



**SUBJECT:** USAID/DCHA/OFDA Annual Program Statement (APS) No. APS-OFDA-11-000005 for PROJECTS LEADING TO DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE, SCALABLE FARMER OR COMMUNITY SEED STORAGE MODELS FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS.

**ISSUANCE DATE:** March 14, 2011

## **A. AUTHORITY AND INTRODUCTION**

Pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA), the United States Government (USG), as represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance is seeking to support or stimulate the activities described in this Annual Program Statement (APS).

Section 491 of the FAA authorizes USG assistance for natural and human-caused disasters abroad, as well as Prevention, Mitigation, and Preparedness (PMP) activities designed to reduce the impact of recurrent natural hazards and foreign disasters.

Pursuant to Section 493 of the FAA, the USAID Administrator has been appointed as the President's Special Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance, with responsibility to promote maximum effectiveness and coordination by USG agencies and between the U.S. and other donors in responses to foreign disasters. OFDA provides technical support to the President's Special Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance and coordinates the U.S. Government response to disasters in foreign countries. OFDA is the primary operating unit within USAID for the provision of international disaster assistance, except for (1) emergency food aid, where USAID's Office of Food for Peace (DCHA/FFP) is considered the primary operating unit, and (2) cases where a determination is made that a country is in transition to democracy and USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (DCHA/OTI) is designated as the primary operating unit. To this end, the OFDA Director is responsible for planning, developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating assistance for international disaster relief and PMP activities.

OFDA responds to all types of foreign natural disasters, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, cyclones, floods, droughts, fires, pest infestations, and disease outbreaks. OFDA also provides assistance when lives or livelihoods are threatened by catastrophes, such as civil conflict, acts of terrorism or industrial accidents. Disasters cause loss of life or injury, damage to private or public

infrastructure, and interruption of livelihoods. Foreign disasters comprise both acts of nature and acts of humankind that disrupt economic and social life. USAID defines a foreign disaster as one which occurs outside the United States, its territories, or possessions, and may be:

- A violent act of nature, such as a flood, tsunami, hurricane, fire, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, etc.;
- Secondary disasters such as floods, landslides, fires, or civil disturbances that may be triggered by rapid-onset disasters such as earthquakes or hurricanes;
- A human-caused act, such as civil strife, border conflict, displacement of large numbers of people, explosion, fire, chemical spill, or radiological release;
- A complex emergency, usually of long-term duration, that includes a combination of humanitarian, political, and military dimensions which hinder the provision of external relief;
- A slowly developing catastrophe caused by nature, humankind's neglect, or both, such as drought, famine, or epidemic; or
- A potential calamity, including ecological threats menacing lives and property and requiring prevention or monitoring measures.

OFDA not only responds to disasters but also works with disaster-prone countries to prevent, mitigate, and prepare for the effects of potential disaster scenarios. This includes assistance relating to disaster preparedness, and to risk reduction activities, to lessen adverse impacts of, and enhance the prediction of and contingency planning for, natural disasters abroad. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) identifies the hazards present in a country or region; the vulnerability of people and infrastructure; and the resources available for relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Mitigation or risk reduction measures implement activities to reduce loss of life, livelihoods, and property by reducing vulnerability. Recognizing the benefits in lives and resources saved, OFDA provides DRR to reduce risks to vulnerable people and property posed by natural and human-caused hazards. DRR activities take many forms, including, but not limited to:

- Maintenance of regional disaster supply stockpiles;
- Training in disaster management;
- Technical assistance in national disaster planning for institutions, officials, and other individuals in disaster-prone countries;
- Support for USAID Missions in developing Mission Disaster Relief Plans; and
- Risk reduction and disaster management activities, including hazard early warning systems.

The purpose of this APS is to disseminate information to enable prospective applicants to decide whether to seek OFDA funding in support of DRR projects related to the design and development of sustainable farmer or community level seed storage models targeting small scale subsistence farmers in developing countries where post-harvest losses of seed and grain are documented to be greater than twenty percent, and if so, to assist them in developing and submitting concept papers (if required hereunder) and applications. OFDA assumes no liability for reimbursing potential applicants for any costs they incur in the preparation and submission of concept papers and/or applications.

