to upgrade technical deficiencies and reduce costs where appropriate. Requests submission of Revised Final Proposal and prepares appropriate contract or grant instruments for award. Coordinates last stages of selection with the Project and technical evaluation team(s). Similarly, s/he negotiates and awards grants and cooperative agreements with U.S.-based and indigenous PVOs and NGOs, colleges and universities and other non-profit organizations. Analyzes transactions to ensure compliance with Agency cost-sharing and registration policies, as well as local laws governing status. S/he coordinates contracting activities with other government agencies frequently negotiating and drafting interagency agreements.

This is a complex process requiring a high degree of analysis among, and between competing and often conflicting regulations and objectives, where the incumbent independently exercises judgment involving multi-million dollar issues with significant political and legal implications. Controls the flow of information from the Mission to the offering community during the proposal preparation stage ensuring that all requirements of full and open competition are met and that the

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integrity of the procurement process is upheld.

Represent the Contracting/Agreement Officer in the evaluation of bids and proposals, ensuring compliance with all published evaluation criteria and factors, and Federal and USAID regulations, policies and procedures. Provide instructions to the technical evaluation committee regarding rules and procedures in the conduct of a competitive source selection. Obtain pricing assistance as necessary and available and perform cost or price analysis, as appropriate and document findings. Advise the Contracting/Agreement Officer concerning the make-up of the competitive range in competitively negotiated acquisitions.

Prepare pre-negotiation strategies which address price, profit/fee, terms special conditions, as applicable; prepare requests for confirmation of the results of the negotiation, including requests for final revised proposals or revised program descriptions/financial plans, as applicable. Document the results of the negotiations in the negotiation memo and make responsibility determinations, which may require either performing or requesting pre-award, financial and program management reviews as circumstances dictate or permit.

Prepare award document that reflect the results of all discussions, any special needs of the project, and applicable terms and conditions.

Distribute award documents, ensure proper recording of the obligation by the Controller's office, provide all required notifications to unsuccessful bidders, offerors, and U.S. Government award publication points, arrange debriefings and ensure proper data entry and processing into USAID acquisition and assistance management information systems.

**2) Post-Award Duties and Responsibilities (40%)**

Responsible for contract administration sufficient to ensure that the terms and conditions of the award are met and that the contractor/recipient meets delivery schedules and/or performance milestones in a timely manner to achieve Mission objectives. Organizes and conducts Post-award conferences to include orientation meeting with the selected Contractor/Recipient and all cognizant Mission Support Offices, beneficiaries, and relevant implementer employees to ensure that mobilization efforts will be conducted efficiently and that all terms and conditions of procurement instruments are clear and well-understood by all parties. Provides support debriefing to unsuccessful offerors. Contract administration include, among other tasks, site visits, change orders, drafting correspondence, initiating contractor performance evaluations, monitoring of reporting requirements, advising CORs/AORs and contractors/recipients on their administration responsibilities, etc.

Advises the Contracting/Agreement Officer and prepare appropriate documentation on any issues that may arise in the course of performance, including changes, disputes, work stoppages, problems with Government Furnished Property or Materials, changes in scope or direction, replacement of key Personnel, failure to make acceptable progress, default, payment problems, or unacceptable performance/deliveries. Recommend appropriate action on all required prior approvals for the Contracting Officer prior approval.

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Manages the non-competing Continuation Application process for Assistance Instruments, including evaluating recipient performance, analyzing subsequent year work plans, and negotiating continuation funding.

**a) Analysis & Resolution of Audits Reports and Findings**

The incumbent analyses and takes action to resolve findings contained in audit reports, such as cost items questioned or unresolved. The incumbent supports recommendations with detailed analysis of each cost, category or element as necessary. Prepares necessary documents to resolve all aspects of audits, questioned or ineligible costs, and accounting issues. Presents documentation to the Contracting/Agreement Officer for signature. Reviews completed (after full performance) official contract files to determine that all contractual actions are satisfied and that there are no pending administrative actions to be resolved. Ensures that all file documents are signed, that there are no litigation actions pending, and that the contract is complete in every respect and ready to be closed. Ensures that contracts nearing annual anniversaries or final completion have a performance report filled out by the Technical Officer, and submits the report to the Contractor for comment.

