



Civil Society Strengthening Activity (SCSA)
RFA-514-14-000007
Questions and Answers
March 14, 2014 – March 21, 2014

Question 1

Are you in contact with a larger organization that wants to lead the whole project and who may be interested in our organization as a local partner? If so, would it be possible to give us the name of this organization so we can contact them?

USAID cannot provide this information. We encourage applicants to research potential partners.

Question 2

Is it possible to submit an application with an international organization with a presence in Colombia, either as the main applicant or as partner?

No, only local organizations can be the prime recipient of the award or members of the consortium. The official eligibility criteria for organizations are as follows:

USAID will not accept applications from individuals. All applicants must be legally recognized organizational entities under applicable law. Local organizations are eligible and encouraged to apply, as well as consortiums of local organizations. A local organization applicant must be locally recognized under the laws of the country in which it is domiciled. A local organization does not include subsidiaries, affiliates, or member entities of organizations located outside of, or organized outside of Colombia. Local organizations by this definition are not international organizations. When applying to the solicitation, local organizations are required to attach official documentation of their formal status in the host country.

Question 3

Can we submit a proposal for less of US\$15,000,000?

Yes, you may present a proposal for less than \$15 million.



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Question 4

Can international NGOs apply for this opportunity?

No, only local Colombian organizations may apply for this opportunity. Please see eligibility criteria outlined in the answer to Question 2.

Question 5

I am writing because I have some doubts about this request. I know we need to have the DUNS number to apply, so I read the link about it, but I don't know how our company can get this DUNS number. Could you give me further information, please?

A DUNS number is not required to submit an application, however one will be required before an organization receives an award.

Question 6

The purpose of this e-mail is to share with you one question regarding the cited RFA. While reviewing Section III (Eligibility Information), paragraph A, we have found the following statement:

“A local organization applicant must be locally recognized under the laws of the country in which it is domiciled. A local organization does not include subsidiaries, affiliates, or member entities of organizations located outside of, or organized outside of Colombia. Local organizations by this definition are not international organizations”.

We are a non-profit organization, legally recognized under applicable law in Colombia, with its own statutes; but at the same time is the country chapter of an international organization; we are not sure if our legal status allows us to fulfill the eligibility requirements regarding local organizations set in the RFA, and subsequently, to submit a proposal.

As per the definition of eligible organizations, “A local organization does not include subsidiaries, affiliates, or member entities of organizations located outside of, or organized outside of Colombia. Local organizations by this definition are not international organizations.”

Question 7

Provided that USAID has determined that this program will be implemented by a local organization, has the Mission considered the possibility of accepting applications in Spanish?

Supporting documentation, including audited financial statements, grant management experience and certifications may be provided in Spanish. The proposal itself must be in English.



Question 8

Page 17, Section III, Applicant, states that: “USAID will not accept applications from individuals. All applicants must be legally recognized organizational entities under applicable law. Local organizations are eligible and encouraged to apply, as well as consortiums of local organizations. Question: Will local consortiums including an international NGO partner meet the requirements of the RFA?”

No, only local Colombian organizations may apply for this opportunity and only local Colombian organizations may be part of the consortium. Please see eligibility criteria outlined in the answer to Question 2.

Question 9

Page 19, Section IV.C, Stage One: Initial Proposal Package, states that: “Applicants must submit a two (2) page Executive Summary based on the following criteria” and lists several criteria that the Applicant must meet to be eligible. Question: May these criteria be met through the consortium members – not just the prime applicant itself?”

Yes, these criteria may be met through consortium members, however the Prime (the main award recipient) should have the ability and capacity to manage the program.

Question 10

Page 25, F. 13(v), STAGE TWO: COST/BUSINESS APPLICATION FORMAT, states that “Note: Local Institutions usually do not have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) letter with the US Government. Therefore no indirect costs should be included in the cost/business application submitted by local NGOs. Local institutions submitting applications should treat all indirect costs as direct costs.” Question: Please confirm that a local institution which has negotiated indirect cost rates with other donors may provide support documentation of such negotiated rate and incorporate indirect costs within the budget.