This APS: (1) provides contextually relevant background information on the current status of seed storage of vulnerable subsistence farmers in developing countries; (2) describes the program aim, results, and types of activities for which concept papers and/or applications will be considered; (3) describes the level of funding available and the process and requirements for submitting concept papers and/or applications; (4) explains the criteria for evaluating and selecting concept papers and/or applications; and (5) refers prospective applicants to related documentation available on the Internet.

OFDA's *Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting*, which is available at [http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/disaster\\_assistance/resources/#grants](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/resources/#grants), stipulates that they do not apply to Annual Program Statements. However, many parts of those *Guidelines* are equally applicable regardless of whether OFDA solicits applications (such as through this APS) or an organization submits an unsolicited application. Thus, for the sake of brevity and in order to prevent unnecessary redundancies, parts of this APS may refer potential applicants to those *Guidelines* and/or may specify that it is an explicit exception to those *Guidelines*. In the event of any inconsistencies between this APS and those *Guidelines*, this APS shall prevail.

As of November 1, 2005, the preferred method of distribution of USAID APS' and submission and receipt of concept papers and/or applications is electronically via <http://www.grants.gov> ("Grants.gov"), which provides a single source for USG-wide competitive grant opportunities. This APS and any future amendments or additions can be downloaded from that website. In order to use this method, an applicant must first register on-line with Grants.gov. If the applicant has difficulty registering or accessing the APS or related documents, the applicant should contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via e-mail at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) for technical assistance. It is the responsibility of the recipient of the APS and any related documentation to ensure that it has been received from Grants.gov in its entirety and USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes. It is important that interested organizations sign-up for e-mail updates with Grants.Gov so that as changes are posted to this and other USG (including USAID) solicitations, alerts will be received.

## **B. SPECIFIC PROGRAMMATIC GUIDANCE**

### **1. Background**

#### **Post-harvest losses and Food Security**

For many farmers around the world, growing and harvesting a crop is only the first step toward ensuring their food security, since significant crop losses can occur during processing, storage, transport and marketing. In many countries in Africa, post-harvest losses of food grains are estimated at 25% of the total crop harvested. In other areas, high moisture environments can be detrimental to the successful storage of such crops as paddy rice. Certain fruit, vegetable and root crops are less hardy than grains, and post-harvest losses for these crops can be as high as 50%. In many cases, since subsistence farmers often rely on grain harvested as a seed source for the next cropping season, post-harvest losses can result in a significant reduction in seed quality, and greatly reduce both the amount and the quality of seeds available for planting. Loss of grain can also contribute to lengthening the hunger gap that subsistence farmers and their families may experience between seasons, thus reducing household food security.

Losses can occur at many different stages. From the moment when crops are harvested until they are sold at the market, risk of loss is high. One major reason for post-harvest crop losses, especially in the case of fresh fruits and vegetables, is decay due to insect and rodent damage and subsequent bacterial or fungal infection. In many cases, lack of good post-harvest storage facilities can force farmers to sell all or most of their grain immediately following harvest when prices are lowest. Later, they will be required to purchase grain or seed at prices that are much higher since availability will decline over time. Post-harvest storage systems that prevent losses to insects or pathogens can not only improve household food security and increase seed quality over time, but it will also allow farmers to manage their market transactions more astutely.

Throughout developing countries, farmers' financial and food security can be severely affected by post-harvest losses, while consumers face hunger and/or high prices in local markets if losses of a staple crop occur on a wide scale in the area where they live. To reduce these losses, smallholder farmers can focus on improving processing and storage techniques, as well as learning how to identify when their harvested crop has been infected by disease pathogens such as fungi.

#### **Household and community seed storage**

Farmer storage systems vary from region to region, based on culture, environment, resources and history. Grain and seed storage systems within one region may be the same, or may differ, depending on tradition. From burial of seeds in the ground to building of separate storage structures to storage of seeds in a hut, each of these traditions has emerged in a culture for specific reasons. In some cases, they may be adequate to protect against rodents, insects, weather, and pathogens. But in other cases, these systems may be outdated or insufficient to protect against post-harvest losses.

