E-Module Navigation

- The toolbar on the left allows you to monitor your progress through the e-module. You are free to navigate through the slides of e-module. The slides you already have seen will appear in BLUE.

- On the top toolbar, this timer shows the overall length of the e-module and how much of the session you have completed.

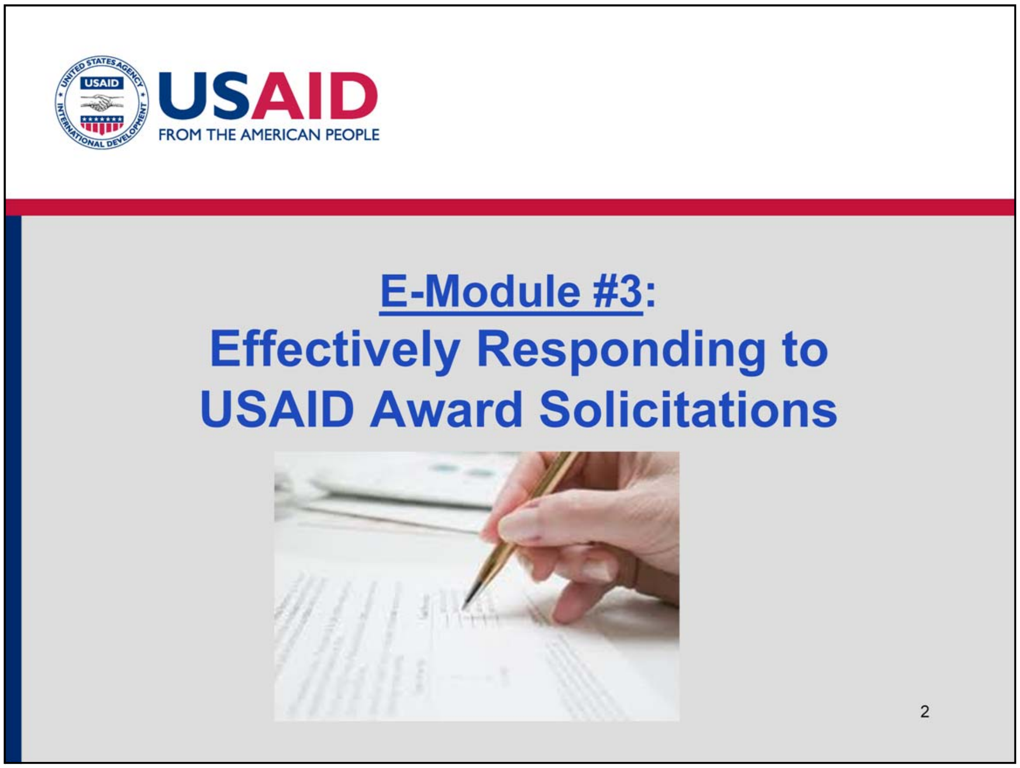
- On the right-hand side of the top toolbar, note the attachments link for important documents related to this e-module.

- On the bottom toolbar, you can click anywhere on the progress bar to hear the audio again, as well as pause or continue playing using this button.

- When you have a completed a slide, click on the play or forward button to move on.
- The volume control is on the left-hand side at the bottom of the screen.

- You can see the complete text for the audio portion of the slides by clicking Notes, either here on the left-hand toolbar, or here on the bottom right.

- Also note that at the end of the e-module, you will be asked to complete some Knowledge Checks that will give you a better of idea of how well you have mastered the content of this E-Module.



Welcome to the second e-module in our series on “Effectively Responding to USAID Award Solicitations.” It's provided to give you best practices and guidance on responding to award solicitations. We hope you find this information helpful. However, please note that completing this course does not guarantee an awarding of USAID funds.

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Objectives of E-Module

The objective of this e-module is to learn best practices in drafting a response to a solicitation, such as understanding the various parts of a response, developing a time-conscious approach, and becoming familiar with the evaluation process.

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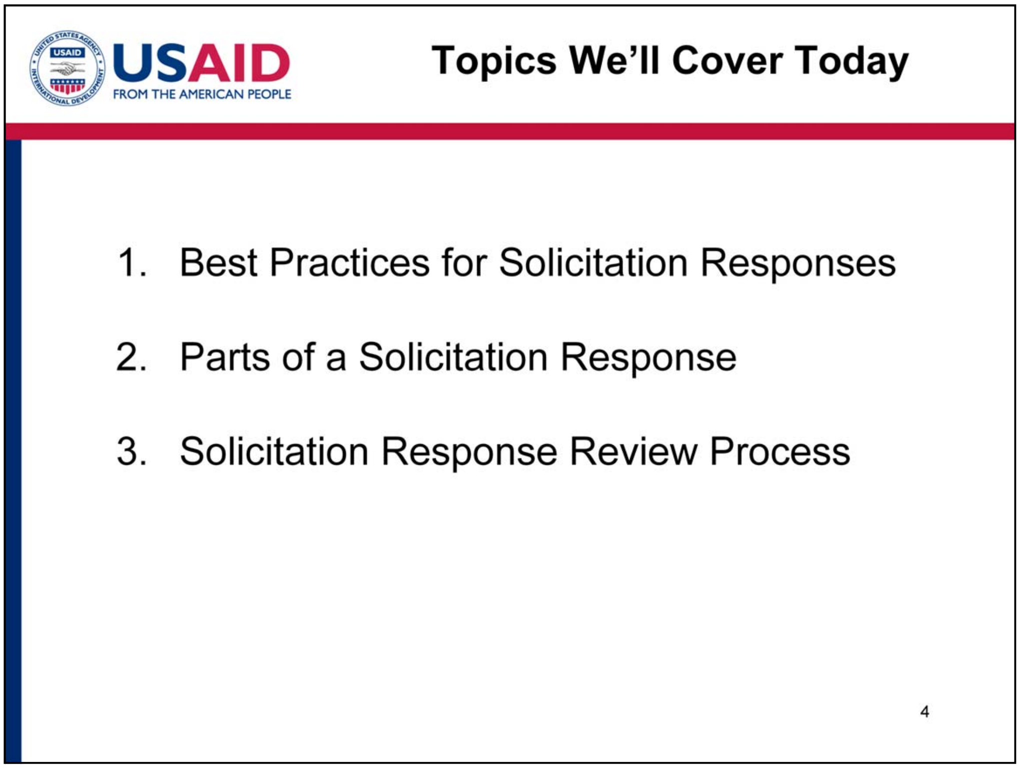

The topics we'll cover in today's e-module are (1) Best Practices for Solicitation Responses (2) Parts of a Solicitation Response and (3) Solicitation Response Review Process.

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1. Best Practices for Solicitation Responses

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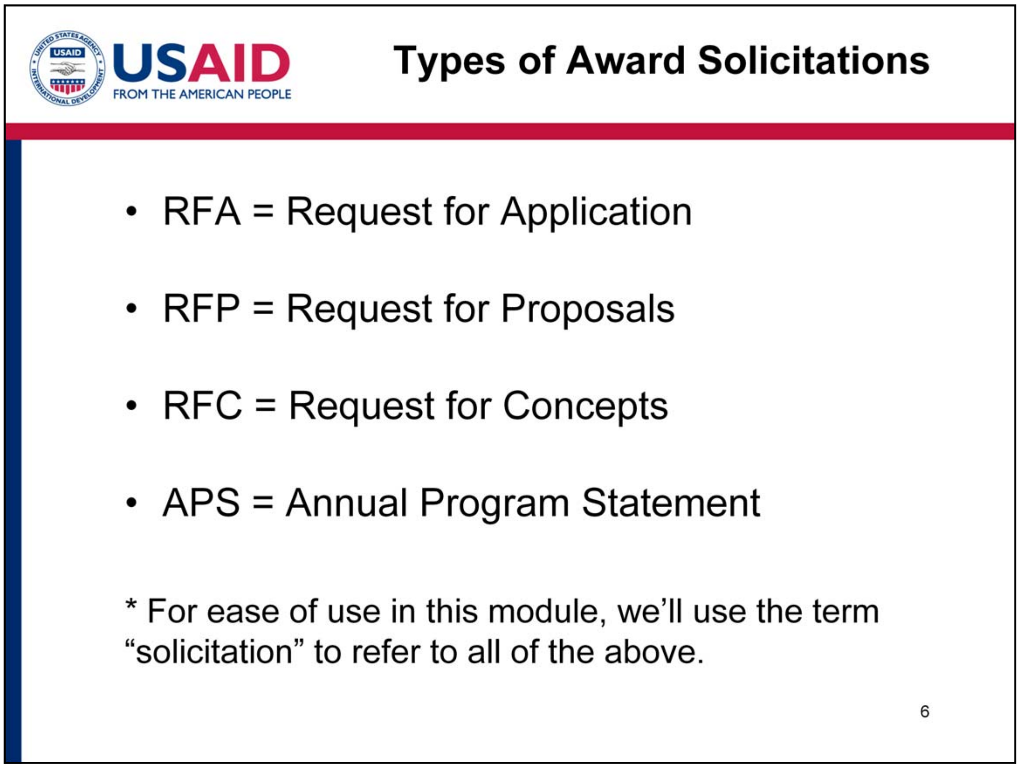
Part 1: Best Practices for Solicitation Responses



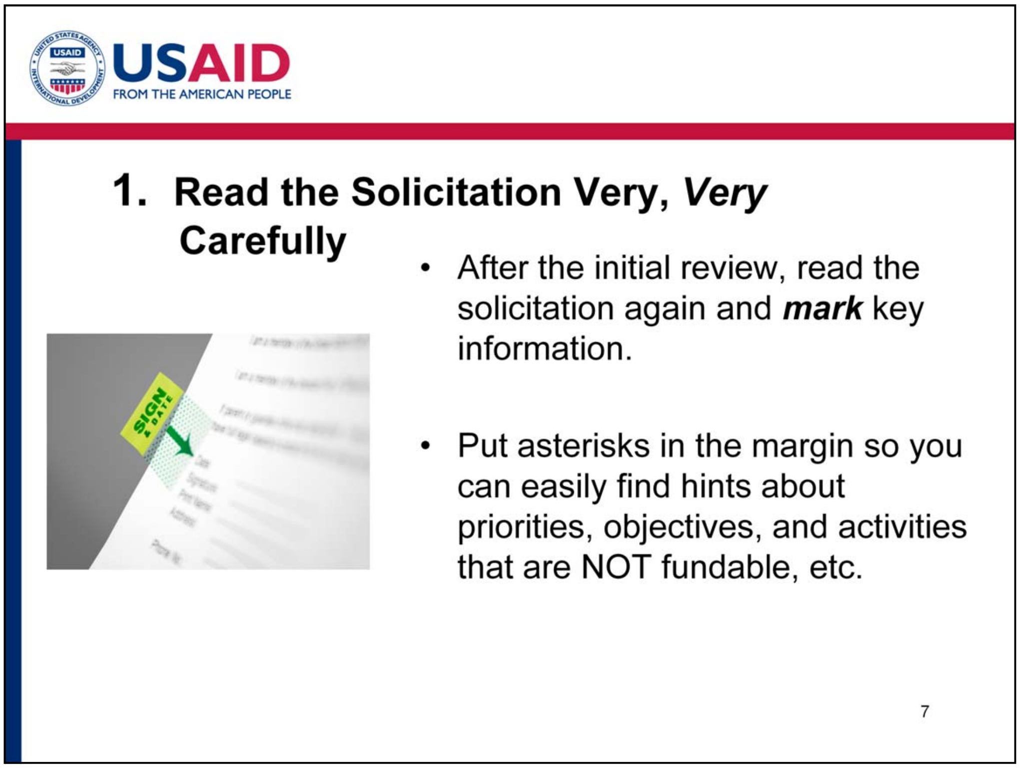
As you are searching for funding opportunities you will find various types of award solicitations. For example, on grants.gov you may find an RFA which is a Request for Application.

On a site like FedBizOps you may find a RFP which is a Request for a Proposal, often referring to a contract.

In addition you may find an RFC which is a Request for Concepts and can refer to either a grant or a contract.

Finally, you may frequently see solicitations for an APS which is an Annual Program Statement. APS' are often used when USAID intends to support a variety of approaches towards developing methodologies.

For continuity sake, we will use the term "Solicitation" to refer to all various types of USAID award solicitations.



Best Practice #1: Read the solicitation very, *very* carefully.

- Find key sections and review the information. Sections such as “Statement of Work," "Recipient Activities," or other titles are the parts of the solicitation that give the background, define the purposes and objectives of the program, and specify what activities USAID wants to fund. Check Eligibility Information to be sure your organization is eligible to receive funding, and check to see that the solicitation calls for programs which are consistent with your organizational missions and capabilities.
- After you're done reading through the solicitation for the first time, go through it again and **mark** key information. Put notes in the margins so you can easily find hints about priorities, objectives, preferred methods and even activities that are not fundable.
- For example, if you don't read the solicitation carefully, you may forget to include some information or some component which is required, and your solicitation response may be judged non-responsive.

