

USAID Child Blindness Program
Phase II Response to Application Questions – RFA No. PGRD-14-0002
Question and Answer Period
January 21, 2015 – February 2, 2015

Applicants are reminded that:

- Full applications are due by February 26, 2015 at 5 pm EST (Eastern Standard Time).
- Full applications must be submitted in the template provided as Attachment B of the RFA and in accordance to the guidelines provided on P. 12-13 of the RFA. Please review carefully the instructions provided at the top of Attachment B and on P. 12-13 of the RFA for submission requirements and page limits. Applications that do not conform to these requirements will not be evaluated.

Questions Regarding Application Instructions

QUESTION 1: Proof of legal registration or incorporation: do you want the proof of legal registration in France or in Burkina Faso? Do you want it translated in English?

Applicants who have a headquarters office in a different country from the country where the proposed project will occur should submit both their headquarters registration and their field office registration. There is no need to translate documents written in English, French and Spanish. Applicants submitting documents written in a language other than these three languages should submit a brief translation.

QUESTION 2: Please could you confirm to what extent we can make changes in our full application to the objectives, results, activities and beneficiary numbers set out in our LOI?

Applicants may not make any changes that would significantly alter the nature of the project that they originally proposed in their LOI. This includes changes to the problem statement, project objectives, country where the activity will take place, activities or proposed interventions. However, applicants may make minor changes to their proposed results or outputs, including beneficiary numbers. A brief but thorough explanation must be included as to why any changes were made.

QUESTION 3: Please could you confirm to what extent we can make changes to the budget submitted with our LOI, in our full application?

Applicants may make changes to their budgets as long as these changes do not result in exceeding the budget limits established for each type of grant as described in Section IV of the RFA.

QUESTION 4: Are we able to make changes to activities or small portions of the approved LOI when preparing the application? If so, are there guidelines on such re-allocations/changes?

See answers to Questions 2 and 3.

QUESTION 5: I have a question regarding project start period. In our LOI, we proposed project July 2015 is starting month. We don't know when we will receive the confirmation of approval of proposal. We assume that it will at least one or two months to complete the project agreement process. From our previous experience, it looks pretty narrow period to be prepared for the program to go. We are thinking to make the January 2016 as a project starting month. If we make that, we will have enough preparation time to go project smoothly. Is that possible to change our project starting month from July 2015 to January 2016?

Applicants should assume that their projects will begin in July 2015. If Phase III negotiations are extended, the start and end dates of projects will be adjusted as necessary.

QUESTION 6: With reference to Section IV (1) re Organisational Capacity, where you require a description of the human, technical, and financial resources available to an organization to successfully implement the project within the proposed timeframe and cost, do you require an overview of the organisation's capacity or project specific information?

Applicants should describe the resources available to implement the proposed project. This can include the organization's capacity and the specific resources that will be dedicated to the proposed project.

QUESTION 7: On page 1 of Attachment B: Full application Template, PGRD asks that applicants "Please limit your responses to Sections II-V, to 10 pages maximum. There is no page limit for Sections I, VI-IX". Should the applicant include the instructions beneath each subheading under Sections II-V when counting pages? Or should the applicant remove all instructions in the template prior to submission?

Applicants should remove the instructions prior to submission in order to maximize space.

QUESTION 8: There is a significant lack of data available related to pediatric eye care in our site. The guidance for the Situational Assessment asks for verifiable information only. If verifiable information is limited, is it acceptable to include relevant data and information from internal sources in this section?

Yes, where verifiable data is limited or unavailable, applicants may use anecdotal data. Applicants must clearly explain the reason for using the anecdotal data and must identify the source.

QUESTION 9: On page 10 of the RFA, PGRD states that "CBP will check the references provided by the applicant". Are references required as part of the full application package?

No, references are not required during Phase II. However, applicants are advised that if they are invited to Phase III, PGRD will request and check references.

Questions Regarding Cost

QUESTION 10: Budget for the full application: can it be slightly different from the one presented in the LOI? Not in the total amount, obviously, but in the different allocations in the budget lines is it possible to have some variations and if yes in which percentage?

See answer to Question 3

QUESTION 11: To what extent can applicants change the budget line items and activities submitted as part of their Letter of Intent (LOI)?

See answer to Question 3

QUESTION 12: Fringe benefits for staff: which kind of costs are included in these lines? In France employers are obliged to pay some charges and taxes which are normally included in the salary, are you referring to these? Insurance is included as well? We made a total cost for each staff, following our normal calculations. Are we obliged to split?

As noted in Attachment D: Budget Instructions, fringe benefits are defined as “any employment benefits that staff paid from this project will receive. These may be health insurance, social security payments, unemployment benefits, educational benefits, etc. Benefits should be calculated based on the standard employment benefits offered by the organization where they will work and should follow the minimum requirements mandated by law.” Taxes or fees that are deducted from an employee’s salary and paid by the organization to the government on the employee’s behalf should not be included in this line item.