All indirect costs should be counted as direct costs.

Question 11

Is it possible to submit a proposal for one of the two goals only? ¿Or for partial assistance in one or both goals?

No, proposals must cover both objectives.



Question 12

Is it possible to submit a proposal only for one or several specific regions of the country?

No, the organization implementing this agreement must be able to work in all the geographic regions as outlined here:

The agreement will require work in Bogota and potentially in conflict regions. Currently, conflict regions in which USAID works consist of the following 40 municipalities: Ataco, Chaparal, Planadas, and Rioblanco (all of which are in Tolima); El Carmen de Bolivar and San Jacinto (both of which are in Bolivar); Ovejas and San Onofre (both of which are in Sucre); Anori, Briceño, Caceres, Caucaasia, El Bagre, Ituango, Nechí, Taraza, Valdivia, and Zaragoza (all of which are in Antioquia); Montelibano, Puerto Libertador, Tierralta, Valencia, and San Jose de Ure (all of which are in Córdoba); La Macarena, Mesetas, Puerto Rico, San Juan de Arama, Uribe, and Vista Hermosa (all of which are in Meta); Cartagena del Chaira, San Vicente del Caguan, and La Montañita (all of which are in Caqueta); Tumaco (which is in Nariño), Pradera and Florida (Valle de Cauca); and Miranda, Corinto, Caloto, Santander de Quilichao, and Toribio (Cauca). The identity of conflict regions is subject to change, especially if there is a peace agreement.

Question 13

The mention of "USAID encourages applications from potential new partners", does it open the possibility of training by USAID to provide the tools of funds awarded by USAID?

No, USAID will not provide capacity building for the Prime (the main recipient of the award) to manage the program.

Question 14

Is it possible aggregate the annual budgets of two entities for submitting a proposal in partnership?

Yes

Question 15

Can we aggregate annual budgets of five partner foundations?

Yes.



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Question 16

How does USAID plan to strengthen ISOs and how they can access resources to strengthen them?

Applicants should propose approach(es) to strengthening ISOs with program funds.

Question 17

Can an ISO apply to this solicitation, and in the case it is not selected, apply to the strengthening program under Result 1.3, and/or for a grant under the program?

There is nothing that would preclude an ISO from applying to do work under Result 1.3 or applying to the sub-grants fund, in the event that it is not the prime recipient of the award.

Question 18

Should the DUNS number be assigned for the two entities that will appear in join or should it be for just one?

A DUNS number is not required to submit an application, however one will be required before an organization receives an award.

Question 19

May the two entities form a consortium, a joint venture, a temporal joint venture or another type join work together to submit the proposal? Please specify which is the proper type?

Yes, these criteria may be met through consortium members, however the Prime (the main award recipient) should have the ability and capacity to manage the program. The specific type should be determined by the organizations working together.

Question 20

I would like to clarify what it means by sub-districts in the SCSA RFA, as follows:

3. Beneficiary Population, Geographic Coverage of the Program, and Gender – Include a description of targeted beneficiaries; list the preferred sub-districts in which to implement the proposed activity, and the sub-districts where willing to be considered in event the stated preference cannot be met.

I understand that the country has regions, departments and municipalities, but the term sub-district is not clear and I would appreciate a clarification.

“Sub-districts” should be replaced by “geographic areas.”



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The agreement will require work in Bogota and potentially in conflict regions. Currently, conflict regions in which USAID works consist of the following 40 municipalities: Ataco, Chaparal, Planadas, and Rioblanco (all of which are in Tolima); El Carmen de Bolivar and San Jacinto (both of which are in Bolivar); Ovejas and San Onofre (both of which are in Sucre); Anori, Briceño, Caceres, Cauca, El Bagre, Ituango, Nechí, Taraza, Valdivia, and Zaragoza (all of which are in Antioquia); Montelibano, Puerto Libertador, Tierralta, Valencia, and San Jose de Ure (all of which are in Córdoba); La Macarena, Mesetas, Puerto Rico, San Juan de Arama, Uribe, and Vista Hermosa (all of which are in Meta); Cartagena del Chaira, San Vicente del Caguan, and La Montañita (all of which are in Caqueta); Tumaco (which is in Nariño), Pradera and Florida (Valle de Cauca); and Miranda, Corinto, Caloto, Santander de Quilichao, and Toribio (Cauca). The identity of conflict regions is subject to change, especially if there is a peace agreement.