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2. Outlining Your Solicitation Response

- Review the section which tells you how to prepare and organize your response.
- Focus on:
  - Page limits
  - Paper size
  - Font size
  - Page numbering
  - Section outline

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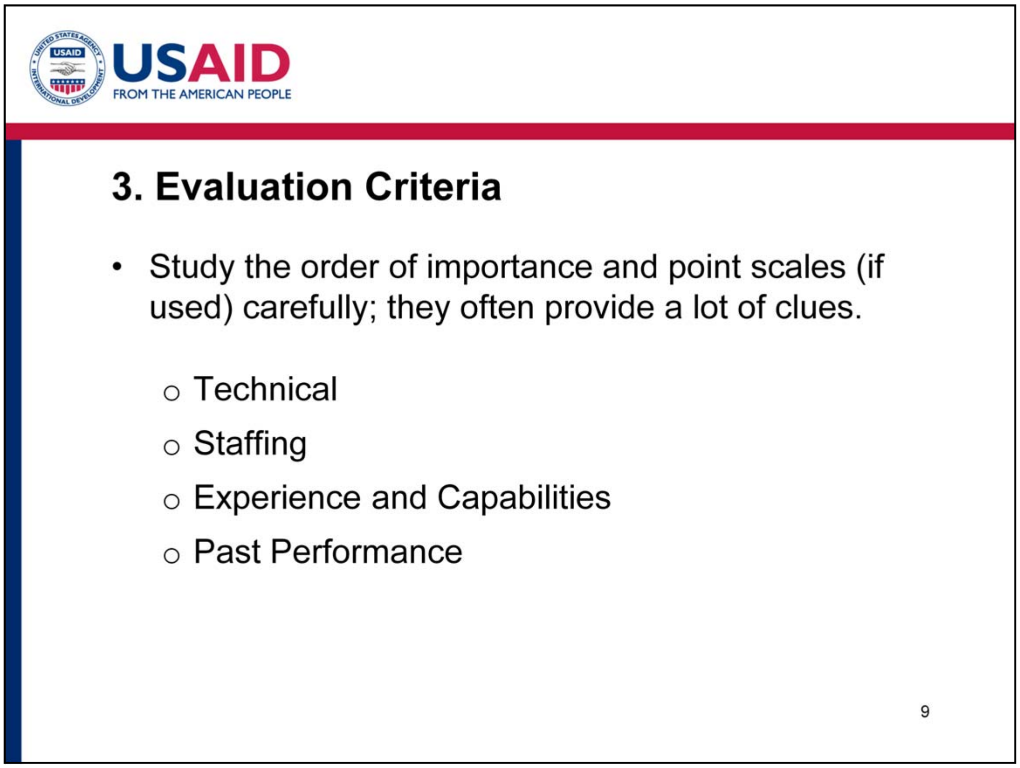
Best Practice #2: Outlining your Solicitation Response

Review the section which tells you how to prepare and organize your solicitation response.

This section will usually be called something like “Technical Proposal Guidelines” or “Application Format." This usually tells you the solicitation response’s outline or format to be used and what goes into each section.

Be sure to focus on restrictions and limits such as page limits, paper size, font size, page numbering and section outlines.



Best Practice #3: Evaluation Criteria

Study the order of importance and point scales (if used in an evaluation criteria section) very carefully; they often provide a lot of clues.

Sometimes there will be no numerical scores or point scales used but the solicitation will tell you that it will be judged on a specified set of factors.

Usually, they are provided in priority order, with the most important factors listed first. But check the solicitation to see if the order is in fact significant.

For example, if the following criteria areas of Technical, Staffing, Experience and

Capabilities and Past Performance are ranked in a solicitation from most important to least, you know that the most important factor will be the technical part of your solicitation response and the least important will be the your past performance. However every factor that is listed, they will be important and should be taken into consideration.

It is extremely important that you thoroughly understand the solicitation's evaluation criteria. I will cover this in greater detail later in the e-module.

4. Drafting

- Prepare an outline of the solicitation response.
  - Follow the format requested in the solicitation.
  - When preparing the outline, write in the required components for each section and subsections.
  - Be careful to use the SAME TERMINOLOGY as the solicitation.
  - Get in the habit of looking for USAID's terminology and using it.

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Best Practice # 4: Drafting

As a reminder, these best practices are meant to be helpful guidance and advice. You and your organization should adopt them as helpful and use the practice that works best for your organization, except in areas where adherence is required such as page limitations. You cannot ignore those solicitation requirements.

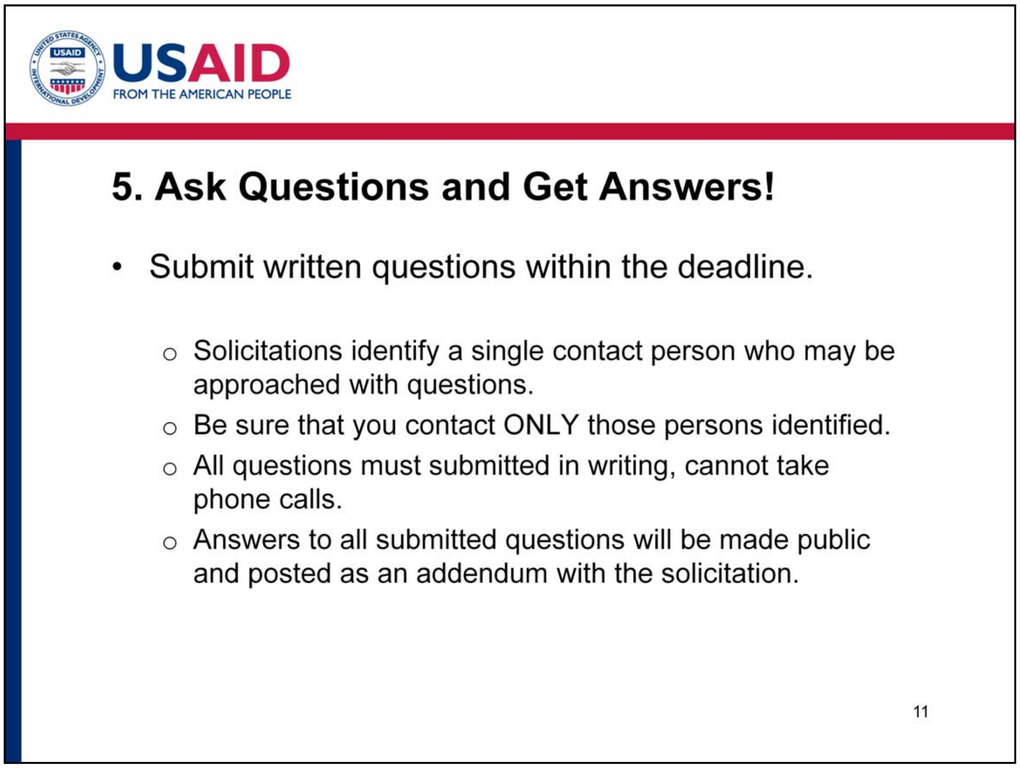
In preparing an outline of your solicitation response, follow the format requested in the solicitation.

When preparing your outline, we suggest writing in the required components for each section and subsections. For example, if the solicitation instructions state to include three examples of your past performance, it might be helpful write “need 3 examples” under the subject heading “Past Performance” on your outline.

Be careful to use the same terminology as the solicitation.

•If the solicitation says "Needs Assessment," use that as your section title, not "Problem Statement"
•If it asks for a "Statement of Work," don't call that section "Methods"

•Get in the habit of looking for USAID's preferred terminology and using it. This implies a familiarity with USAID and its priorities and initiatives. If you don't know what those terms and programs mean, visit the USAID website to look them up and develop a deeper understanding. Your solicitation response will read much stronger if you know and can successfully incorporate USAID initiatives or priorities like "Feed the Future" into your solicitation response. If you don't know some of USAID's terminology and try to use it, it's likely that your reviewer can pick up on that.



Best Practice #5: Ask Questions and Get Answers!

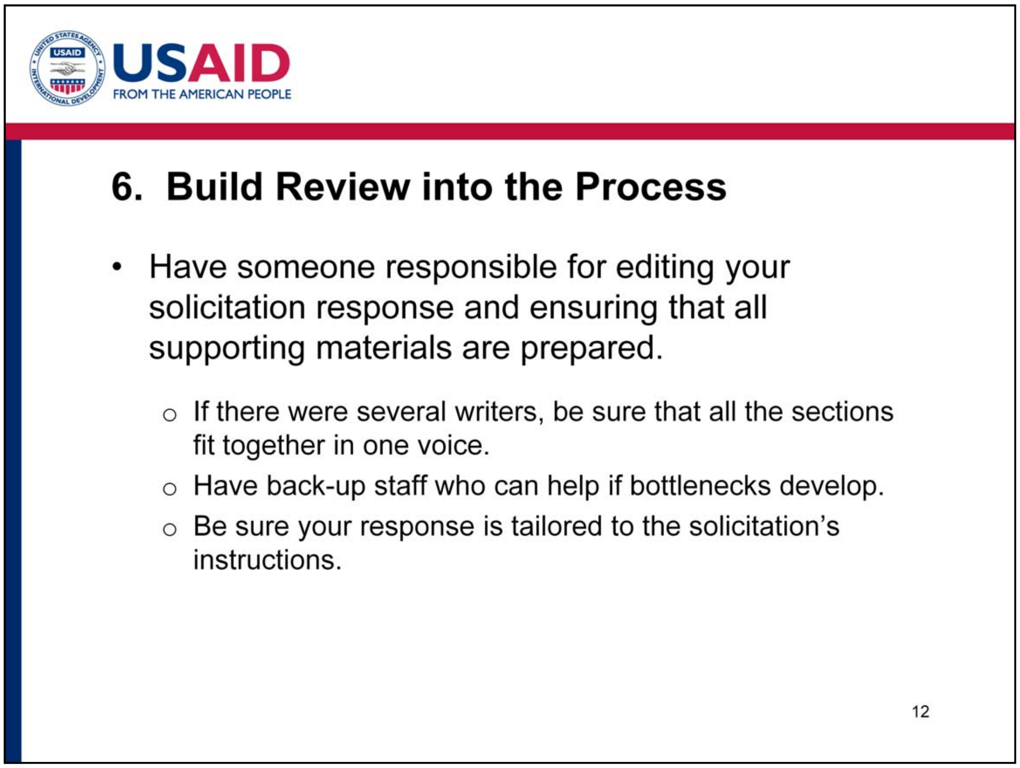
After your organization has completed the draft process, be sure to submit questions to USAID in writing, within the deadline.

Most solicitations identify a single contact person who may be approached with questions.

- Be sure that you contact ONLY those persons identified as no one else in the Agency is permitted to talk to applicants during the open solicitation process. This goes against procurement policies.

- All questions must be submitted in writing and cannot be taken over the phone.

- All responses to submitted questions will then be made public through an addendum to the solicitation and posted on the site hosting the solicitation (such as grants.gov). This insures that no group or organization receives an unfair advantage by gaining access to information that isn't publicly distributed.



Best Practice #6: Build Review into the Process

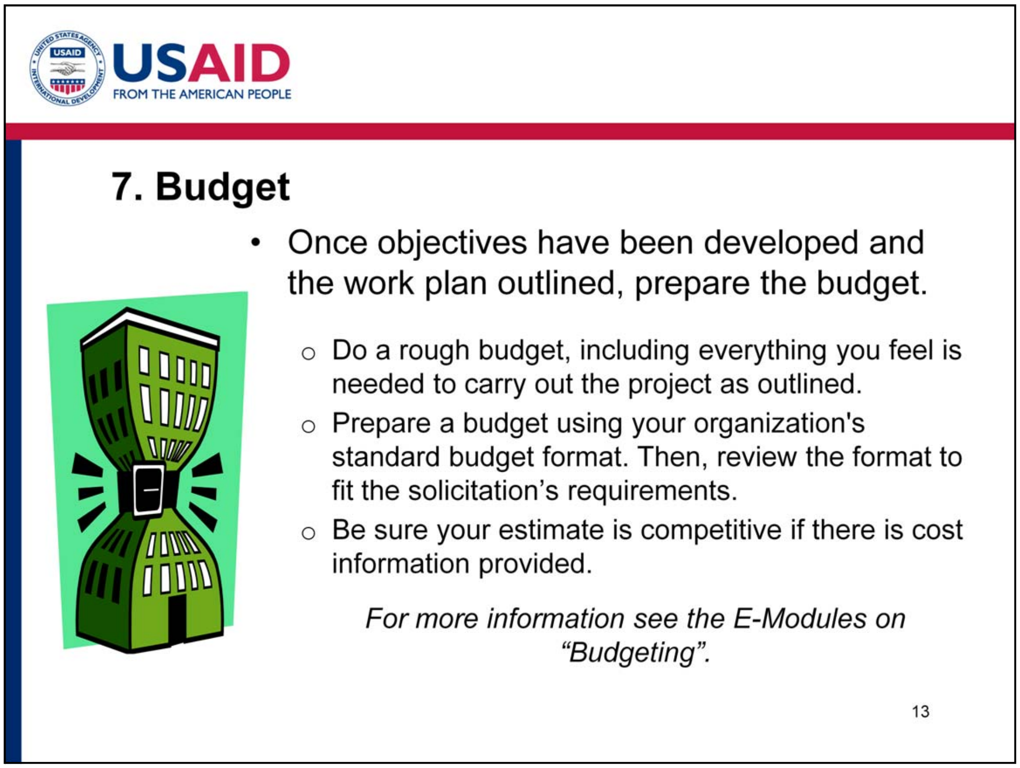
Have someone on your staff be responsible for editing your solicitation response and ensuring that all supporting materials are prepared.

If there are several writers, be sure that all the sections fit together in one cohesive voice.

Consider having back-up staff on hand who can help if bottlenecks develop close to the deadline.

Be sure your response is tailored to fit the solicitation requirements and instructions.

If you plan ahead you may have time for a comprehensive review and avoid basic errors.



