



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Frequently Asked Questions

Local Solutions and Local Development Partners

Question: *What are the most important recent changes at USAID that local implementers should be aware of?*

Answer: USAID highly recommends that any organization – local, regional or international – that is interested in partnering with USAID should carefully review the Local Systems Framework. This document provides a foundation for engaging local systems in ways that support local ownership, local entrepreneurship and local accountability and emphasizes the importance of this approach to the design and implementation of development programs. One can find a copy at:

<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/local-systems-framework>

A main premise of Local Solutions is country ownership of the development agenda. This approach is best captured by the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network (MFAN) language, “accountability through transparency, evaluation and learning; and country ownership of the priorities and resources for, and implementation of, development.” For more information on the MFAN, see

<http://www.modernizeaid.net>

Question: *How can local organizations position themselves well in the vetting process as donor agencies and others evaluate them as potential partners?*

Answer: For all organizations or businesses interested in partnering with USAID, they should:

- All development partners should also carefully review a set of new e-modules, “How to do Business with USAID,” which provide a comprehensive overview of the Agency, our development priorities and procurement processes. The link to that resource is at: <http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/get-grant-or-contract/trainings-how-work-usaid>
- Monitor the USAID webpage for the country or region they are interested in working. The site will explain priorities, current programming and general information on partnering opportunities.
- Monitor the website Grants.gov at www.grants.gov for funding opportunities that anticipate the award of grants or cooperative agreements. Business opportunities that anticipate the award of contracts are posted on FedBizOpps at www.fbo.gov
- Participate in Mission processes in order to provide input as well as better understand USAID priorities in that particular country. Many Missions organize outreach meetings or consultations with all development partners as part of the Country Development Cooperation Strategy development, sector assessments, and project design processes.
- Attend any and all public events for a specific solicitation. These may take several forms including solicitation/information workshops, pre-proposal/pre-application conferences, and industry days.



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- Most important, organizations should ensure that in preparing their proposals in accordance with the instructions in the solicitation, that they have provided relevant, responsive, and adequate information for USAID to evaluate the proposal against the stated evaluation criteria.
- When selecting solicitations to respond to, the potential partner should consider whether the goals/mission of their organization, experience and sector expertise are a good fit with the stated objectives of the solicitation.
- Further, organizations should be familiar with USAID's policies for conducting a responsibility determination. The policy for determining responsibility for grant and cooperative agreement awards is in ADS 303.3.9 at: <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303.pdf>
- Note the regulations for determining responsibility for contracts is in Federal Acquisition Regulation Subpart 9.1 at: https://acquisition.gov/far/current/html/Subpart%209_1.html
- An organization can use this information to determine where they might want to enhance their capacity to increase their chances of receiving a positive responsibility determination.
- If planning to apply for funding opportunities, organizations should familiarize themselves with the provisions that will apply to the award. The Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. NGOs are available at: <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf>
- The Standard Provisions for Fixed Obligation Grants to Nongovernmental Organizations are available at: <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mat.pdf>

Question: Aside from the e-modules, are there any other USAID resources local groups should reference?

Answer: The [e-modules](#) are the best overall reference for understanding USAID, development priorities and our funding processes. In addition, any group interested in partnering with USAID should monitor www.grants.gov for funding opportunities in their respective countries or regions. All grant and cooperative agreement opportunities are announced through this site. Business opportunities are at www.fbo.gov. [The business forecasts linked from http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/get-grant-or-contract/grant-and-contract-resources](http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/get-grant-or-contract/grant-and-contract-resources) are an excellent source of information about anticipated upcoming opportunities.

Please note that all organizations interested in responding to a solicitation for either a funding or business opportunity must register for a DUNS number, which is a unique, identifying number for each organization or business. The DUNS number registration process is explained at:



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<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>. Organizations and businesses will also need to register with the System for Award Management at: www.sam.gov

These can be tricky processes if one is not familiar with U.S. Government processes or if English is not one's native language. If an organization experiences difficulties, contact the point of contact listed in the USAID solicitation document.

Question: What are some common mistakes local groups make when trying to get funding?

Answer: Based on our experience, the following tips are applicable to all development partners seeking to respond to a USAID solicitation:

- Review carefully the USAID webpage for the particular country or region to understand development priorities and current programming. See www.usaid.gov and search for the country or region of interest.
- Read the solicitation and instructions very carefully and follow the instructions exactly as stated in the document.
- Make sure the proposal provides information that is relevant, responsive, and adequate for USAID to evaluate the proposal against the evaluation criteria.
- Respond to solicitations where the project activities are a good match to the mission and objectives of the responding organization.
- Write a clear, specific proposal that responds directly to the instructions in the solicitation.
- Be sure to include all of the requested information and sections of the solicitation.
- Use compelling and quality data to support the proposed project activities in the responding organization's application or proposal.
- Use active voice i.e. "staff will conduct outreach" rather than, "outreach will be conducted by staff."
- Define technical terms and spell out all acronyms.
- Be realistic with program objectives and ensure they are measurable.
- Be sure the project is feasible within the proposed budget and time-frame.
- Ensure the budget and budget narrative are directly correlated to the proposed project activities.
- Contact the person listed in the solicitation with any questions. Do not contact the technical officer or other USAID staff members as they are required to refer questions to the point of contact listed in the solicitation.