

Position Description

Acquisition and Assistance Specialist (Full Performance Level)

BASIC FUNCTION OF POSITION

The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist (Full Performance Level/FPL) is located in the Regional/Mission Office of Acquisition and Assistance. The function of the Office is to provide Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) support to Technical Offices and Development Objective (DO) Teams in the Mission, and in any Offices that may be supported by the Mission. The primary purpose of this position is to support the cognizant Mission Contracting/Agreement Officer (CO/AO), by performing a variety of A&A duties including, writing grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and other procurement instruments, and preparing amendments/modifications to procurement instruments in support of the Mission. The Specialist reviews and recommends approval or revision of requisitions in the Global Acquisition and Assistance System (GLAAS); reviews and recommends approval or revision of statements of work (SOW); drafts requests for proposal or quotations; performs cost and price analysis; analyzes proposals or quotes received; drafts contracts and contract modifications; analyzes budgets; recommends special contract requirements; writes Memoranda of Negotiation; and, prepares other required documentation. The Specialist maintains up-to-date contract files and records, manages Contractor Performance Assessment Reports (CPARs), and supports award closeouts. The Specialist provides guidance to supported Teams related to award modifications. This is a Standard Position Description covering A&A Ladder positions worldwide. Contract "ladder" awards are typically made at a level below the full performance level, where the selected CCNPSC demonstrates high potential to achieve the full performance grade level, but cannot meet the full training and/or experience requirements of the full-performance position description at the time of award. The following Major Duties and Responsibilities are representative of the occupation and not a specific description of any one job.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Specialist (Full Performance Level/FPL) is responsible for providing professional level acquisition and assistance (A&A) support to Mission Technical Offices, DO Teams, and any designated regional clients. USAID programs are diverse and multi-sectoral. The Specialist is required to guide designated Technical Offices, and/or DO Teams, through acquisition and assistance processes to support a variety of activities. These activities are implemented through complex A&A mechanisms, including but not limited to purchase orders, competitively negotiated contracts, task orders, cooperative agreements, Interagency Agreements (IAA), and sole source or limited competition awards, requiring the Specialist to be expert with regard to the full range of USAID instruments. The Specialist coordinates the development of A&A objectives for assigned portfolios, taking primary responsibility for all phases of the A&A

process for complex actions. The Specialist performs complete A&A transactions for complex activities. The Specialist provides guidance and mentoring to junior-level staff, trainees, procurement technicians, and assistants on basic principles of USG and USAID acquisition, assistance, general A&A management, A&A policy direction, new/changed procurement policies, etc., as required. The Specialist is eligible for temporary duty (TDY) travel to the US, or to other Missions abroad, to participate in the "Foreign Service National" Fellowship Program, in accordance with USAID policy.

b. The Specialist (FPL) must fully understand the USG laws, regulations, policies and procedures governing each type of A&A mechanism, and to apply these requirements to make recommendations to the supervisor regarding the appropriate instrument type for the situation at hand. The Specialist works independently in the selection of the appropriate A&A instrument types to meet the Mission's needs, and accurately applies United States Government (USG) A&A laws, regulations, policies, and procedures governing each type of instrument. The Specialist has an advanced knowledge of the procedures for acquisition of goods, for managing personal services and non-personal services contracting actions, and managing and awarding assistance agreements.

c. The Specialist (FPL) performs his/her assignments independently, seeking the guidance of the Contracting/Agreement Officer (CO/AO) for the most complex activities. The Specialist works directly with technical specialists/activity managers in DO Teams throughout the Mission and/or the Region, assisting in the preparation of annual A&A plans, clear and concise statements of work/statements of objectives/program descriptions, etc., and supporting documentation. The Specialist provides well supported guidance to technical specialists/activity managers pertaining to their A&A-related responsibilities and procedures. Specific duties include:

i. Pre-Award Duties: The Specialist assists the Technical/DO Teams with A&A planning and advises on the selection of the appropriate A&A mechanisms to achieve program objectives. The Specialist collects and analyzes data, and prepares and updates tracking tools in order to monitor pending actions; works with clients to assist in the preparation of justifications, waivers, deviations, and other necessary approvals, as needed; and, reviews GLAAS Requisitions (REQs) for completeness and clarity before endorsing them to the CO/AO. The Specialist conducts pre-award activities for highly complex competitive solicitations, assisting technical personnel in the preparation of required descriptions of proposed activities, including SOWs, specifications, and program descriptions. The Specialist applies a high degree of judgment and analysis when deciding among and between competing and often conflicting regulations and objectives, where the activities involved include multi-million dollar issues, often with significant political and/or legal implications. The Specialist works with the requiring office to develop evaluation criteria and determine the extent of advertising required. The Specialist prepares Requests for Proposal and Notices of Funding Opportunities for review by the CO/AO. The Specialist ensures compliance with FAR and AIDAR advertisement requirements, including publication of synopses and solicitations. The Specialist responds to offeror/applicant questions during the proposal submission phase; and, determines