Best Practice #7: Budget

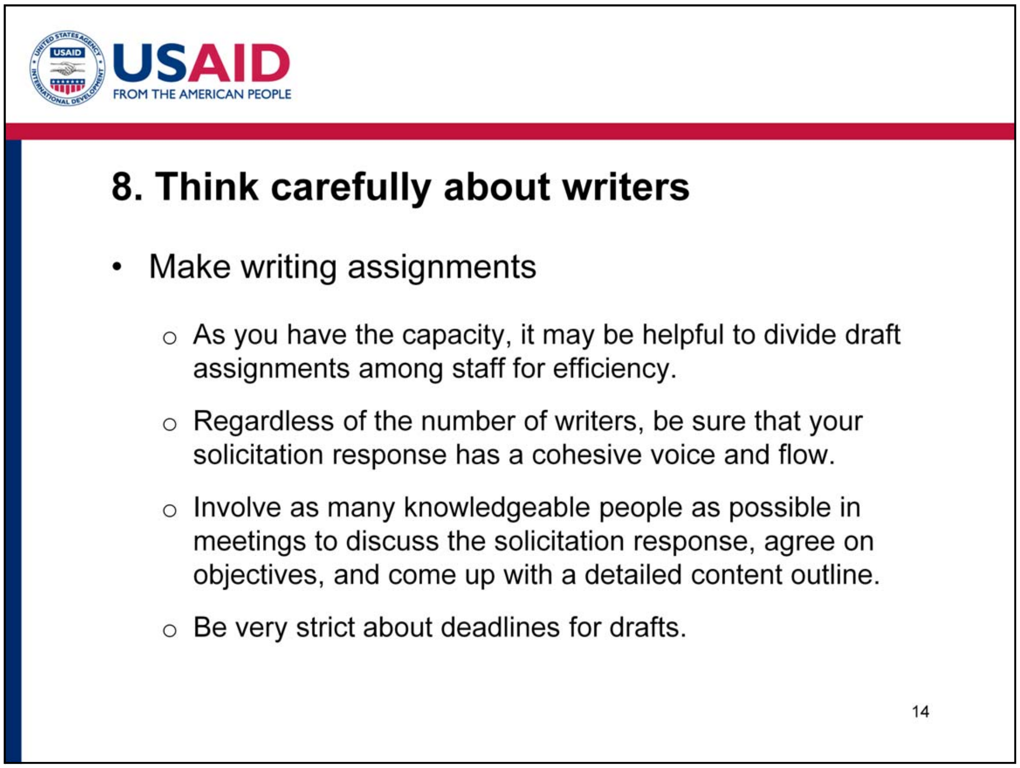
Once objectives have been developed and the work plan has been outlined then prepare the budget.

- Do a rough budget for the program including everything you feel is needed to carry out the project as outlined.

- Prepare a budget using your organization's standard budget format. This ensures that no cost categories needed for your organization's operations are forgotten. Then, review the format to fit the solicitation's specific requirements.

- Be sure your cost estimate is competitive if there is cost information provided in the solicitation. There might be solicitations that don't provide this information.

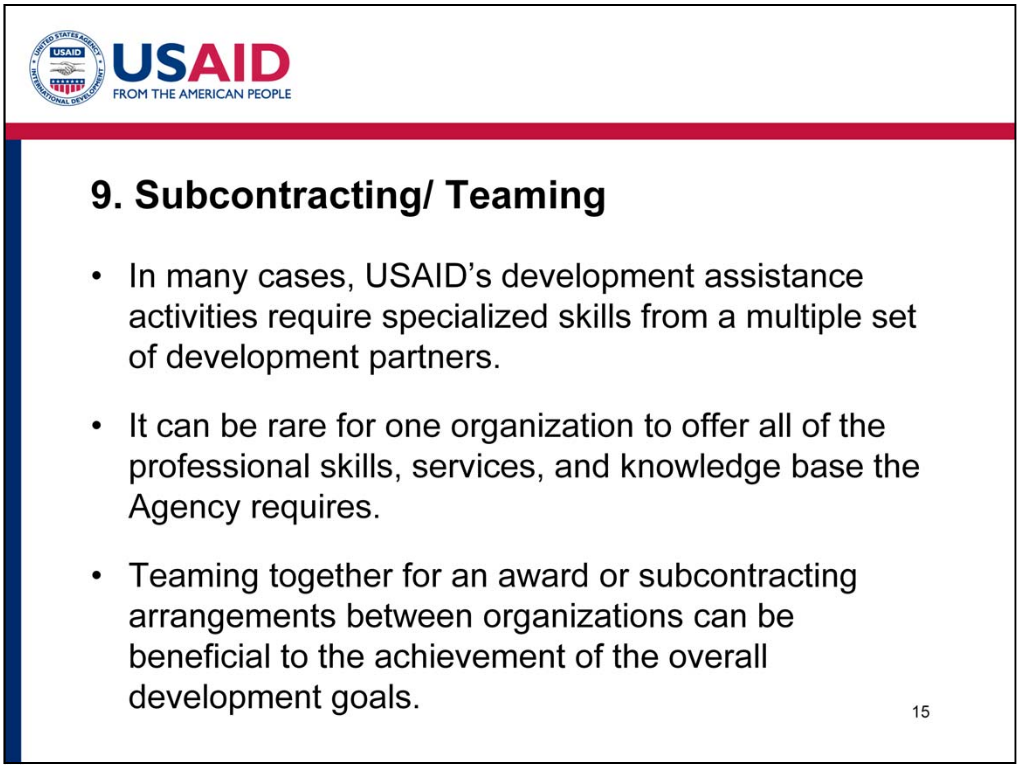
For more information see the E-Modules on "Budgeting" which cover this subject in greater detail.



Best Practice #8: Think Carefully About Writers

Make writing assignments among your staff

- As you have the capacity, it may be helpful to divide draft assignments among staff for efficiency.
- Regardless of the number of writers, be sure that your solicitation response has a cohesive voice and flow.
- Involve as many knowledgeable people as possible in meetings to discuss the solicitation response, agree on objectives, and come up with a detailed content outline.
- *Be very strict about deadlines for drafts.*



Best Practice #9: Subcontracting or Teaming

In many cases, USAID's development assistance activities require specialized skills from a multiple set of development partners.

It can be rare for one organization to offer all of the professional skills, services, and knowledge base that USAID requires.

Teaming together for an award or subcontracting arrangements between organizations can be beneficial to the achievement of the overall development goals.

In addition to better meeting the development goals of the solicitation, subcontracting or partnering with other organizations may be a helpful first step to partnering with USAID. It allows you to become familiar with USAID processes and build past performance experience. You may find it easier to then graduate to applying for an award solicitation as a lead in the future.

Best Practice #10: Check the Solicitation's Requirements

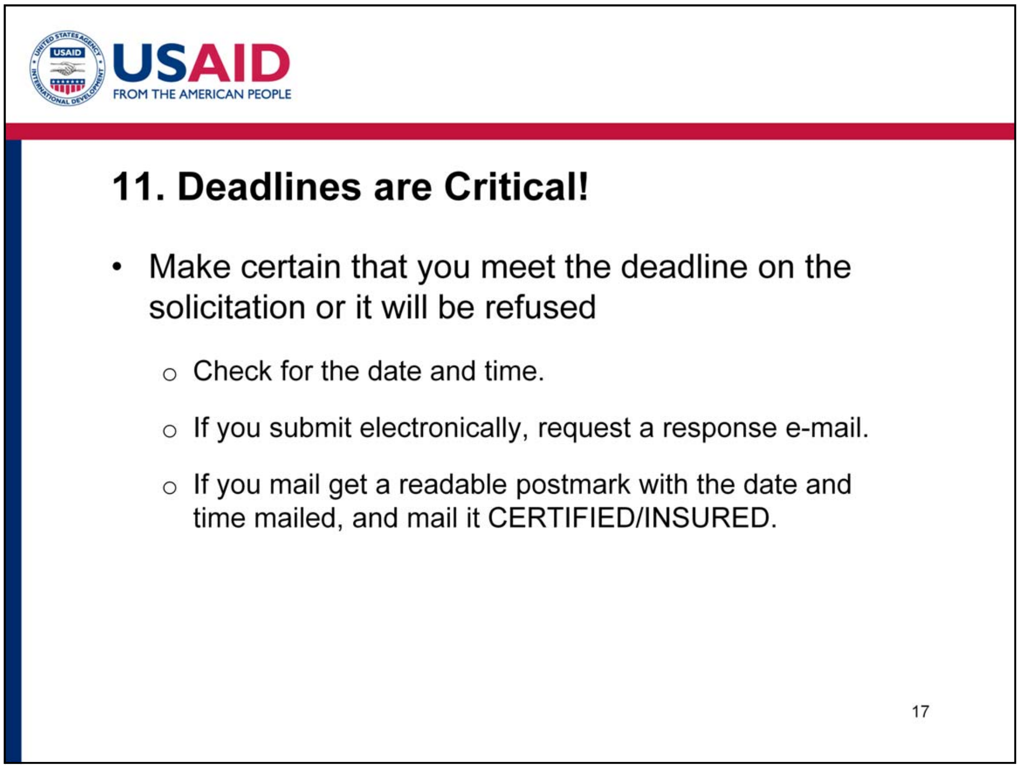
If I haven't stressed this enough already, be sure to follow the solicitation's requirements!

Prepare your solicitation response for submission well ahead so you don't get caught on the last day by email problems, a broken copier or sick staff.

Go over the completed solicitation response, from cover letter to your attachments, very carefully, and be sure all the solicitation requirements are met.

For example, if the solicitation says to mark the proposal in a certain way, or include an original signed copy, or say separately package the technical cost proposals, be sure to meet all of these requirements.

Create a checklist of key items, review it and then check them off!



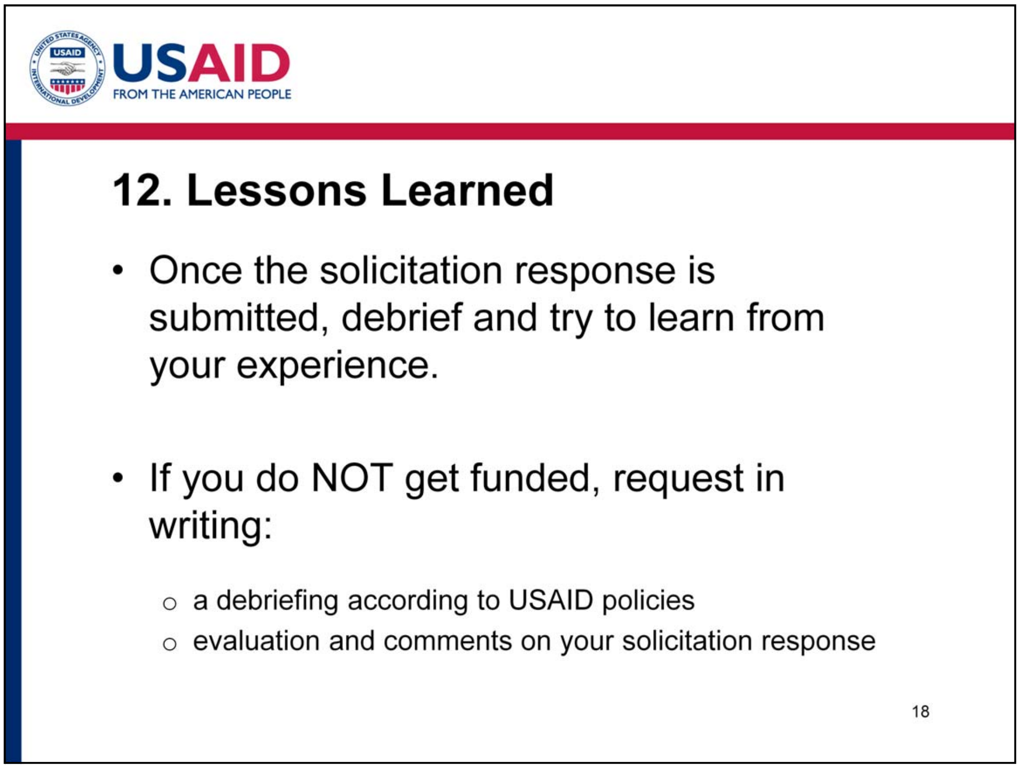
Best Practice #11: Deadlines are Critical

Make certain that you meet the deadline on the solicitation or it will be refused.

Check for the date and time and make sure you take into account international time or differences in time zone.

If you submit electronically, request a response e-mail to acknowledge the receipt of your solicitation.

And finally, if you mail in your solicitation response, get a readable postmark with the date and time mailed, and mail it certified or insured.



The last best practice is “Lessons Learned.”

Once the proposal is submitted, debrief and try to learn from your experience. Staff should talk about the “good, the bad, and the ugly…” and how to maximize or minimize them in the future.

If you do NOT get funded, request in writing a debriefing or the evaluation and comments on your solicitation response.

USAID is required to provide such information either in a meeting or in writing. It will help you do better the next time you want to respond to a solicitation.