Both communal and individual storage structures are a means to achieve a reduction of crop loss, post-harvest. A communal storage structure might be proposed simply as a means to better

preserve the commodity at hand. It will involve a physical structure where people can store or pool their resources but they can withdraw their own contribution whenever they want to, and they have no responsibility to contribute or to maintain a certain amount in the storage facility. This is really just like a community shed where pests and weather cannot degrade the farmer's seeds/grain/fodder as quickly as they might if the seed were stored within a household. Depending on the quality of the structure, however, losses to rodents, insects and pathogens may still be fairly significant.

A seed/grain/fodder *bank* is different from a storage unit in that it uses market fluctuations as triggers for filling the bank or for withdrawing stored items. There are many different models for this, some of which rely on farmer contributions, and others which rely on governments or donors to fill the banks. In general, grain is added to the bank right after harvest when supplies are plentiful on the markets and prices are low. When the dry season or hunger season approaches, market prices will rise. At this time, when prices are high on the regular markets, the grain bank will sell at lower prices to those who are part of the grain bank. Fodder banks work in much the same way.

### **Problems with seed storage interventions**

Various studies have found that sustainability of storage based on the seed bank model is very poor and that contributions to the bank from year to year must often be maintained by the donor or the government. This is because banks are often proposed in response to some type of a shock, when farmers are just starting to recover assets and stability. After the first year of the program, it is unrealistic to expect that beneficiaries will be in a position to restock the bank. In addition, because shocks such as droughts and floods are often recurring in areas prone to these events, these banks are even harder to keep stocked without continual outside input. Both from official reports and from assessment trips, evidence suggests that banks created in response to food crises seldom remain functional after the supporting organization pulls out.

The repayment side of the seed bank programs is particularly problematic, since this puts an additional burden on already stressed populations. In addition to this, there is often concern about the quality of seeds farmers put into a bank when they are not certain which seeds they will be able to take out in return. If everyone puts in their highest quality seed, this is not an issue, but if some farmers do and some do not, the quality of the seed will be inconsistent and potentially unfair. However, in the absence of shocks, there is potential for this model to function sustainably. For this reason, proposals for seed/grain/fodder banks will be accepted under this APS, but the justification must not only provide sufficient evidence that sustainability is likely, but must also address issues of replicability (e.g., if this only works in a region because a population is particularly free of corruption, the technology that is adopted may not spread successfully to other areas within the same agro-ecological zone).

Sustainability is also limited when the methods proposed for seed storage are not replicable because of complexity, inability to maintain or to source the materials used, or very high cost which prohibits purchase by vulnerable farmers (e.g. pesticide treatment of storage facilities).

There has been very little academic research conducted on the efficacy and improvement of seed storage systems, particularly within the African context, and reviews of successes and failures

are dated. Seed and cereal banks, in particular, are frequently noted to lack sustainability, with only a small percentage of community-based banks still functioning after the implementing organization leaves the region. Even documents that look favorably on seed and cereal banks note an inherent lack of sustainability to these systems, especially in areas of recurrent shocks.

**Looking towards more efficient models:**

USAID/OFDA has allocated US \$1.5 million to support pilot projects or basic research programs that can lead to the design and development of seed storage models for vulnerable subsistence farmers in developing countries. These seed storage systems should a) be sustainable after the supporting NGO leaves the region, b) be replicable across many different areas in similar agro-ecological zones, and c) significantly reduce post-harvest losses to insects and diseases. This effort will be implemented over an eighteen (18) month period.

**2. Program Scope and Objective(s) of this APS**

The scope and objective(s) of the program(s) to be funded under this APS is (are) to:

Fulfill USAID/OFDA's mandate is to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the economic impact of disasters worldwide. In order to achieve this goal, USAID/DCHA/OFDA seeks to mitigate the effects of post-harvest losses to grain and seed through the development of replicable and sustainable seed storage systems, constructed at household or community level.

Under this APS, OFDA is specifically looking for innovative methods or research programs, preferably building upon traditional seed storage methods that are culturally acceptable and do not require long-term input from an outside source. While proposals that focus on community-level storage methods will be considered, preference will be given to systems that are functional and sustainable at the household level. Proposals for conventional seed banks will generally not be considered.