the need for, and prepares, clarifying amendments as required for solicitation documents. As necessary, the Specialist holds pre-bid or consultative meetings with potential partners to fully explain the Agency's needs, and discusses solicitation documents. The Specialist evaluates applications and offers for responsiveness to particular solicitations, guides DO Teams in the review of the applications or proposals, and obtains reports and references, ensuring that any past performance of the offeror is relevant and of a high quality. The Specialist develops pre-negotiation cost objectives for approval by the CO/AO. The Specialist performs analysis of cost issues, considering economic conditions and factors of material, labor, and transportation costs; examines cost and pricing data submitted by offerors, to substantiate direct and indirect costs and profit; determines reasonableness of costs submitted; ensures data provided is consistent with USAID requirements on eligible geographic sources, and that salary structures are consistent with Agency policy; and, identifies circumstances that may require a waiver/deviation. The Specialist analyzes cost proposals and technical scores from technical evaluation committees; and, based on the analysis, makes a recommendation to the Contracting Officer/Regional Contracting Officer to establish the competitive range. The Specialist negotiates with potential awardees; documents negotiations in writing; recommends the selected contractor/recipient; and, prepares contract files to include making required certifications and determinations necessary for each A&A action. The Specialist leads pre-award assessment surveys of potential contractors or recipients, ensuring that offerors have adequate management, accounting, personnel, and procurement systems, and appropriate corporate leadership, resources, and quality control systems to satisfactorily carry out contracts, in order to ensure eligibility prior to an award being made. The Specialist prepares award documents that accurately reflect all discussions and provisions relevant to the type of award mechanism to be implemented. The Specialist organizes and conducts orientation meetings with selected contractors, to ensure that mobilization efforts will be conducted efficiently, and that all terms and conditions of A&A instruments are clear and well-understood by all parties. The Specialist provides support in debriefings to unsuccessful offerors.

ii. Post-Award Duties: The Specialist monitors performance as required by the terms and conditions of the award, through reviews of performance and reviews of financial reports. The Specialist administers the awards in his/her assigned developmental portfolio, monitoring funding levels and preparing incremental funding modifications; works with CO/AO and CORs/AORs to assure targets/milestones are set and being met (or that remedial action is taken), and that the overall goals of the activity are met. The Specialist ensures timely submission of technical progress reports, and works with the COR to develop Contractor Performance Assessment Reports (CPARs) that are consistent with implementation progress and performance; makes periodic visits to contractor work sites, and represents the Office at performance-related meetings; assists any client Missions to develop appropriate indicators for work plans and contract documents; ensures contractors are fully compliant with performance standards contained in the Contract, and seeks corrective action in cases of non-compliance; expedites Change Orders or revisions when circumstances require it; and, issues 'show cause' or 'cure notices,' and/or recommends termination of contracts for default or for convenience, and negotiates termination settlements.

The Specialist analyzes and takes action to resolve procurement system review and audit findings, such as cost items questioned or unresolved; 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; and, presents documentation to the CO/AO for signature.

iii. Award Closeout: The Specialist reviews completed (after physical completion) 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; and, ensures that contracts nearing anniversaries or completion have a completed performance report from the COR/AOR, and submits reports to the Contractor for comment. The Specialist conducts closeout of acquisition and assistance awards (i.e., contracts, task orders, grants, cooperative agreements) after completion. This includes ensuring contract audits are conducted in a timely manner, preparing performance documentation, and resolving outstanding issues noted in audits.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE

Education: Possession of a Baccalaureate Degree or the equivalent of a four-year US college/university (or equivalency accreditation if a non-US institution) degree is required.

Note: Additional education will NOT be substituted for Experience.

b. Prior Work Experience: A minimum of five years of progressively responsible experience in acquisition and assistance, development assistance, or a position that requires closely related skills, such as program management, law, or financial management, is required. One year of this experience must have been gained working in a position equivalent to no less than the next lower level of FSN responsibility in this or an occupation that requires similar skills, within a USG organization, the Host Government, the private sector, or within an international or donor organization. Note: Additional experience will NOT be substituted for Education.

c. Post Entry Training: In order to qualify at the Full Performance level, the Specialist must be certified at the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) Level - 1, and have additionally completed USAID Essential Elements in Assistance and CON 237 Simplified Acquisition Procedures (SAP) or equivalent. FAC-C Level II & III courses may be provided, in person or on-line, over a period of time as a part of the continuing requirement for all A&A professionals to complete a minimum of eighty (80) Continuous Learning Points for every two-year

period. In addition, the Specialist may be provided with formal or on-the-job training to keep abreast of changes in the ADS, FAR, CFR, OAA-Intranet, the AIDAR, and Office and Mission operating and administrative procedures. Off-site formal training, if considered necessary, will be provided based on availability of course offerings, and availability of funds.