Question 21

What is the geographical scope of the grant?

The agreement will require work in Bogota and potentially in conflict regions. Currently, conflict regions in which USAID works consist of the following 40 municipalities: Ataco, Chaparal, Planadas, and Rioblanco (all of which are in Tolima); El Carmen de Bolivar and San Jacinto (both of which are in Bolivar); Ovejas and San Onofre (both of which are in Sucre); Anori, Briceño, Caceres, Cauca, El Bagre, Ituango, Nechí, Taraza, Valdivia, and Zaragoza (all of which are in Antioquia); Montelibano, Puerto Libertador, Tierralta, Valencia, and San Jose de Ure (all of which are in Córdoba); La Macarena, Mesetas, Puerto Rico, San Juan de Arama, Uribe, and Vista Hermosa (all of which are in Meta); Cartagena del Chaira, San Vicente del Caguan, and La Montañita (all of which are in Caqueta); Tumaco (which is in Nariño), Pradera and Florida (Valle de Cauca); and Miranda, Corinto, Caloto, Santander de Quilichao, and Toribio (Cauca). The identity of conflict regions is subject to change, especially if there is a peace agreement.

Question 22

What are the eligibility criteria of civil society organizations to be strengthened?

The Prime (the main award recipient) of this award will propose such a definition in its Grants Manual.

Question 23

In case of an association, under legal concept of Temporary Union, which are the eligibility requirements for the same?

Organizations working together may aggregate their resources to meet eligibility criteria.



Question 24

Does the required experience for the grant apply to both national and international funds?

Yes.

Question 25

En el caso de una asociación, cada parte cuenta con un número DUNS, ¿es necesario que la forma asociativa realice un nuevo registro para la obtención del número DUNS?

In the case of a partnership, each partner has a DUNS number; is it necessary for the partnership to make/submit a new record to obtain the DUNS number?

A DUNS number is not required to submit an application, however one will be required before an organization receives an award.

Question 26

Page 7: Program Description. The implementing partners can function also as Intermediate Support Organizations?

Yes, if they have the requisite experience to function as such.

Question 27

Page 7: Program Description. Is there a specific profile or requirement to select the IOS's?

The Prime (the main award recipient) will establish such a profile.

Question 28

Page 8: Program Description. The implementation of the program will take place on a national level. ¿Are there any prioritized territories or regions?

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Toribio (Cauca). The identity of conflict regions is subject to change, especially if there is a peace agreement.

Question 29

Page 8: Program Description. Are there any expectations in terms of the number of Civil society organizations that are beneficiaries of the program?

The Prime (the main award recipient), in collaboration with USAID, will determine the appropriate number of beneficiaries.

Question 30

Page 13: Key Personnel. Should the key personnel be part of the stage one application form?

That is not required.

Question 31

Page 17: Eligibility information: Is the DUNS number mandatory for stage one?

A DUNS number is not required to submit an application, however one will be required before an organization receives an award.

Question 32

Page 17: Eligibility information: In case of consortium, all the members need to present a DUNS number?

A DUNS number is not required to submit an application, however one will be required before an organization receives an award.

Question 33

Page 19: Management financial capacity: In the case of a consortium , the USD 2 million or more in annual budgets pertain to each member of the consortium or to the ensemble of the consortium?

This requirement applies to the entire consortium, not individual members, however the Prime should have the ability and capacity to manage the program.



Question 34

Page 19: Grants management experience In the case of a consortium , the USD 1 million or more in managing grants during the 2011-2013 period pertain to each member of the consortium or to the ensemble of the consortium?