**b) Supplemental Position Information**

The Acquisition and Assistance Office (A&A) is responsible for the bilateral contracting matters of USAID/Rwanda. The current portfolio consists of 50 plus contracts and grant agreements with a current annual budget of approximately \$190 million. The majority of the funds are for HIV programs under the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR), the Presidential Malaria Initiative (PMI), Rural Economic Growth and Democracy & Governance activities. All USAID/Rwanda funds are signed into bilateral agreements with the Government of Rwanda and then sub-obligated into contract and grant agreements. USAID/Rwanda includes the Mission Strategy Center/Program Office, Rural Economic Growth Team, Democracy and Governance Team, the Health and HIV/AIDS Team, Controller Office and Executive Office.

**III. QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE**

- A. **Education:** A Master's Degree in Business Administration, Political Science, International Relations, International Procurement, Supply Chain management, Social Science or related field. NB: Additional education may NOT be substituted for Experience.
- B. **Prior Work Experience:** Five to Seven years, or more, in a progressively responsible work situation in USAID Acquisition and Assistance is required. As this position is part of a recognized and established career ladder, a minimum of two years of this experience must have been gained working in a USAID Contracting/A&A Office at no less than the next lower grade level. NB: Additional experience may NOT be substituted for Education.
- C. **Post Entry Training:** The Specialist must have previously successfully completed all mandatory Federal Acquisition Certification – Contracting (FAC-C) Level I and Level II courses in accordance with a formal individual development plan (IDP). Level III training will be provided. The Specialist must continue to complete a minimum of forty (40) Continuous Learning Points for every one-year period. In addition, the Specialist will be provided with formal or on-the-job training to keep abreast of changes in the ADS, FAR,

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CFR, OAA-Intranet, the AIDAR, and OAA operating and administrative procedures. Formal training, other than FAC-C Level III, training will be provided based on availability of course offerings, and availability of funds.

- D. **Language Proficiency:** Level IV (Fluent) in spoken & written English and fluent Kinyarwanda are required.
- E. **Knowledge:** A very good knowledge of Federal and agency procurement regulations and procedures and highly specialized knowledge of:
- i) Analyzing and organizing large amounts of detailed information, such as cost factors and contract types, as relates to requirements;
  - ii) Ability to deal effectively with intermediate to high level representatives of U.S., interregional, International and local business and industry, and the host government.
  - iii) Good knowledge of results-based assistance instruments (grants and cooperative agreements) and how these documents can help fulfill Mission objectives. Good knowledge of market conditions, the political context and social conditions impacting USAID procurement actions. Knowledge of the organizations interested in, and capable of performing USAID contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, etc. Knowledge of the concerns from PVOs, NGOs, 8(a) firms, small businesses, and large businesses.
  - iv) A highly specialized knowledge in all phases of the procurement processes leading to award; particularly soliciting, reviewing of applications or proposals and contract award and administration procedures, providing technical advice in complex contractual arrangements to USAID Rwanda Mission and host country officials; knowledge of program, project, or other commodity requirements. Knowledge of local market conditions and costs. Knowledge of U.S Federal and agency acquisitions is a plus. Ability to work independently.
- F. **Skills And Abilities:** Excellent negotiation skills to negotiate multi-year, multi-million dollar contracts and other instruments. Excellent analytical skills and sound judgment to select appropriate acquisition or assistance instrument types, to evaluate bids or offers and determine the responsibility of contractors on the basis of competition, historical costs, reports, etc., and to conduct cost and price analysis. Excellent writing skills to draft various procurement-related documents and to develop sound solicitation and instrument documents. Excellent interpersonal skills to deal effectively with various officials, usually with highly divergent points of view, diplomatic and tactful in setting forth ideas, constraints, or courses of action.