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2. Parts of a Solicitation Response

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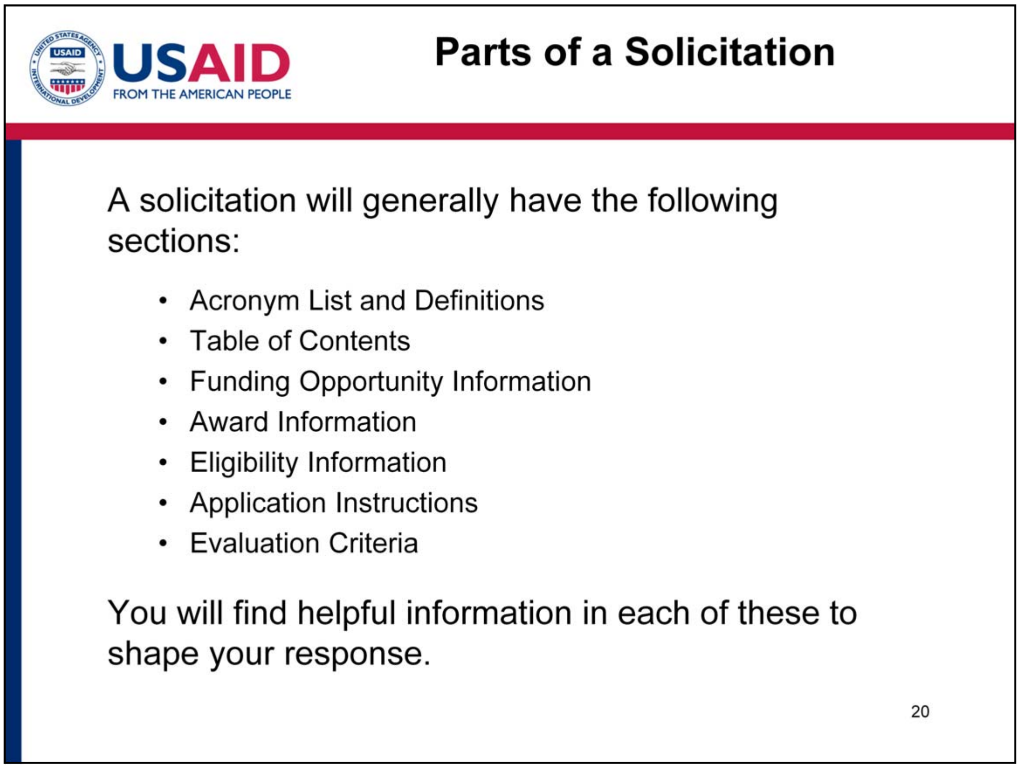
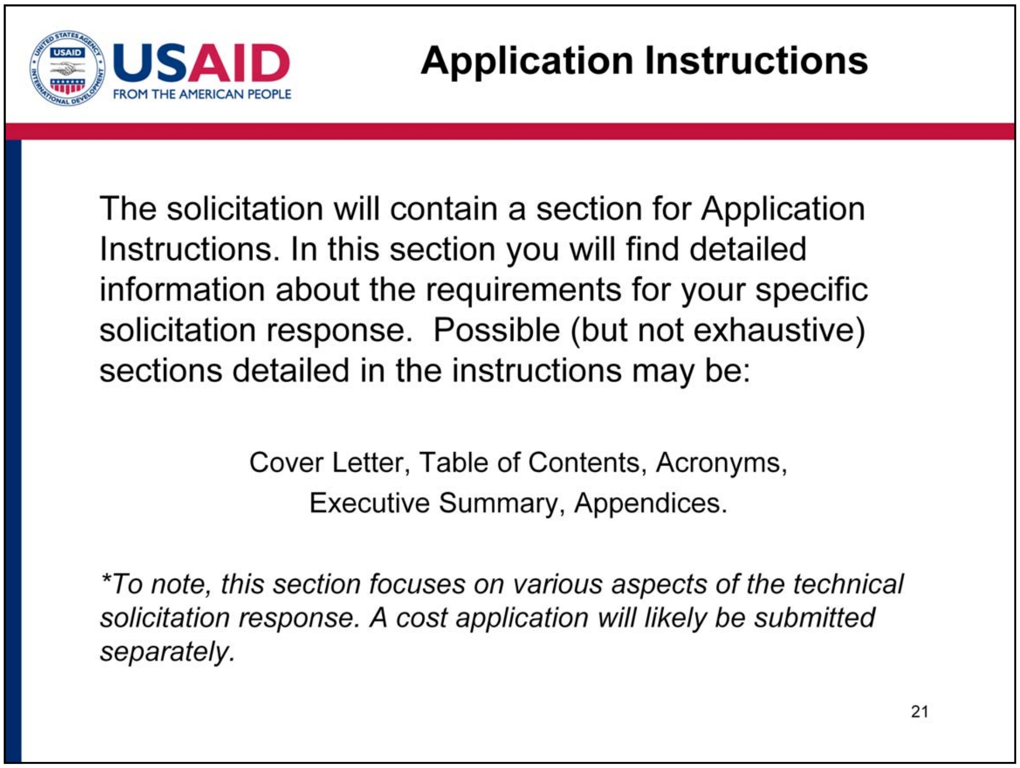
Part 2. Parts of a Solicitation Response



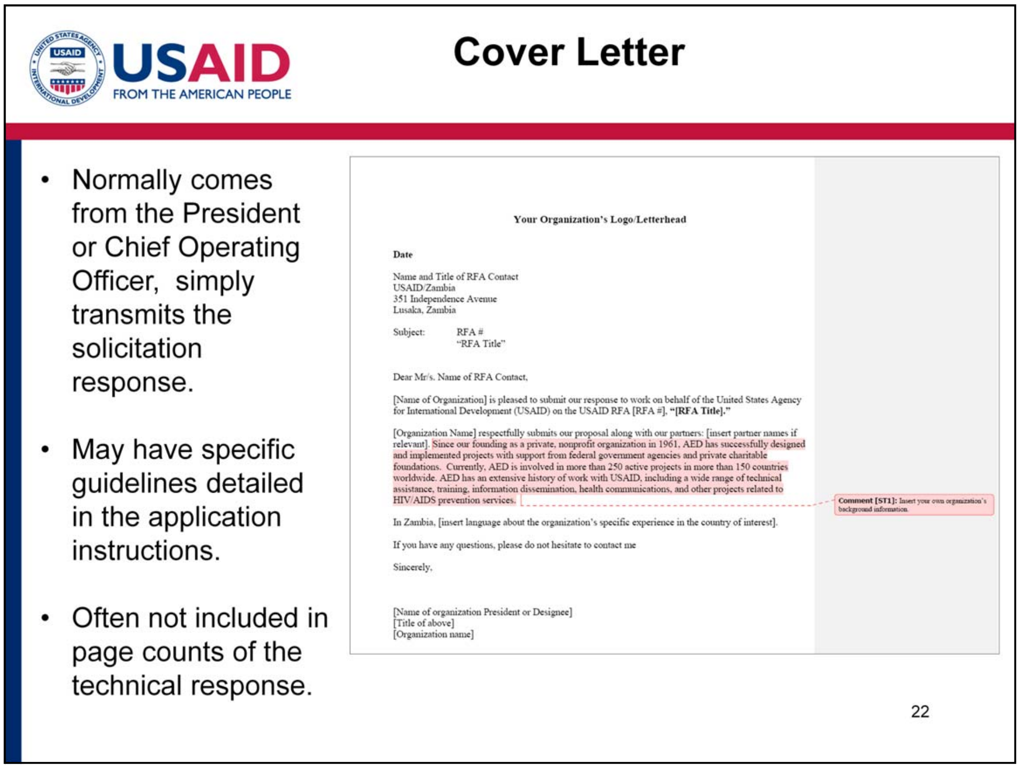
A USAID solicitation for funding will generally have the following sections listed below; though they may have different versions of these types of section headings. You will find helpful information in each of these sections of the solicitation that can help shape your response, such as award information and eligibility information. In this particular section of the e-module we will primarily focus on the solicitation response instructions typically found in a section titled "Application Instructions"



As mentioned, USAID solicitation's will contain a section for Application Instructions. In the application instructions section you will find detailed information about the requirements for your specific solicitation response. Possible sections to be detailed in these instructions may be:

- Cover Letter
- Table of Contents
- Acronyms
- Executive Summary
- Appendices

**To note, the majority of these application instructions will fall within the technical response section of your solicitation response. There will likely also be a cost application, which is the budget and budget narrative. But those are covered in separate e-modules as mentioned before and usually even submitted under separate cover. The next section will primarily focus on this technical response including incorporating the application instructions. **



The first part of your solicitation response: the cover letter or transmittal letter.

On your screen you should see an example of a draft cover letter. This letter normally comes from the President or Chief Operating Officer, and it simply transmits the solicitation response.

The application instructions may have specific guidelines for the cover letter including length.

Often this letter is not included in the total page count of the technical solicitation response.

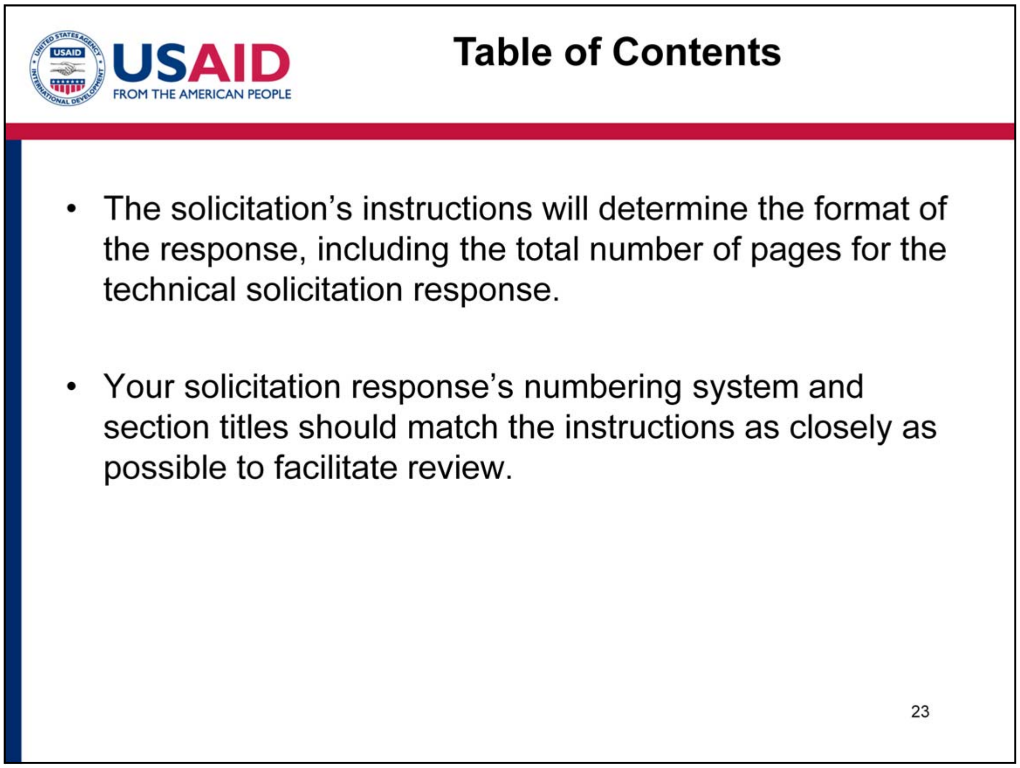
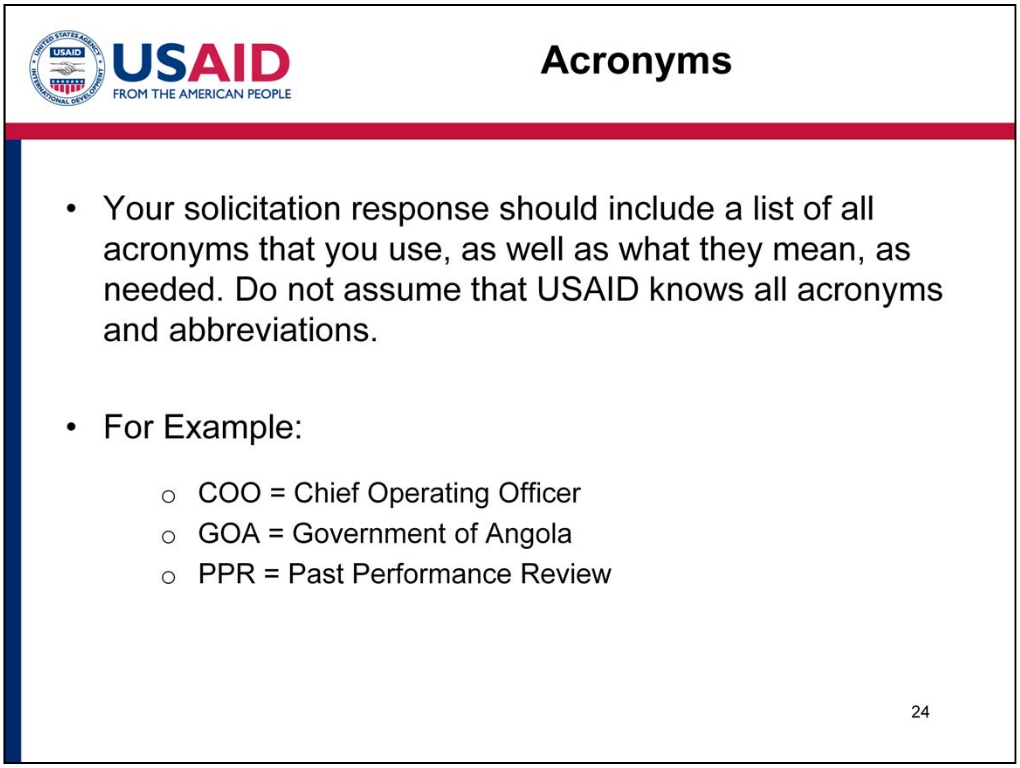


Table of Contents:

- The solicitations instructions will determine the format of the response, including the total number of pages for the technical solicitation response and/or the total number of pages per section.