This requirement applies to the entire consortium, not individual members, however the Prime should have the ability and capacity to manage the program.

Question 35

Page 19: Grants management experience makes reference to managing donor funding in general of providing grants to other organizations?

Grants management experience refers to providing grants to other organizations.

Question 36

Page 19: Is it necessary to present the financial statements in English?

Supporting documentation, including audited financial statements, grant management experience and certifications may be provided in Spanish. The proposal itself must be in English.

Question 37

Page 19: For stage one application process, is it necessary to present the consortium document?

In case it is mandatory, does the consortium document have to be translated?

The consortium document should be provided, identifying the consortium and identifying it as a local entity. The consortium document is considered supporting documentation, and may be submitted in Spanish.

Question 38

Page 19: Audited financial statements, grant management experience certifications and other attached documents that are in Spanish need to be translated in English?

Supporting documentation, including audited financial statements, grant management experience and certifications may be provided in Spanish. The proposal itself must be in English.



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Question 39

Please clarify that U.S.-based organizations with 501(3)(c) status are eligible to prime for this award.

US-based organizations are not eligible to apply.

Question 40

Please clarify the title and RFA number of this program as the solicitation uses two different page headers: 1) RFA- 514-14-00007 Civil Society Strengthening Activity; or 2) RFA-514-14-00005 Strengthening Civil Society to Engage in Political Processes.

The first header is the correct one.

Question 41

Is it permitted to subcontract an activity or component of this program?

Yes.

Question 42

Our organization is a non-profit NGO. Please let us know if for the financial costs of the project's proposal it is required to detail the methodology for calculating the profit margin that our firm would get from implementing the USAID program.

This is not required in Stage One, however may be requested if the organization is selected to submit an application as part of Stage Two.

Question 43

If we assume that the total budget of the program will be US\$15 million for 4 years of activities, each year of program activities will correspond to a maximum annual amount of US\$3.75 million. For the above mentioned, please tell us the following: a) If it would be possible that USAID makes, each year, an advance of resources to the operator. b) If there is not an initial annual advance to the operator, would it be possible that monthly payments may be made for the value of total expenditures incurred by month by the operator to implement the activities proposed in the program?

During award negotiation, USAID will work with the awardee to determine an appropriate payment schedule.



Question 44

In Section III, page 17, USAID/Colombia does not restrict applicant eligibility to local organizations alone, but leaves open the potential for international organizations to apply as prime applicants. Does USAID welcome applications from both local and international organizations as prime applicants?

Eligibility is limited to local Colombian organizations.

Question 45

Section IV, Section C, Page 19 with reference to the Grants Management Experience, can USAID/Colombia clarify whether the period 2011 – 2013 refers to calendar years or fiscal years?

This refers to calendar years.

Question 46

Page 9, result 2.1 Improved Access to Justice. The focus on the explanation paragraph is on gender issues. Is the Mission focusing this result primarily on gender issues, or is it considering other access to justice related topics?

There may be other justice-related topics, apart from those involving gender. Please address the requirements of the relevant program description.

Question 47

Page 19, Management/Financial Capacity, sub category three (3). The Mission is requesting a demonstration of capacity to work outside major population centers. Does the mission have in mind specific regions for this project?

The agreement will require work in Bogota and potentially in conflict regions. Currently, conflict regions in which USAID works consist of the following 40 municipalities: Ataco, Chaparal, Planadas, and Rioblanco (all of which are in Tolima); El Carmen de Bolivar and San Jacinto (both of which are in Bolivar); Ovejas and San Onofre (both of which are in Sucre); Anori, Briceño, Caceres, Cauca, El Bagre, Ituango, Nechí, Taraza, Valdivia, and Zaragoza (all of which are in Antioquia); Montelibano, Puerto Libertador, Tierralta, Valencia, and San Jose de Ure (all of which are in Córdoba); La Macarena, Mesetas, Puerto Rico, San Juan de Arama, Uribe, and Vista Hermosa (all of which are in Meta); Cartagena del Chaira, San Vicente del Caguan, and La Montañita (all of which are in Caqueta); Tumaco (which is in Nariño), Pradera and Florida (Valle de Cauca); and Miranda, Corinto, Caloto, Santander de Quilichao, and Toribio (Cauca). The identity of conflict regions is subject to change, especially if there is a peace agreement.