A. The broad goals of this APS are to:

Support research and development of seed storage methodology that will provide protection to farmers against post-harvest loss of both seed and grain;

Provide humanitarian assistance through mitigative programming which will be used as a foundation for long-term development;

Mitigate the effects of loss of quality seed and allow farmers to access markets over time, rather than selling at harvest when prices are low and buying seed or grain later as prices increase.

B. The following general programmatic guidance is provided to potential applicants:

Applications for interventions proposed in response to this APS shall be confined to developing countries and focus on supporting small scale subsistence farmers. Programs should be proposed for areas/ countries with documented post-harvest losses of 20% or more.;

The applications submitted for seed storage systems should be implemented within eighteen months or less;

Programs must address issues of long-term sustainability, particularly in times of crisis, since these are the times that the systems most frequently fail;

The APS is aimed at seed storage for preservation of quality seed, but can be expanded to storage of grain provided that the system can work for seed as well;

Connections of farmers to market systems should be addressed in any application;

An understanding of seed systems must be evident. For more information on seed systems, please see the following:

<http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/work/Africa/Pages/SeedSystemsUnderStress.aspx>

<http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/work/Africa/Documents/seed%20brief%201-5.pdf>

<http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/work/Africa/Documents/seed%20brief%206-10.pdf>

Programs implemented under all components of this APS should be relevant in the culture where it is proposed; assessment of traditional seed storage methods in the locality should be included in the proposal to either justify proposed activities or to improve upon them. The applicant should demonstrate an understanding of the local agricultural system and production and storage constraints of the farmers (labor, risk aversion, concerns over theft). Ideally, all pilots would be based on consultation or coordination with farmers or farmers groups in the target location, rather than imposing a pilot storage structure on a local community.

### **3. Program Duration**

The program duration is for up to 18 months from the date of award. OFDA plans to fund approved activities starting in the current fiscal year but reserves the right to incrementally fund activities over the duration of the program, if necessary, depending on program length, performance against approved program indicators and availability of funds. Program length and start date should incorporate consideration of the agricultural calendar and a start date should be proposed accordingly. Extensions due to poor timing of objectives with the agricultural calendar are discouraged.

### **4. Anticipated Funding Availability**

OFDA anticipates that up to approximately US \$1.5 million will be available to support the research, design and/or development of sustainable seed storage models at either the household or community level, although final , funding levels will depend on content, quality, number of applications received, needs, availability of funding, and competing priorities.

While no ceiling has been established on the magnitude of individual applications, applicants are encouraged to keep costs reasonable in relation to the scope of their proposed activities, recognizing that the total funding under this APS will cover a range of efforts.

## **5. Anticipated Number of Awards**

OFDA plans to make multiple awards under this APS. Nevertheless, OFDA reserves the right to make a single award, to fund parts of applications, or not to make any awards at all. Issuance of this APS does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of any application.

## **6. Type of Award(s)/Substantial Involvement**

OFDA anticipates that a grant(s) will be awarded as a result of this APS. However, depending on the application(s) that is/are received and selected, OFDA may decide to be “substantially involved” in the implementation of the program, and therefore reserves the right to award a cooperative agreement(s) instead of a grant(s) accordingly. Cooperative agreements are identical to grants except that OFDA may be substantially involved in one or more of the following areas:

- (a) OFDA approval of a recipient’s implementation plans (limited to not more frequently than annually);
- (b) OFDA approval of specified key personnel (limited to 5 positions or 5% of a recipient’s total team size, whichever is greater);
- (c) OFDA and recipient collaboration or joint participation which includes one or more of the following:
  - (i) Collaborative involvement in selection of advisory committee members (OFDA may also choose to become a member), if applicable;
  - (ii) OFDA concurrence on the selection of sub-award recipients and/or the substantive technical/programmatic provisions of sub-awards;
  - (iii) OFDA approval of a program monitoring and evaluation [M&E] plan (to the extent that such information is not included in the application);
  - (iv) OFDA monitoring to permit specified kinds of direction or redirection because of interrelationships with other projects; and
- (d) OFDA authority to immediately halt a construction activity, if applicable.