- Your solicitation response's numbering system and section titles should match the instructions as closely as possible to facilitate review.

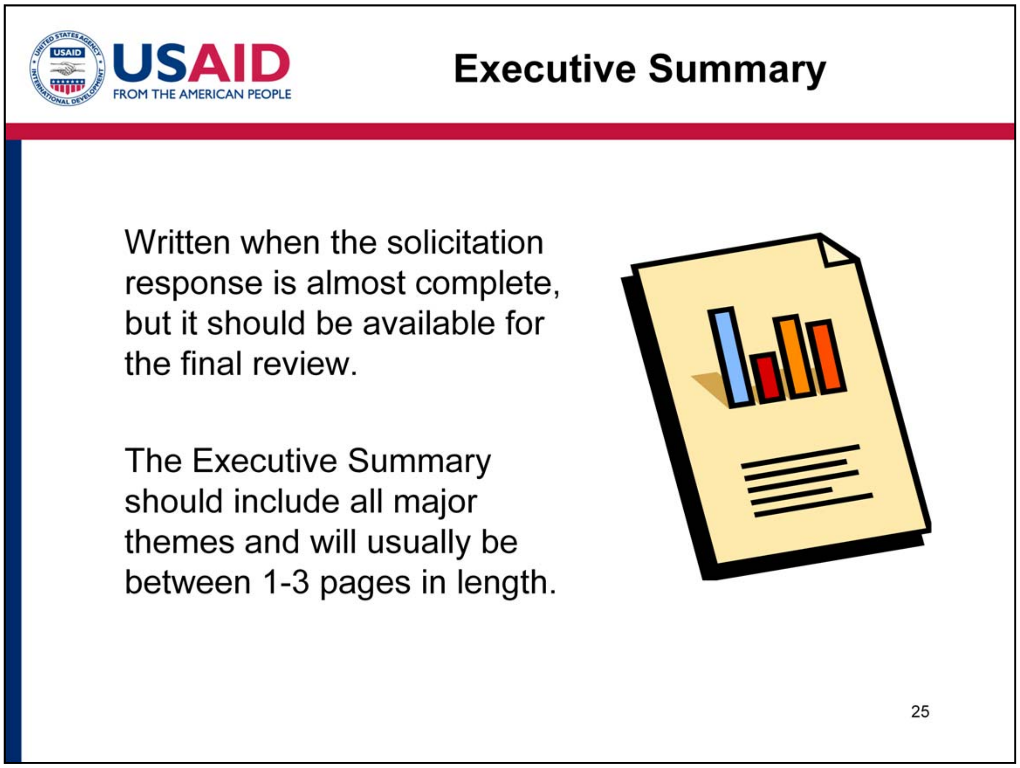
- You must adhere to page limits.



List of Acronyms:

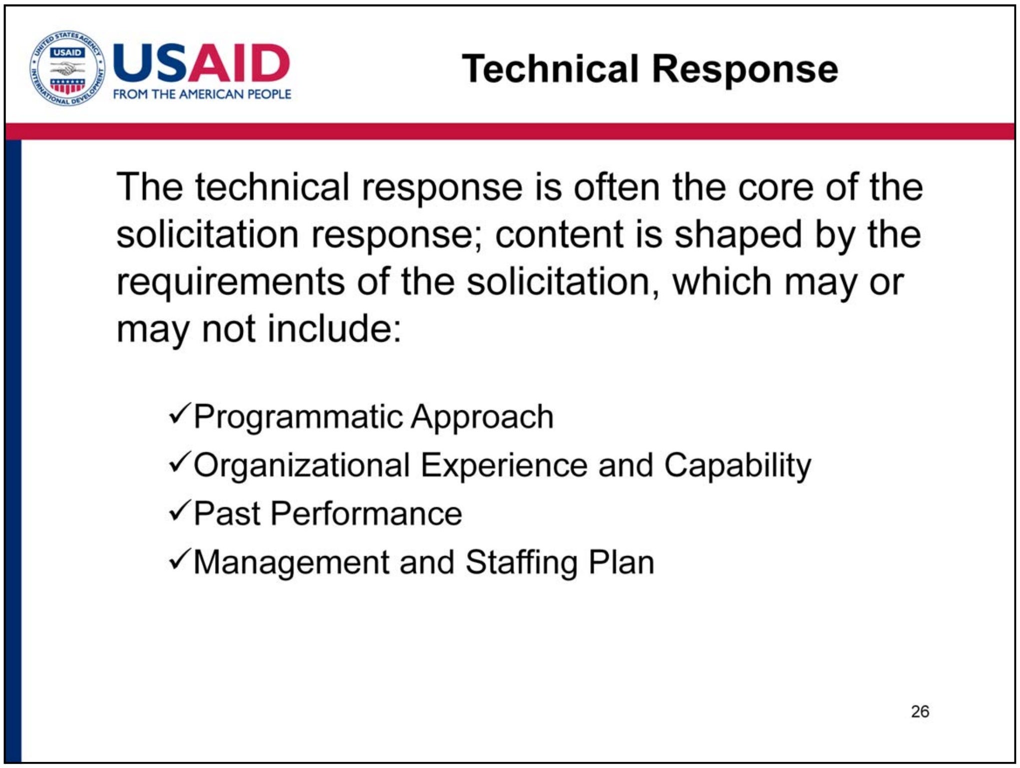
As needed, your solicitation response should include a list of all acronyms that you use, as well as what they mean. Do not assume that USAID knows all acronyms and abbreviations.

For example, be sure to spell out that GOA in your solicitation response stand for Government of Angola.



Executive Summary:

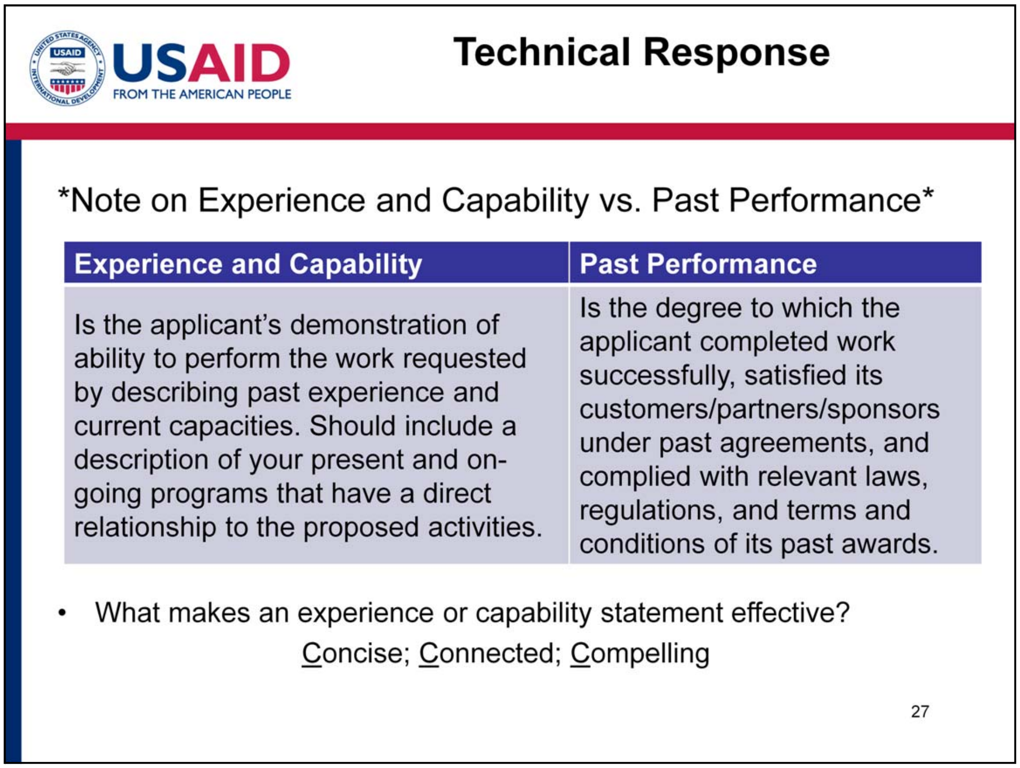
The executive summary should be written when the solicitation response is almost complete, but it should also be available for your organization's final review of your solicitation response. The executive summary should include all major themes and will usually be between 1-3 pages in length. The page limits are often outlined in the application instructions listed in the solicitation.



Technical Response:

This is the core of the solicitation response and the content is shaped by the requirements and instructions of the solicitation. This may or may not include content such as: your programmatic approach, organizational experience and capability, past performance and management and staffing plans.

I will talk about various aspects of the technical response in the following slides, including sharing examples of templates your organization can use to demonstrate your experience and past performance.



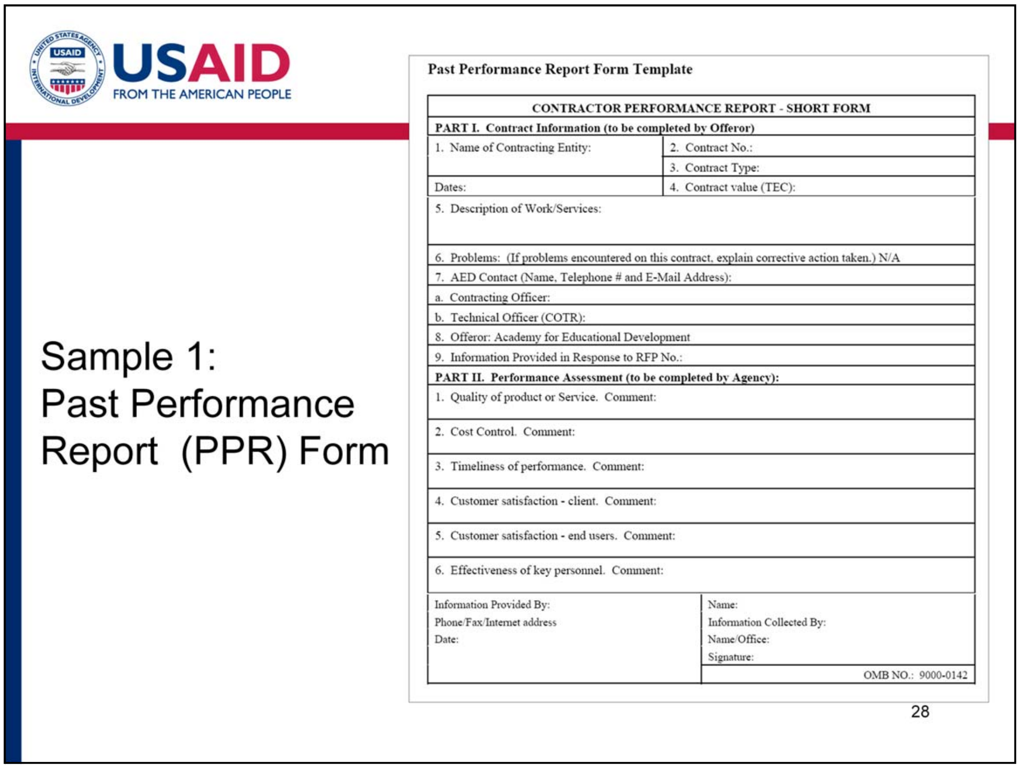
An important note to highlight is the difference between organizational experience and capability and past performance. This can sometimes be a little confusing and some solicitations may not clearly distinguish the difference between the two; however, in general USAID solicitations differentiate the two categories in the following ways:

Experience and capability refers to the applicant's demonstration of ability to perform the work requested by describing past experience and current capacities. This should include a description of your present and on-going programs that have a direct relationship to the proposed activities under the solicitation.

In contrast, past performance is the demonstration of the degree to which the application completed work successfully, satisfied its customers, partners, and sponsors under past agreements, and complied with relevant laws, regulations, and terms and conditions of its past awards.

These aspects of a technical response can be presented in a variety of formats, through narrative writing, charts, bulleted lists and more. I will share some of those examples of those formats in the next few slides.

Helpful advice for your experience and capability statements, no matter the format, is to ensure that they are concise, connected and compelling.