Question 48

Page 23, Stage Two: Technical Application Format, number five (5), Institutional capability and past performance. Is the page limit ten (10) or five (5) pages?

This should read “five (5) pages.”

Question 49

Does USAID/Colombia intend page limitation requirements for the Implementation Plan, noted within Section IV, part E, number 4 on page 23 of the RFA?

Yes, this section should not exceed 10 pages.

Question 50

To facilitate planning, please confirm when applicants will be informed of the results of Stage One, and the release and due dates for Stage Two.

We are unable to project timelines because much will depend on the number of Stage One applicants.

Question 51

Could you provide a copy of the Mission’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS)? The draft results framework is online, but the CDCS does not appear online.

The CDCS has not been approved so we are unable to provide a copy at this time.

Question 52

The CDCS Draft Results Framework mentions that the level of USAID investment will depend on changes in country context and windows of opportunity. Under the Program Objective Two, shall grant funding target windows of opportunity, where relevant, or are the sub-objectives and resultant grants expected to be weighted equally?

The technical proposal should focus on the objectives outlined in this RFA.

Question 53

May grant funds be used for hardware to build and support IT infrastructure, such as computer-based information systems or other monitoring systems?

Such an activity is not excluded, however any IT projects need to be in adherence with USAID agency policy ADS 548 as outlined here:



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<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/548.pdf>

Question 54

May grant funds be directed to host-country systems, (including government agencies), to foster or enhance public-private partnerships?

No, grants funds will not be directed to host-country systems.

Question 55

Would potential sub-grantees be permitted to provide technical assistance, training or sensitization to law enforcement regarding Gender-Based Violence? Will USAID provide Leahy Vetting if needed?

Such an activity is not excluded. USAID will provide Leahy vetting if needed.

Question 56

Are consortium or partnerships with local NGOs and personnel required to be exclusive? May local personnel or NGOs participate in more than one application or consortium agreements?

Local personnel or NGOs may participate in more than one application or consortium agreement.

Question 57

What should be included in the Grant-Making Experience Table (Section 4 of the Application Stage 1)? May applicants present an illustrative sample of grant-making experience in the last 3 years?

Yes, an illustrative sample would suffice. At a minimum, the table should include the name of the recipient of the grant, a point of contact (name and contact information) for the recipient of the grant, the amount of the grant, a brief description of the grant, and the dates of the grant.

Question 58

The Eligibility Criteria listed on page 17 do not specifically address U.S. organizations, but the focus of the program aims to build the technical and financial management capacity of local organizations. Are U.S.-based organizations eligible to apply?

No, US-based organizations are not eligible to apply.



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Question 59

We are a medium-sized American firm from Leesburg, VA, but all of our work is in Latin America. The question is: Are we qualified to submit an application in response to the referred RFA?

No, US-based organizations are not eligible to apply.

Question 60

Can an international, non-profit organization that is legally registered in the United States as a 501(c)(3) organization apply for this RFA?

Below is the RFA section focusing on eligibility of applicants which is slightly unclear on the matter though it appears that the answer to my question is likely, yes. I appreciate your clarification.

SECTION III - ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. APPLICANT

1. USAID will not accept applications from individuals. All applicants must be legally recognized organizational entities under applicable law. Local organizations are eligible and encouraged to apply, as well as consortiums of local organizations. A local organization applicant must be locally recognized under the laws of the country in which it is domiciled. A local organization does not include subsidiaries, affiliates, or member entities of organizations located outside of, or organized outside of Colombia. Local organizations by this definition are not international organizations. When applying to the solicitation, local organizations are required to attach official documentation of their formal status in the host country.

No, US-based organizations are not eligible to apply.