## **7. Cost-Sharing (Matching)**

### **NGOs**

NGOs are not required to include counterpart funding. However, applications that include additional in-kind and/or cash contributions from non-USG sources will be more competitive, since cost-sharing demonstrates a strong commitment to the planned activities and will be rewarded under the “cost-effectiveness” evaluation criterion set forth in F below. Cost-sharing will be subject to 22 CFR 226.23 and the standard provision entitled “Cost Sharing (Matching)” (U.S. NGOs) or the standard provision entitled “Cost-Sharing (Matching)” for non-U.S. NGOs (see G1 & 2 below).

## **8. Program Income**

### **NGOs**

If the successful applicant(s) is/are a non-profit organization, any program income generated under the award(s) will be added to OFDA funding (and any cost-sharing that may be provided) and used for program purposes. However, pursuant to 22 CFR 226.82, if the successful applicant is a for-profit organization, any program income generated under the award(s) will be deducted from the total program cost to determine the amount of OFDA funding. Program income will be subject to 22 CFR 226.24 (U.S. NGOs) or the standard provision entitled “Program Income” for non-U.S. NGOs (see G1 below).

## **9. Authorized Geographic Code**

### **NGOs**

USAID’s rules for the source, origin, and componentry of goods (other than “restricted goods,” as described in ADS 312 [<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/312.pdf>]), and the nationality of suppliers of goods and services (other than delivery services, as described in ADS 314 [<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/314.pdf>]), which are financed by USAID and procured by the recipient under the award(s) resulting from this APS, are set forth in 22 CFR 228 ([http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx\\_08/22cfr228\\_08.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_08/22cfr228_08.html)). These rules do not apply to procurement by the recipient with cost-sharing or program income funds. Except as authorized under USAID’s “Local Procurement” rules (see 22 CFR 228.40), the authorized geographic code (see 22 CFR 228.1) for the award(s) resulting from this APS is 935, subject to the recipient’s compliance with the order of preference and file documentation requirements set forth in paragraph (b)(1) of the standard provision entitled “USAID Eligibility Rules for Goods and Services” (see G1 below).

## **10. Title to Property**

### **NGOs**

Title to property financed by OFDA under the award(s) will vest in the recipient, and will be subject to 22 CFR 226.30-37 (U.S. NGOs) or the standard provision entitled “Title To and Use of Property (Recipient Title; Over \$50,000) for non-U.S. NGOs (see G1 below).

## **11. Post-Award Reporting**

### **(a) Programmatic Reporting**

#### **NGOs**

Programmatic reporting will be in accordance with the *OFDA Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting* (see G1 below). Quarterly program performance reports are required. A final report will also be required which should provide lessons learned, challenges to implementation, as well as an analysis of the percentage reduction of post-harvest loss and the potential for replication/scalability.

### **(b) Financial Reporting and Payment**

Financial reporting will depend on the payment provisions of the award, which cannot be determined until after the successful applicant(s) is/are selected. Advance payments will generally be made if the applicant’s systems, policies, and procedures meet USG and USAID requirements (see G1 & 2). The recipient(s) will be required to have a U.S. bank account into which payments under the award will be made.

## **C. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

OFDA will not accept applications from individuals. All applicants must be legally recognized organizational entities under applicable law. Applicants must have completed all required steps (if any) with the host government to legally operate their program. **Applicants must be registered with the host government (if required by local laws) where they propose conducting their program. ALL applicants must also be currently registered in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database and must provide the date of their CCR expiration.** For registration go to <https://www.bpn.gov/ccr/default.aspx>

The following types of organizations may apply for OFDA funding under this APS:

### **1. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

#### **(a) Types and Nationalities of NGOs**

##### **(1) U.S. and Non-U.S. Non-Profit Organizations**

Qualified U.S. and non-U.S. private non-profit organizations may apply for OFDA funding under this APS. Foreign government-owned parastatal organizations from countries that are ineligible for assistance under the FAA or related appropriations acts are ineligible.

**(2) U.S. and Non-U.S. For-Profit Organizations**

Qualified U.S. and non-U.S. private for-profit organizations may apply for OFDA funding under this APS. Foreign government-owned parastatal organizations from countries that are ineligible for assistance under the FAA or related appropriations acts are ineligible. Potential for-profit applicants should note that, pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, the payment of fee/profit to the prime recipient under grants and cooperative agreements is prohibited. However, if a prime recipient has a (sub)-contract with a for-profit organization for the acquisition of goods or services (*i.e.*, if a buyer-seller relationship is created), fee/profit for the (sub)-contractor is authorized.