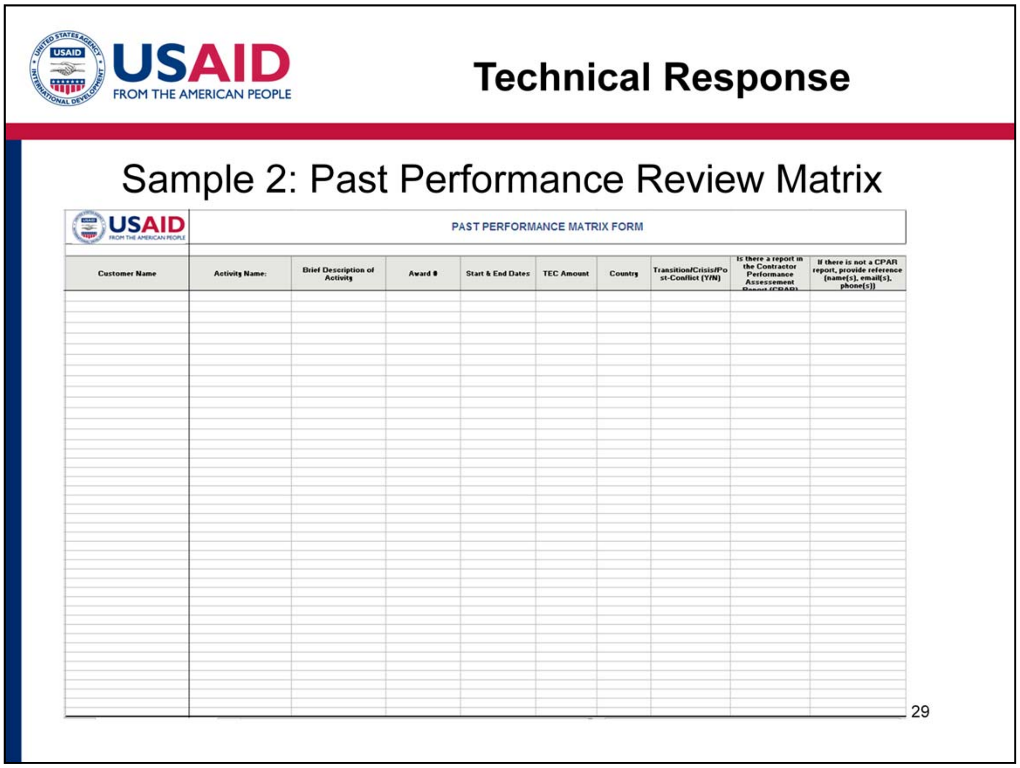
Past Performance Report Form Template

CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE REPORT - SHORT FORM	
PART I. Contract Information (to be completed by Offeror)	
1. Name of Contracting Entity:	2. Contract No.:
	3. Contract Type:
Dates:	4. Contract value (TEC):
5. Description of Work/Services:	
6. Problems: (If problems encountered on this contract, explain corrective action taken.) N/A	
7. AED Contact (Name, Telephone # and E-Mail Address):	
a. Contracting Officer:	
b. Technical Officer (COTR):	
8. Offeror: Academy for Educational Development	
9. Information Provided in Response to RFP No.:	
PART II. Performance Assessment (to be completed by Agency):	
1. Quality of product or Service. Comment:	
2. Cost Control. Comment:	
3. Timeliness of performance. Comment:	
4. Customer satisfaction - client. Comment:	
5. Customer satisfaction - end users. Comment:	
6. Effectiveness of key personnel. Comment:	
Information Provided By: Phone/Fax/Internet address Date:	Name: Information Collected By: Name/Office: Signature:
	OMB NO.: 9000-0142

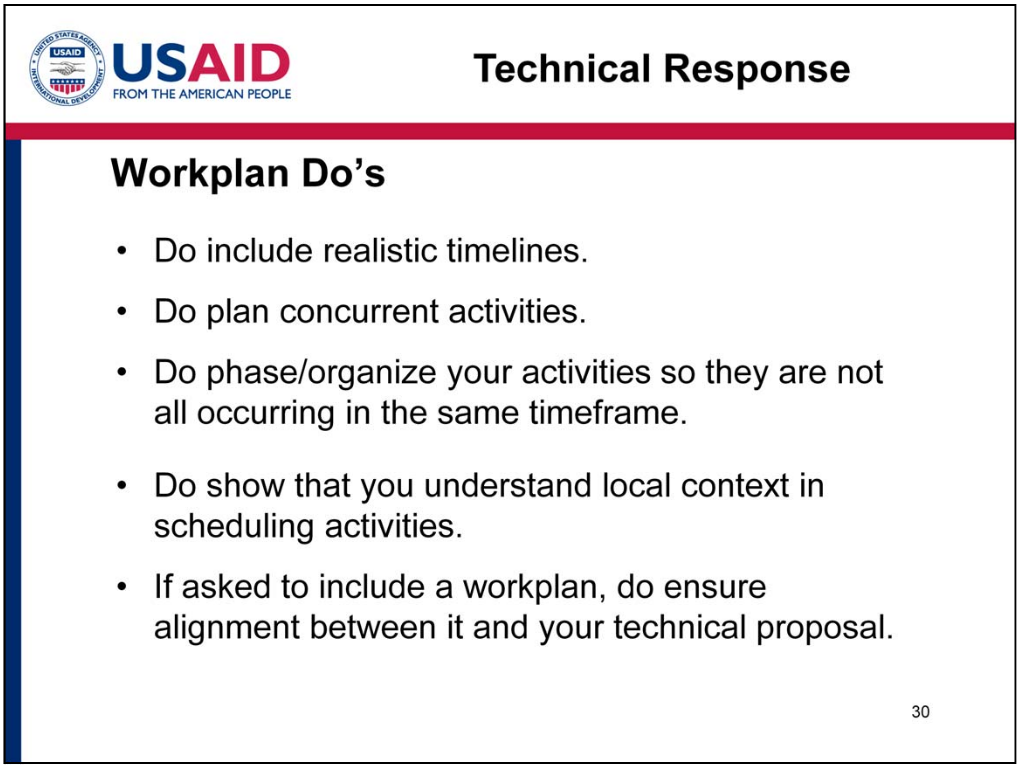
Here is the first sample option to demonstrate your past performance.

This is a past performance report form. Note that these outlines are meant to be helpful templates for your organizations but are not required.

Be sure to use a format that works best for your organization. You can download a copy of these formats at the end of the e-module and also by clicking on the attachments tab in the upper right hand corner of your screen.

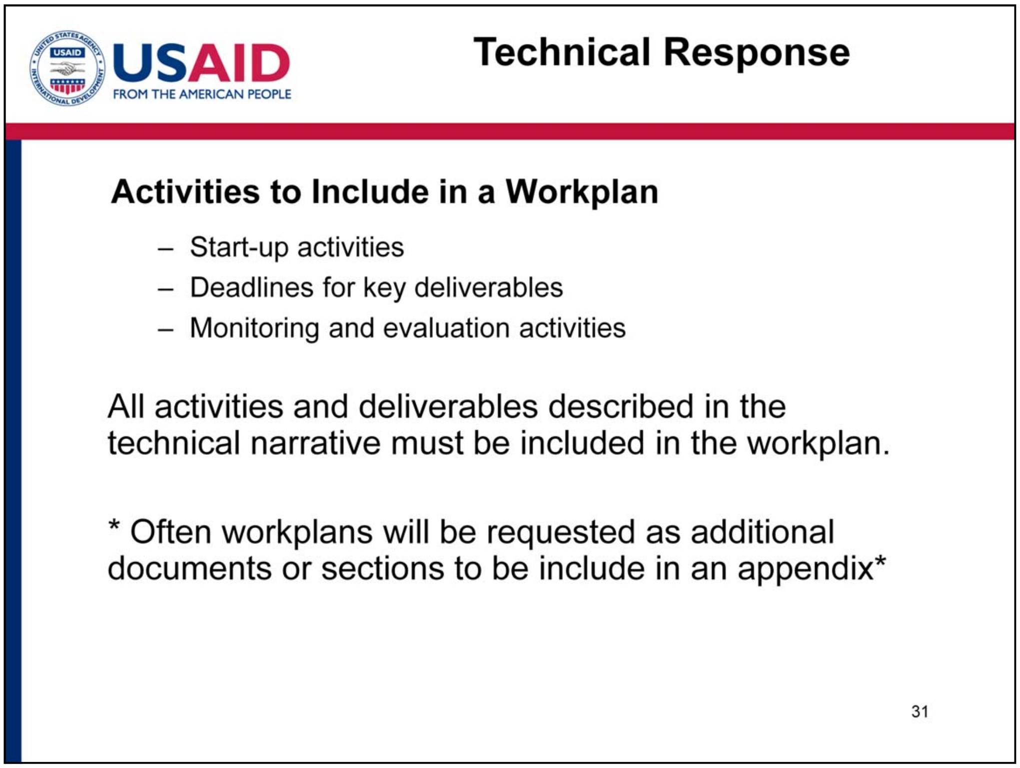


Pictured here is a recently updated version of a past performance review matrix. This is a spreadsheet format as opposed to the report template from the previous slide.



Another component in a technical response may be a workplan. Here are some workplan do's:

- Do include realistic timelines.
- Do plan concurrent activities. This demonstrates that you can plan multiple activities simultaneously and can effectively manage time and resources. Do phase or organize your activities so they are not all occurring in the same timeframe.
- Do show that you understand local context in scheduling activities. For example, consider holidays, elections, school terms, rainy seasons, even the World Cup.
- And do ensure that there is alignment between your workplan, your technical response and your budget.



Activities to include in a workplan:

Consider including start-up activities such as office logistics, staff recruitment and orientation. Also, think about deadlines for key deliverables requested in the solicitation. This might include quarterly reports or branding and marking plans. Finally consider monitoring and evaluation activities such as site visits, data quality audits, reporting and evaluations.

All activities and deliverables described in your technical narrative must be included in the workplan.

You can include sub-activities if needed, depending on the level of detail requested in the solicitation.

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Technical Response

Formats for Workplans: Sample 1

Activity	Year 1 (months)												Year 2 (quarters)				Year 3 (quarters)				Year 4 (quarters)				Year 5 (quarters)			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Start-up Activities																												
Objective 1																												

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I will now show you sample workplans for your consideration. Again none of these workplans are required but are here as a reference for your use. Be sure to use the work plan that best represents your organization. This first sample workplan focuses on deadlines and the timing of deliverables for activities.

Technical Response

Formats for Workplans: Sample 2

Activity Title	Activity Details	Responsible (Implementer)	Indicator & Targets	Time frame	Budget inputs
Objective 1:					
Activity 1.					
Activity 2.					
Activity 3.					
Activity 4.					
Activity 5.					
Objective :					
Activity 1.					
Activity 2.					
Activity 3.					
Activity 4.					
Activity 5.					

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This second format of a sample workplan focuses less on the timing of your activities and more on the specific details.

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Technical Response

Formats for Workplans: Sample 3

			Year 1 (by quarter)				Year 2 (by quarter)				Year 3 (by quarter)							
Activity	Outcomes	Impact	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	Gender	Disadvantaged communities	Alliance|partner involvement	Sustainability
MOBILIZATION PLAN																		
ANNUAL WORKPLAN (FOR THREE YEARS)																		
Expected Result 1: Reaching MARP with a Core Set of Interventions to Reduce HIV Transmission.																		
Expected Result 2: Local MARP-led Organizations Capable of Implementing Evidence-based Integrated HIV Interventions for MSM, SW and their Clients.																		
Expected Result 3: Improved Enabling Environment and Program Learning for MARP-led Advocacy, Networking and Collaboration with GRN and Stakeholders																		

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This third sample workplan gives you the opportunity to spell out your activities in outcomes and impacts and measure them in quarters on a yearly scale.

Technical Response

Formats for Workplans: Sample 4 (Gantt Chart)

Activity	Year 1 (months)												Year 2 (quarters)				Year 3 (quarters)				Year 4 (quarters)				Year 5 (quarters)			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Start-up Activities																												
Objective 1																												
Objective 2																												
Objective 3																												
Monitoring and Evaluation																												

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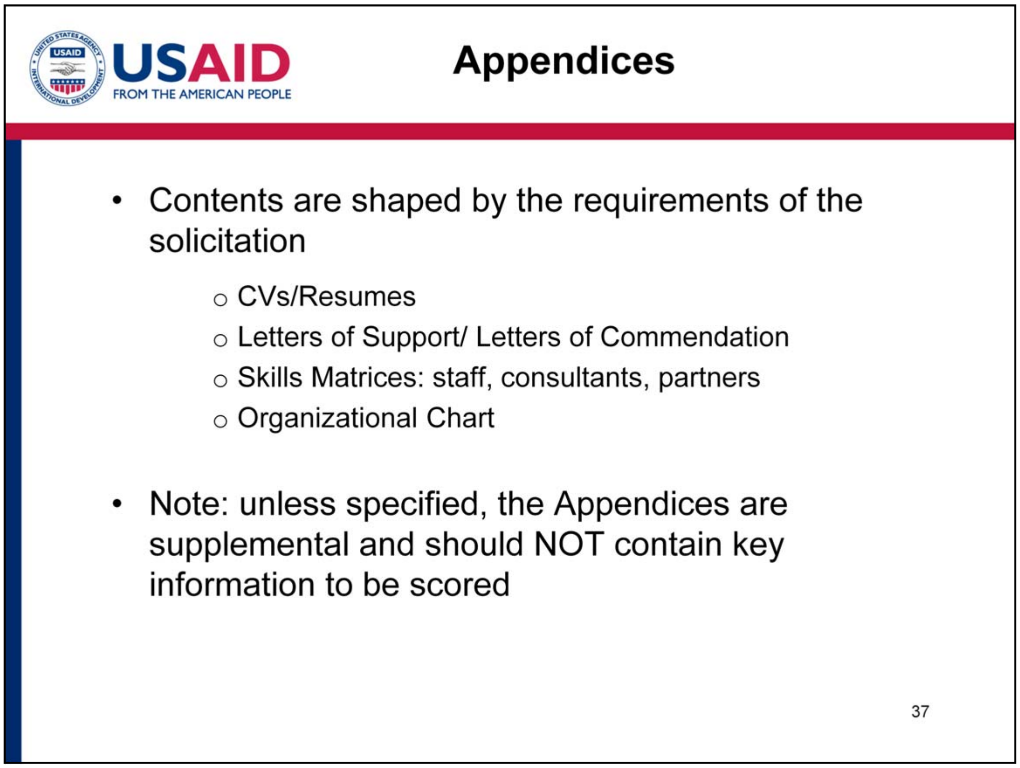
This final sample is a specific type of workplan called a Gantt Chart. All of these workplan formats will be available for download through the attachments tab.