d. Language Proficiency: ADS 438 and Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Level 4 (advanced professional proficiency, speaking and reading; see <https://www.govtilr.org/>) English and local language proficiency (if appropriate), both oral and written, is required.

e. Job Knowledge: Knowledge of public and/or private-sector business processes is required. Professional level knowledge of USG A&A regulations and policies, and/or knowledge and understanding of how to execute and administer a complex acquisition and assistance portfolio is required, particularly as it relates to acquisition through methods of negotiation, sealed bidding, simplified acquisition procedures, and that result in standard and established contract types. A professional level of knowledge of host-country and regional markets pertaining to program/project/activity requirements for services and commodities, and a good knowledge and understanding of US/local market and pricing methods is required.

f. Skills and Abilities: The ability to independently plan and administer complex A&A activities and provide A&A support for Agency programs and projects in a timely manner, is required. The ability to apply contracting and assistance regulations, procedures, and policies to complex acquisition and assistance programs, is required. Ability to manage the competition phase of new agreements and contracts and to perform cost or price analysis in both a competitive and non-competitive environment is required. Skill in solving practical problems relating to A&A is required. An ability to deal effectively with mid- to high-level representatives of the US, local, and Regional business community, and with colleagues in USAID Missions and/or host governments throughout the Region, is required. Skill in the use of most elements of the Microsoft Business suite is required. Good analytical, negotiating, and time management skills, along with strong proofreading skills and attention to detail, are required. The ability to work calmly, tactfully, and effectively under pressure is essential, as well as the ability to maintain strict CONFIDENTIALITY, and meet all STANDARDS OF CONDUCT/ETHICS STANDARDS in accordance with US law throughout all phases of the A&A process, is required.

POSITION ELEMENTS

Supervision Received: The CO/AO, and/or his/her designee, makes assignments in terms of a portfolio of A&A actions to be performed. The Specialist plans and implements the procurement approach, and exercises initiative and judgment in developing and coordinating the A&A package up to recommendation for award. The Specialist will independently initiate necessary coordination with requesting Mission CORs/AORs, Technical Offices, Office of Financial Management (OFM), DO Teams, and legal officers, providing policy guidance on how to best fulfill requirements, obtaining advice from the supervisor on unanticipated problems or complex issues when necessary. The Specialist will keep the CO/AO and/or his/her designee, informed of progress, potentially controversial issues, or matters that affect policy. The supervisor reviews the final work product of the Specialist to ensure that thorough analysis has been made, and that the determinations are supported by sound judgment and adequate justification. The Specialist has considerable latitude in dealing with problems arising during pre-award or postaward phases of the action.

b. Supervision Exercised: This is a non-supervisory position, but the Specialist provides support and guidance to lower level Specialists. Continuing supervision of other office staff is not contemplated.

c. Available Guidelines: At this level the Specialist will be familiar with the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), USAID Acquisition Regulations (AIDAR), 2 CFR 200 and 700, the Automated Directives System (ADS), USAID Policies, US Department of State Standardized Regulations, Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), Mission Orders, etc. Guidelines often are not directly applicable to the task at hand, and the Specialist will use judgment in their application, requesting guidance in cases where the Specialist has not used the particular guideline in the past.

d. Exercise of Judgment: The Specialist will exercise a developed degree of judgment in handling pre-award and post-award actions, when advising CORs/AORs and Mission staff, and when interacting with IPs to resolve issues arising during program/project/activity implementation. The Specialist must apply good judgment in dealing with visitors and callers; in the analysis of cost, financial, and other characteristics of prospective contractors and recipients; and, in deciding what questions need to be asked of client Mission representatives and potential contractors/ recipients, in order to ensure achievement of A&A objectives. The Specialist uses judgment in selecting among authorized A&A methods and techniques, and in the application of regulations and procedures. The supervisor is consulted when decisions on very complex issues are needed or deviations are proposed.

e. Authority to Make Commitments: The Specialist is required to hold discussions and negotiations with potential contractors and grantees to reach agreement on statements of work/program descriptions and budgets. The Specialist has the authority to conclude negotiations and to structure the final terms and conditions of USAID acquisition and assistance instruments, as assigned, as long as they are within the approved pre-negotiation objectives. The awards must be approved and signed by a warranted CO/AO in order to obligate funds. The Specialist is not authorized to make formal commitments.

f. Nature, Level, and Purpose of Contacts: The Specialist is in daily contact with staff throughout the Mission, with managers of any serviced Missions/Offices in the Region, IPs, potential IPs, visitors, and mid-level officials from both the public and private sectors in order to exchange and/or collect information, and to provide advice relating to program implementation.

g. Time Expected to Reach Full Performance Level: Fully Successful performance at the Full Performance level should be achieved in one year. Although this is the full performance level of this "ladder" position, the Specialist is required to continue his/her professional development.