**(3) U.S. and Non-U.S. Colleges and Universities**

Qualified U.S. and non-U.S. colleges and universities may apply for OFDA funding under this APS. USG and USAID regulations generally treat colleges and universities as NGOs, rather than governmental organizations; hence, both public and private colleges and universities are eligible. Non-U.S. colleges and universities in countries that are ineligible for assistance under the FAA or related appropriations acts are ineligible.

**(b) Registration as a Private Voluntary Organization (PVO)**

Pursuant to ADS E251.5.3.(a)6, applicants do not need to be registered with USAID as a PVO to be eligible for funding under this APS.

**(c) “Responsibility” of Applicant**

In order for an award to be made, the Agreement Officer must make an affirmative determination that the applicant is “responsible,” as discussed in ADS 303.3.9. This means that the applicant must possess, or have the ability to obtain, the necessary management and technical competence to conduct the proposed program, and must agree to practice mutually agreed-upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided or funded by USAID.

The following criteria are used by USAID in determining an applicant’s “responsibility:”

- (1) Adequacy of Applicant’s Program Description, Budget, and Monitoring System.
- (2) Adequacy of the Applicant’s Financial Resources for Program Performance.
- (3) Applicant’s Ability to Meet Award Conditions:

- (A) Compliance of Applicant’s Accounting and Overall Financial and Program Management Systems with 22 CFR 226.20-28.
- (B) Compliance of Applicant’s System of Reports and Records with 22 CFR 226.50-53.
- (C) Compliance of Applicant’s Internal Control Systems with Applicable USG Cost Principles.
- (i) Internal Controls.
- (ii) Personnel Policy is Reasonable under Applicable USG Cost Principles.
- (iii) Travel Policy is Reasonable under Applicable USG Cost Principles and the U.S. Department of State’s *Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign Areas)* (<http://aoprals.state.gov/>), and Complies with Fly America Requirements.
- (D) Compliance of Applicant’s Property Management System with 22 CFR 226.30-37.
- (E) Compliance of Applicant’s Sub-Award Administration and Monitoring System with OMB Circular A-133 (U.S. NGOs) or the USAID Inspector-General’s *Guidelines for Financial Audits Contracted by Foreign Recipients* (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/500/591maa.pdf>) for non-U.S. NGOs.
- (F) Compliance of Applicant’s Purchasing System/Contracting Procedures with 22 CFR 226.40-49.
- (G) Applicant’s Absorptive Capacity Given Other Existing and Potential Work Commitments.
- (4) Satisfactory Record of Performance by Applicant.
- (5) Satisfactory Record of Business Integrity by Applicant.
- (6) Applicant is Otherwise Qualified to Receive an Award under Applicable Laws and Regulations (*e.g.*, Nondiscrimination, Lobbying, Debarment/Suspension, Terrorist Financing, etc.).

In the absence of an affirmative “responsibility” determination, an award can ordinarily not be made. However, in rare cases, an award can be made with “special award conditions” (*i.e.*, additional non-standard award requirements designed to minimize the risk presented to USAID of making an award to an NGO for which an affirmative determination of “responsibility” cannot

be made), but only where it appears likely that the applicant can correct the deficiencies in a reasonable period.

#### **(d) New Partners**

Partners new to USAID and/or OFDA may submit applications. However, resultant awards to these organizations may be significantly delayed if OFDA must undertake necessary pre-award reviews of these organizations to determine their “responsibility” (see subparagraph [c] above). These organizations should take this into account and plan their implementation dates and activities accordingly.

#### **2. Other USG Agencies**

USG departments and agencies may not apply for OFDA funding under this APS.

#### **3. Public International Organizations (PIOs)**

PIOs are not eligible to apply for funding under this program.