Appendices:

Appendices differ for each solicitation response and should be carefully reviewed each time.

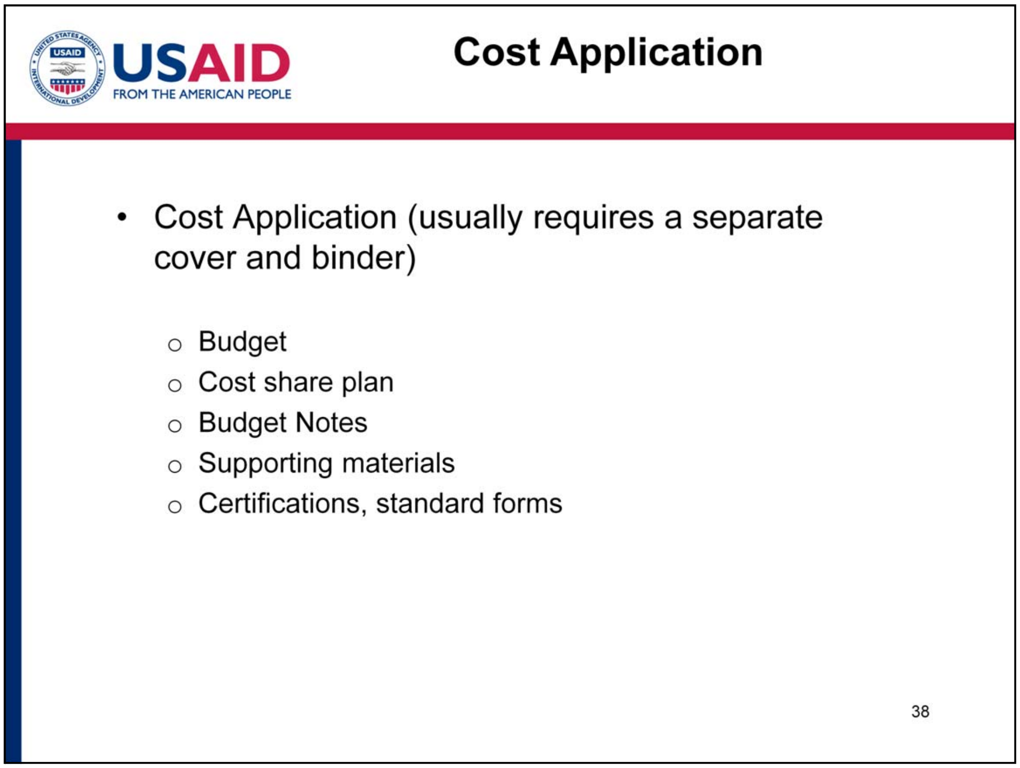
There is no “right” way to complete appendices, however, the following guidelines should always apply: Be consistent, be accurate and always present yourself professionally.

While you want to make sure and include helpful additions, don't overwhelm the reviewer with unnecessary information.



Contents of the appendices are often shaped by the requirements of the solicitation. Some of the materials requested may include: CVs/Resumes; letters of support/letters of commendation; skills matrices of staff, consultants, partners; and an organizational chart.

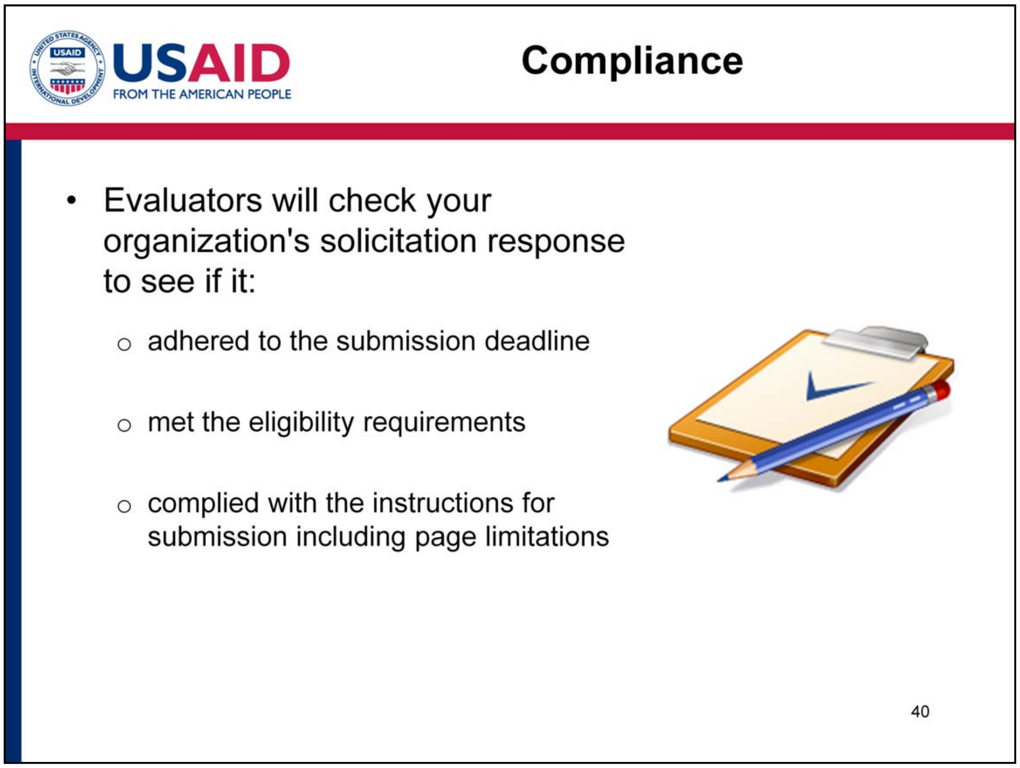
To note: unless specified, the appendices are supplemental and should NOT contain key information to be scored.



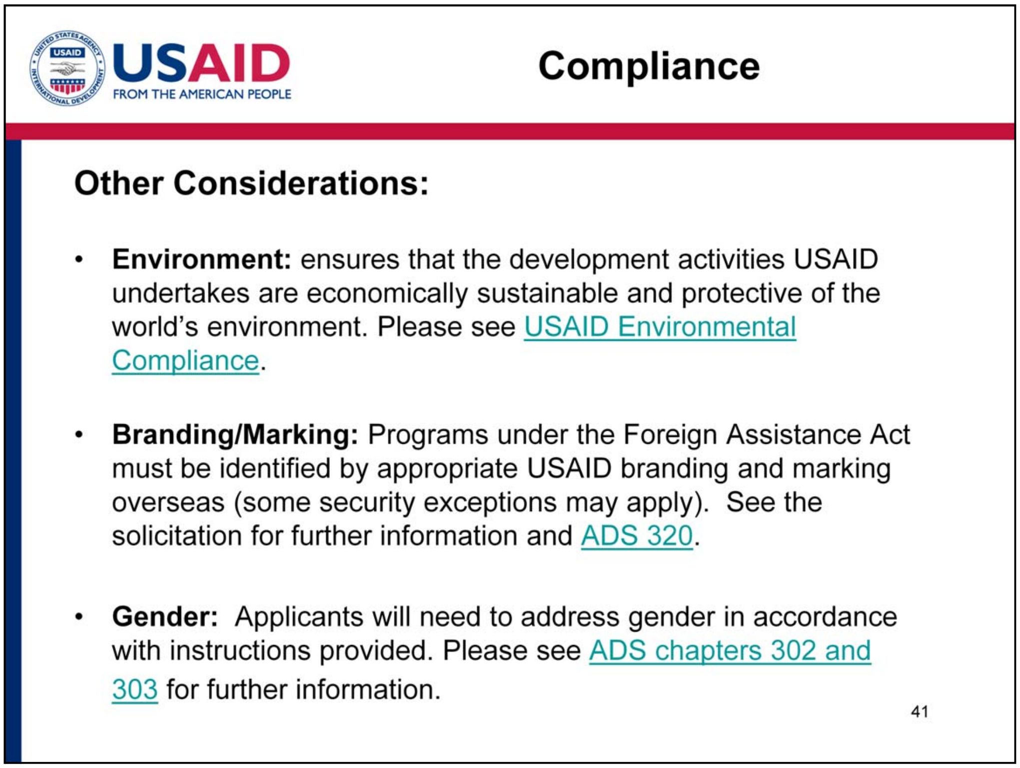
The final part of a solicitation response may include a cost application. This usually requires a separate submission under a different cover from the rest of the technical response. Included in the cost application may be a budget, cost share plan, budget notes, supporting materials, and certifications and standard forms.

We know that this is a complex topic and there will be two different e-modules dedicated to budgeting. Please refer back to our training section for those e-modules.

Part 3: Solicitation Response Review Process



One of the first and most basic steps in a solicitation response review process will be a compliance check. Evaluators will check your organization's solicitation response to see if it: (1) adhered to submission deadline; (2) met the eligibility requirements; and (3) complied with the instructions for submission including page limitations; **pages beyond the limit will not evaluated.**



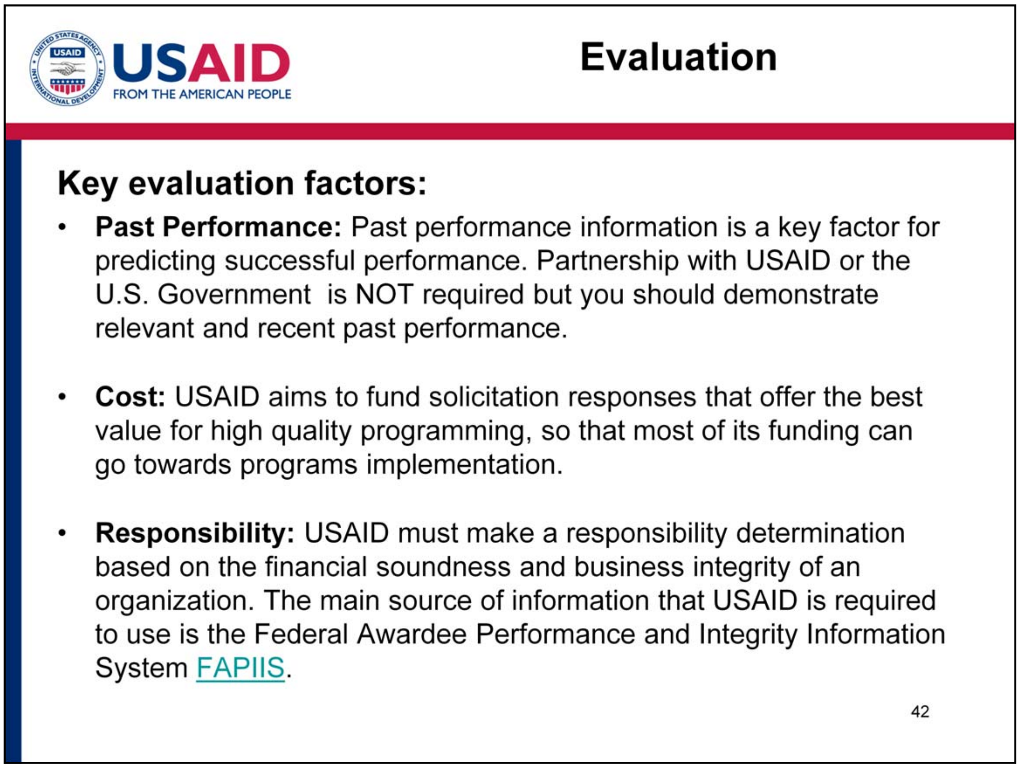
Other compliance considerations may include the environment, branding/marking and gender.

Environment ensures that the development activities that USAID undertakes are economically sustainable and protective of the world's environment.

For branding and marking, it's noted that program under the Foreign Assistance Act must be identified by appropriate USAID branding and marking overseas (some security exceptions may apply).

Finally for gender, applicants will need to address gender in accordance with instructions provided.

Please see the links on this page for further information on each of these topics.

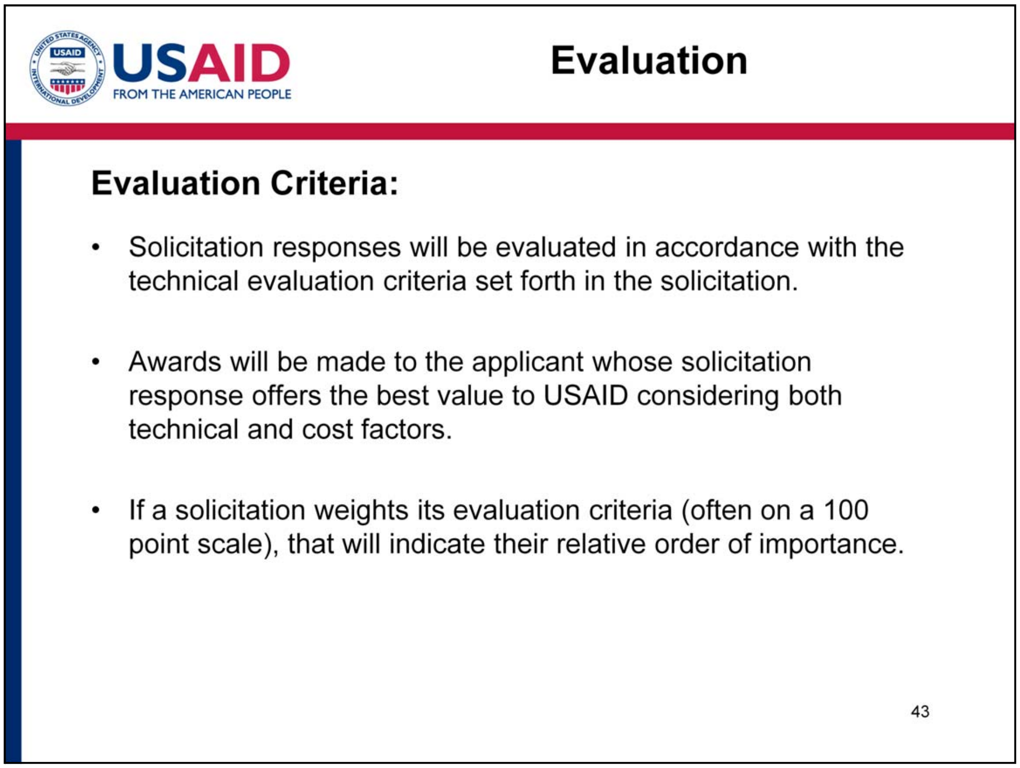


Key Evaluation Factors:

One key evaluation factor is past performance. Past performance information is a key factor for predicting successful performance. So your organization will want to ensure that they have relevant and recent past performance. If you are new to doing business with USAID or the federal government, your organization can still submit performance information that is not necessarily government work.