QUESTION 13: We require a bus for providing transportation facility to the poor patients, who may not be able to afford to come for their treatment to our hospital. Does this fall under cost categorized as ‘motor vehicles, including motorcycles’ which are unallowable or restricted under the CBP grant?

Yes, buses are considered motor vehicles and are restricted items under USAID rules and will require special waivers and approvals before they may be purchased. Note, however, that the aim of this grant program is not to fund the purchase of vehicles. USAID and PGRD encourage applicants to evaluate their proposed projects to determine if a vehicle purchase is necessary or if other options such as vehicle rental could be considered. When determining whether an organization can purchase a vehicle with CBP funds, USAID will consider a variety of factors including the size of the grant being requested. A disproportionate amount should not be allocated to the purchase of a vehicle. If the purchase of a vehicle is deemed necessary and no other options such as vehicle rental are available, note that nationality and origin rules will apply, which means that the vehicle must be manufactured within the United States. It may be possible to receive a waiver for this requirement but receiving such a waiver will take anywhere from three to nine months to obtain. This must be taken into consideration when putting together the organization’s application and budget.

QUESTION 14: In Section VIII, regarding the Budget, you recommend that an organisation should modify its budget depending on the proposed start and end dates. To what extent can we change the budget & timeframe from what was in the LOI?

Please see answer to Question 3.

QUESTION 15: Noting the detailed instructions, we were wondering if organisational/project specific info should be supplied around Staff fringe benefits & Indirect Costs? As an INGO many of our staff listed work out of Australia.

The budget must include a detailed list of all costs, and the narrative must explain each one of these costs. As noted in Attachment D: Budget Instructions, if an indirect rate is being applied applicants “must submit proof that this rate has been independently verified by a third party.

This may be through a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement (NICRA) with a US Government Federal Agency or independently audited financial statements which clearly show the indirect rate and how the organization has determined it.”

QUESTION 16: Can a portion of funds be released directly to the sub-contractor or does ALL monies have to go direct to the Organisation who then disburse the money to the sub-contractor?

Applicants must manage their contractual relationships with all their vendors and subcontractors directly and independently.

Questions Regarding Attachments:

Regarding Attachment G: The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

QUESTION 17: You mention that you are available to assist with the selection of categories with regards to the M&E Table. If an organization would like to make use of your invitation, how do they achieve this?

During Phase II of this RFA applicants should choose the most appropriate indicators for their project as described in the template. If an applicant is invited to Phase III of the RFA, the technical evaluation committee may provide feedback about the most appropriate indicators for the project. Applicants will not be penalized in the evaluation for having chosen the wrong indicators.

QUESTION 18: It appears that all of the M&E categories are geared towards service delivery, rather than administrative capacity building, as described in the RFA under illustrative activities "enhancing the capacity of programmatic, administrative, technical &/or human resource functions to directly impact the quality & quantity of services". What type of information is needed with regards to administrative capacity building?

In order to capture administrative capacity building, applicants are encouraged to use service delivery indicators to measure how much their service delivery will be affected by the improvement in their administrative capacity.

QUESTION 19: Is 'capacity building' in the child eye health programs captured by category 2 in the M&E table?

See answer to Question 18.

QUESTION 20: With M&E, what happens if the baseline data is not accurate? Will we be able to amend it later if we find a huge discrepancy?

Applicants should make a reasonable and educated estimate of their baseline data. If the application is approved, applicants will be allowed to make changes to the baseline number with a thorough explanation for the reason for the discrepancy between the application baseline number and the grant baseline number.

Regarding Attachment H – Certifications

QUESTION 21: Please explain the difference between (a) “Request for Application No” and (b) Application No.” Does (a) refer to the RFA number and (b) the code within the notification letter?

The Request for Applications No refers to the RFA number which is PGRD – 14 – 0002 Child Blindness Program. The Application No. is the code that each applicant received upon CBP’s confirmation of receipt of the LOI and which begins with the letter “B.”

QUESTION 22: What is the difference between “Date of Application” and the date following the signature?

The date of the application is the date in which the application was submitted to CBP. The date on the signature block is the date in which the signatory added his/her signature. This may or may not be the same date of the application.

QUESTION 23: Who should sign the certifications: does the “Name of the Recipient” refer the person who received the official letter from Ms. Ana Maria Cuenca, Grants Specialist?

The person who signs the certifications must be a person legally authorized to sign on behalf of the applicant organization. The Name of the Recipient in the Certifications refers to the name of the applicant organization.

QUESTION 24: The documents required to be supplied (attachment of incorporation/registration and signing of attachment H) by the lead organization, are they also require these for sub-contractors?

No, only the applicant organization is required to provide its incorporation/registration documents.

QUESTION 25: Regarding Attachment I don’t know if the next question is for publication, but I will appreciate it if you could clarify the following: The [name of organization] previously received a grant from CBP to implement a project in [country]. In September 2012 our name changed to [name of organization] and we registered as an IPVO with USAID in September 2013. For this call we are entering into a partnership with [name of organization]. Should our partner be registered or is it enough that we are registered with USAID. The [name of organization] will be the sub-contractor.

CBP does not require applicants to be registered as IPVOs with USAID.