#### **4. Foreign Governmental Organizations**

Foreign governmental organizations are organizations that function as a governing body, such as foreign ministries and local governments. Foreign governmental organizations [may not apply for OFDA funding under this APS. Note: USAID policy makes foreign governmental organizations ineligible as sub-recipients under awards to NGOs unless special approval is provided. Even if special approval is provided, potential applicants must consider the impact of foreign governmental organizations' sovereignty on issues such as audits, cost disallowances, disputes, etc. (see <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/updates/iu3-1.pdf>). In addition, USAID policies do not permit the payment of "salary supplements" to employees of a host government except in exceptional circumstances and with special approval. Additional guidance on salary supplements may be found at: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/119780.pdf>.

#### **5. Code of Conduct**

As a condition for any award resulting from this APS, applicants must have adopted a code of conduct that addresses the protection of beneficiaries of assistance from sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian relief operations. Such code of conduct is described in the “Notices” section (page 1) of the *OFDA Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting*.

### **D. SELECTION PROCESS AND SCHEDULE**

#### **1. Selection Process**

Applications will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria set forth in Section F below. After evaluation of the applications, either award(s) will be made, or, if deemed necessary or desirable by OFDA, written and/or verbal discussions/negotiations will be conducted with applicants that submit

the most highly rated applications. After the conclusion of any such discussions/negotiations, such applicants will, unless otherwise advised, be required to submit a revised application, which will be re-evaluated against the criteria set forth in Section F below. Ordinarily, award(s) will be made after the first round of any such discussions/negotiations and revised applications; however, OFDA reserves the right to conduct subsequent rounds of discussions/negotiations and revised applications, and to limit the number of applicants with whom such subsequent discussions/negotiations would be conducted and revised applications requested.

## **2. Schedule**

This APS is open for six months from the date of issuance, although OFDA plans to review applications in batches. Applications received no later than **4:00 pm Eastern Time (ET) on May 16, 2011** will be included in the first batch of applications for review.

Questions concerning the first batch of applications under this APS must be received no later than **March 25, 2011**. Following this date, the questions received by that date, if any, (without attribution to the organization), and answers will be posted as an amendment to this APS. Questions must be in writing and should be e-mailed to [OFDA\\_APS@ofda.gov](mailto:OFDA_APS@ofda.gov). Oral explanations or instructions given before award(s) is/are made will not be binding.

This APS may be amended either to establish subsequent deadlines or to indicate that an award(s) has/have been made and that no further funding is available. If an award(s) results from the first batch of reviewed applications, the award date is anticipated to be July 2011. Late applications will only be considered under subsequent batches of applications, if any.

## **E. GENERAL GUIDANCE**

### **1. OFDA Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting**

Except as may be stated otherwise in this APS, applicants must submit their applications in compliance with the OFDA *Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting*. Applications that do not adhere to those *Guidelines* will not be considered for funding. OFDA's *Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting*, which is available at [http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/disaster\\_assistance/resources/#grants](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/resources/#grants). In the event of inconsistencies between this APS and those *Guidelines*, this APS shall prevail. Applicants are also encouraged to review *Results-Oriented Assistance: A USAID Sourcebook* (<http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/sourcebook/usgov/>), which may also prove helpful in preparing concept papers and/or applications..

### **2. Content of Concept Papers and/or Applications**

Under this APS, all proposed activities must fall under the Agriculture and Food Security sector and the seed systems and agricultural inputs subsector, as described in those *Guidelines*. As noted in those *Guidelines*, OFDA indicators for the subsector must be used, but applicants may include additional indicators. Applicants are requested to state in their applications: (1) the estimated cost per beneficiary; and (2) the percentage of the total affected population (by administrative unit or

site) to be served under any resulting award. Applicants must consider the role that gender plays, demonstrate an understanding and sensitivity to the real or perceived impact that gender and other personal attributes may have on personal security, and include a plan for achieving gender-integration and -balance.

It is recognized that, in some programs, identification of specific teaming partners and sub-recipients cannot occur until after award and, hence, specific delineation of responsibilities and costs cannot be provided in the concept paper and/or application. Nevertheless, such information is, in fact, often known at the time the concept paper and/or application is being prepared. In order to reduce the post-award administrative burden of obtaining post-award approval for such sub-awards, and, thereby, facilitate program implementation and the achievement of results in the timeframe of the award(s), applicants are strongly encouraged to identify such teaming arrangements and sub-recipients in the technical/programmatic and cost/budget/management sections of their concept paper and/or application, if any, to the maximum practicable extent. When such organizations are identified, Letters of Intent, Letters of Agreement, or Memoranda of Understanding should be included in the concept paper and/or application.