Another key evaluation factor is cost. USAID aims to fund solicitation responses that offer the best value for high quality programming, so that most of its funding can go towards program implementation. Please keep this in mind in preparing your solicitation responses.

Final key evaluation factor will be responsibility. USAID must make a responsibility determination based on the financial soundness and business integrity of an organization. The main source of information that USAID is required to use is the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System FAPIIS. You can find more at the following link. If a USAID Contracting or Agreement Officer cannot make a positive pre-award responsibility determination, they may undertake a formal selection survey involving a pre-award audit of your organization. Again this information can be found in the link provided.



Evaluation Criteria:

Solicitation responses will be evaluated in accordance with the technical evaluation criteria set forth in the solicitation.

Awards will be made to the applicant whose solicitation response offers the best value to USAID considering both technical and cost factors.

If a solicitation weights its evaluation criteria, and if it’s weighted it is often on a 100 point scale, that will indicate their relative order of importance so that applicants will know which areas require emphasis in the preparation of the solicitation response.

USAID
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Evaluation

Sample Weighted Evaluation Criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Max Points	
1. Technical Approach		**60**
1.1 Management and Capacity	10	
1.2 Partnerships	10	
1.3 Project Description	40	
2. Cost		**15**
2.1 Cost-Realism	10	
2.2 Cost-Effectiveness	5	
3. Past Performance		**15**
4. Sustainability		**10**
TOTAL		**100**

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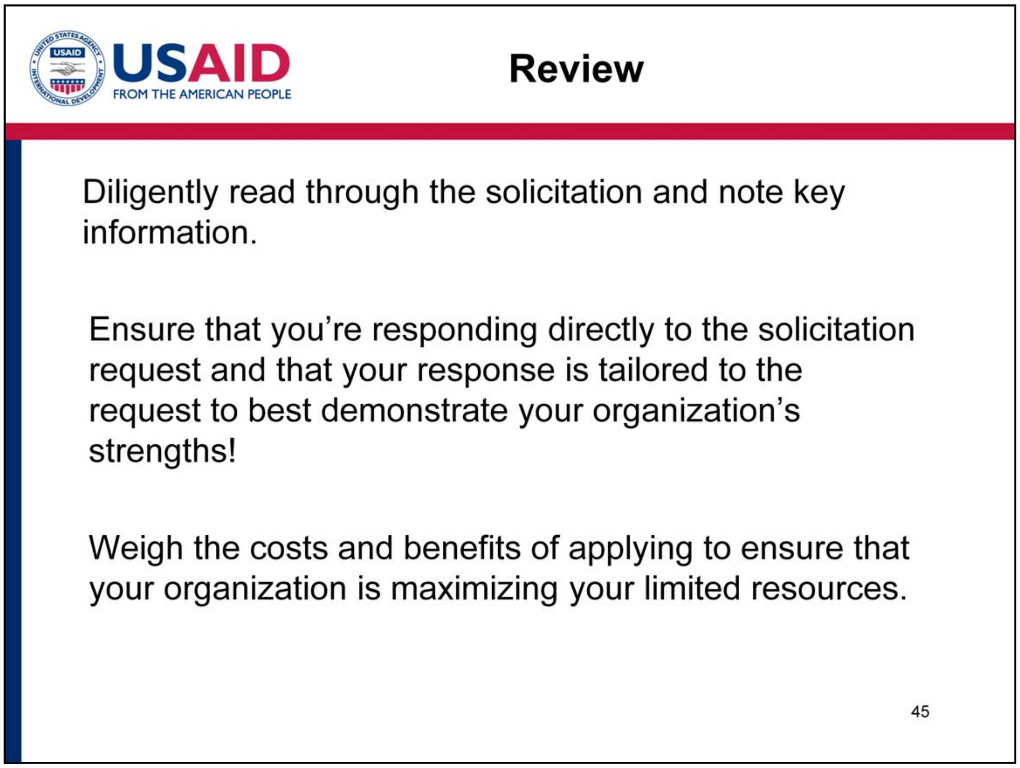
Here is an example of weighted evaluation criteria as laid out in a fictional solicitation. You can see that the four main categories on which the solicitation response will be evaluated are technical approach, cost, past performance and sustainability.

The first evaluation criteria, technical approach, is the most important and will carry the most weight in the evaluation process. This is clearly noted by the 60 point max value. On the scale of 100 total possible points, that means your technical approach will comprise 60% of your overall score in the evaluation process.

The second two factors, cost and past performance, are weighted at 15 points each and thus are equivalent to each other in importance. The final criteria is sustainability for 10 points.

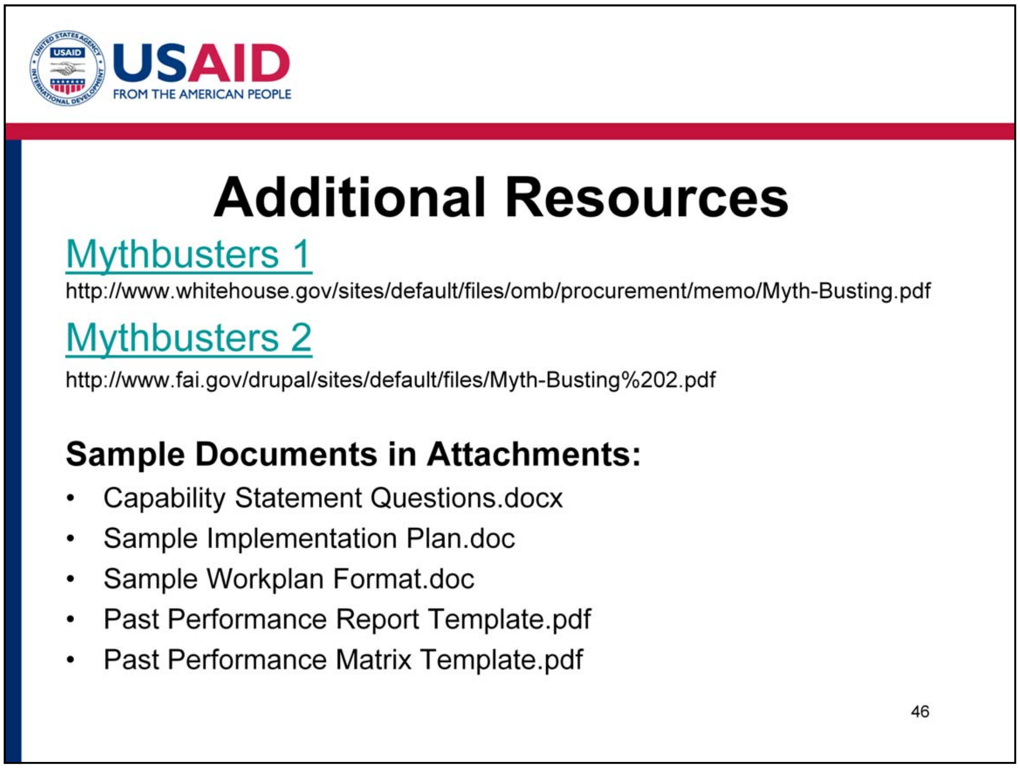
Again, this is a sample to demonstrate what a potential weighted criteria may look like and is not reflective of all solicitations. Be sure to read the solicitation and its evaluation criteria very carefully for specific information.



You've reached the end of the e-module and I wanted to review some of the topics covered today.
First, diligently read through the solicitation and note key information. This makes sure your solicitation response is well crafted and follows solicitation instructions. Some of the biggest blunders that make it hard to review a solicitation response are some of the easiest things to fix. Those include following instructions on page limits and outline headings, as well as double checking that your organization actually meets the eligibility requirements to apply. In addition, note the evaluation criteria and any weighted factors that are listed to be sure you are focusing your efforts on those areas.

Beyond the compliance measures of a solicitation response, be sure that your response is tailored to the award solicitation for which you are applying. For example, submitting your organization's 5 year plan for your overall vaccination work in all of sub-Saharan Africa in response to a specific solicitation request for polio vaccinations to children in Nigeria is **not** a tailored response. You are providing more information than the reviewer needs and likely not going to get into enough detail on the specific program request. One-size applications do not fit all.

One final note, we know that preparing a solicitation response requires a lot of staff and organizational resources. This e-module does not guarantee winning a solicitation award, but it is our hope that by completing this e-module you have a better understanding of the solicitation response process and will have picked up some best practices in order to maximize your time and work investment into preparing a response. On behalf of USAID, thank for you your interest in partnering with us and best of luck.



Some additional resources you may find helpful are mythbuster documents drafted by the White House Office of Management and Budget in response to some procurement questions and concerns.

Cumulative Knowledge Check!

The following questions will check how well you have understood the content in this e-module.

Instructions: Read each question carefully and select your answer before clicking “submit” and moving on to the next question.

After you have finished all of the questions, click “finish” to proceed to your results. After reviewing your results, you may decide if you have an adequate understanding of the content of this e-module.

Knowledge Check: Cummulative Review

Question 1

Looking at the following sample, select the evaluation criteria factor that carries the greatest weight in the solicitation response review process.

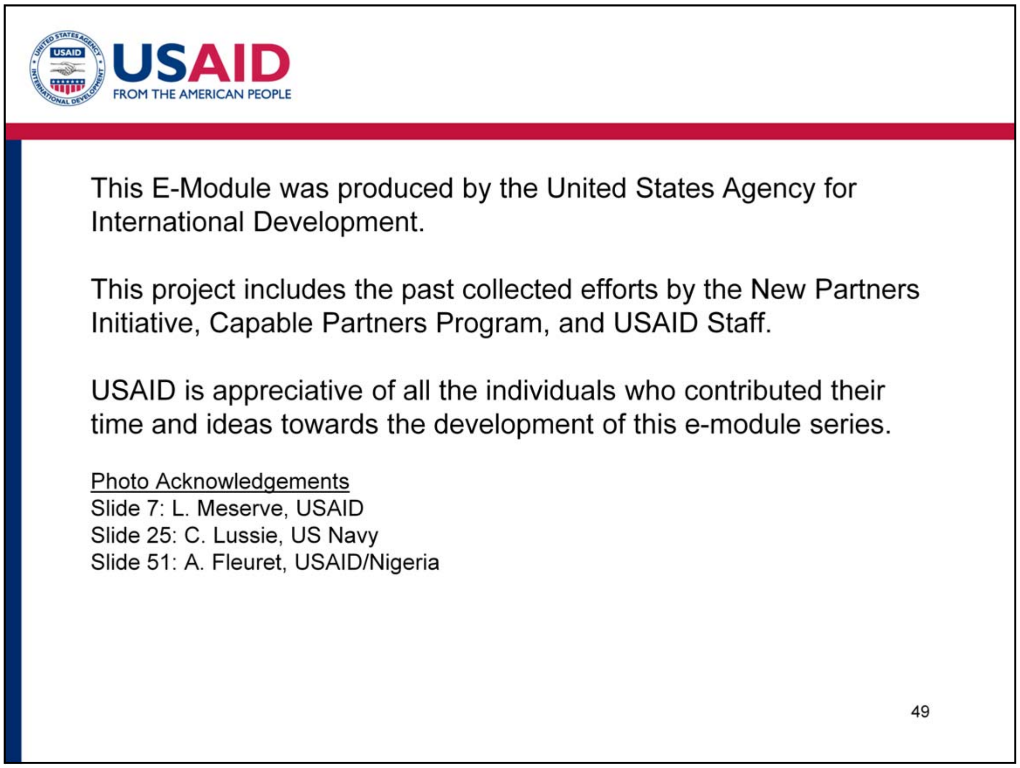
Evaluation Criteria		Max Points
1. Technical Approach		**60**
1.1 Management and Capacity	10	
1.2 Partnerships	10	
1.3 Project Description	40	
2. Cost		**15**
2.1 Cost-Realism	10	
2.2 Cost-Effectiveness	5	
3. Past Performance		**15**
4. Sustainability		**10**
TOTAL		100

PROPERTIES

On passing, 'Finish' button: Goes to Next Slide
On failing, 'Finish' button: Goes to Next Slide
Allow user to leave quiz: At any time
User may view slides after quiz: At any time
User may attempt quiz: Unlimited times

Properties...

Edit in Quizmaker



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USAID is appreciative of all the individuals who contributed their time and ideas towards the development of this e-module series.