#### **IV. POSITION ELEMENTS**

- A. ***Supervision Received:*** Receives general guidance from the TCNPSC A&A Specialist who makes assignments in terms of procurement actions to be performed. The incumbent plans & implements the procurement approach & interacts with cognizant DO and Project teams, providing policy & strategic guidance on how to best fulfill the requirements, S/he initiates any necessary coordination with the accounting and legal offices staff of other Agencies, and with contractors, to obtain supporting documentation and resolve any conflicts including disagreements over technical descriptions, elements of cost, legal matters, and performance problems. The incumbent keeps the supervisor updated via periodic status reports and verbal briefings. Completed work is reviewed from the overall standpoint of providing a viable procurement approach for meeting established objectives, or for results achieved in meeting delivery schedules and contractual conditions.
- B. ***Available Guidelines:*** Guidelines include Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), USAID Acquisition Regulations (AIDAR), the Automated Directives System (ADS), Contract Information Bulletins (CIBs) and AAPDS, US Department of State Standardized Regulations, Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars, other Mission Orders, and grant format requirements.
- C. ***Exercise of Judgment:*** At this full-performance level, the Specialist is expected to apply a high degree of judgment in all aspects of Acquisition and Assistance actions, in particular when advising CORs/AORs and Mission staff, and when interacting with implementing partners to resolve complex issues arising during program/project/activity implementation. The Specialist exercises good judgment in dealing with visitors and callers; in the analysis of cost, financial, and other characteristics of prospective contractors and grantees; and, in deciding what questions need to be asked of Technical Officials and DO Team representatives and proposed contractors/grantees, to ensure achievement of the acquisition objectives on contract, grant, or other assistance instruments. The Specialist must exercise independent judgment and initiative as the sole procurement representative on the SO team or the project team to: 1) Identify those aspects of regulations which apply to the particular procurement; 2) develop justification for adopting a procurement posture; 3) tailors provisions to meet special requirements and develop criteria or justifications involving contractors claims; 4) to recommend the selection of winning contractors or grantees. S/he also determines and uses special clauses, clearances, and determinations applicable to certain procurements. The exceptional exercise of judgment and discretion is required given the sensitive nature of Contracting Procedures.
- D. ***Authority to Make Commitments:*** The Specialist independently holds discussions and negotiations with potential contractors and grantees to reach agreement on complex statements of work/program description. The Specialist has the authority to conclude complex negotiations and to structure the final terms and conditions of major USAID acquisition and assistance instruments. Upon completion, agreements are approved and signed by a warranted USDH Contracting/Agreement Officer in order to obligate funds. The Specialist is authorized to distribute official documents including, solicitation

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documents, contract modifications to authorized personnel and Rwanda Mission. However, he/she has no authority to bind the U.S Government to contract or order any goods or services.

- E. ***Nature, Level and Purpose of Contacts:*** Contacts include large and small U.S. business firms, other local national and international business firms, Bi-lateral Government officials, U.N agencies, Public Voluntary Organization (POV), Inter-governmental bodies, Public International Organization (PIOs) and the Bureau's office in USAID/Washington. Typical contacts with contractors include officers and technical experts representing these firms. The incumbent works with technical staff, attorneys, auditors, and others from within the agency or other agencies. The contacts occur in moderately unstructured settings, with the roles and authorities being developed during the negotiation or discussion. The purpose of contacts with external groups is to conduct conferences, share USAID policies on recent procurement innovations, techniques and reforms, to conduct fact finding, negotiate contracts, and modifications, and resolve numerous problems during contract administration. Contacts at host country counterpart institutions are to represent USAID overseeing briefing sessions by potential contractors, and ensure that the counterpart employees understand USAID procurement processes fully.
- F. ***Supervision Exercised:*** The incumbent does not have supervisory responsibility, but provides guidance to junior Acquisition staff, etc.

**Time Required to Perform Full Range of Duties after Entry into the Position:** One year.