It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure that local partners do not appear on the Excluded Parties List (which includes the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control "*Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List*"), which can be found at: <http://www.epls.gov>. Applicants working through local partners must ensure that local organizations have the capacity to carry-out expanded programs, and should consider a capacity-building component which will leave a lasting impact on local organizations.

Applications must be submitted in English. Documentation in other languages may be included as long as there is an English translation. Applications should use Word 2000 or newer and/or Excel 2000 or newer. The signed certifications and representations (see Section V.H of the OFDA *Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting*) are required at the time of submission of an application and may be provided in PDF format. Applications submitted without the required signed documentation will not be considered.

### **3. Place and Means of Submission**

Applications may be submitted via Grants.gov (see page 3 above) or electronically to: [OFDA\\_APS@ofda.gov](mailto:OFDA_APS@ofda.gov). Copies in .zip format may not be submitted since they are automatically quarantined by USAID's computer security system.

### **4. Communications with OFDA**

As an exception to the OFDA Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting, potential applicants may not have contact with OFDA except as described in Section D2 above.

### **5. USAID Disability Policy and Accessibility Standards**

The applicant's attention is directed to Section VI.A of the OFDA *Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting*. These policies have implications for both the program design and program budget.

## **6. Voluntary Survey on Faith-Based and Community Organizations**

The applicant is encouraged, but is not required, to submit USAID's Voluntary Survey on Faith-Based and Community Organizations, as described in Section VI.C of the OFDA *Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting*.

## **7. Branding Strategy and Marking Plan (BS/MP)**

NGO and foreign governmental organization applicants are required to comply with 22 CFR 226.91 (see G1 below) and USAID Acquisition and Assistance Policy Directive (AAPD) 05-11 ([http://www.usaid.gov/business/business\\_opportunities/cib/pdf/aapd05\\_11.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/business/business_opportunities/cib/pdf/aapd05_11.pdf)). If concept papers are required under this APS, a BS/MP need not be included with the concept paper. As an exception to Section V.G of the OFDA *Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting*, applicants are encouraged, but are not required, to submit their BS/MP with their applications. Applicants who choose not to include their BS/MP with their application will not be penalized during the evaluation process, but should be aware that, if the applicant is the/an apparently successful applicant, the applicant will be required to submit an acceptable BS/MP as a prerequisite for any resulting award. This would delay any such award, pending receipt and review of the applicant's BS/MP. Moreover, because USAID's branding and marking requirements have cost implications, such costs should be included in the application budget even if the applicant does not submit its BS/MP with the application.

## **8. Ineligible Goods and Services, Ineligible Suppliers, and Restricted Goods**

The applicant's attention is directed to Section V.F of the OFDA *Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals*, as well as ADS 313 (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/313.pdf>). These rules and requirements may affect the program design, budget, timing of award, and/or timely program implementation and post-award administration.

## **F. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Applications will be reviewed by OFDA/Washington in accordance with the following evaluation criteria. Other USAID staff, USG agencies, USAID/OFDA consultants, and other partners may also be invited to review applications on a case-by-case basis provided that such participation does not create a conflict of interest, and further provided that information contained in the application shall be used only for evaluation purposes and shall not be disclosed outside OFDA. Award(s) will be made to organization(s) whose application(s) offer the best value to USAID.

The seven evaluation criteria and their respective weight (out of a total of 100 points) are:

### **1. Justification for Proposed Interventions – 5 points**

The applications will be evaluated based on their justification for the proposed program in terms of:

- Identified need for improved seed storage in a region based on assessments or surveys using sound methodology;
- The applicant made an attempt to obtain historical information on seed and grain storage in the region of interest, and the interventions proposed build on this information; otherwise, applicant should carefully explain why a new system is needed in lieu of building on what already exists.

## 2. Program Description - 35 points

The application will be evaluated from a technical perspective in terms of:

- The activities are appropriate for achieving USAID/OFDA's objectives. The proposed interventions are technically sound and will likely contribute to long-term food security in the region proposed;
- The implementation plan provides sufficient detail for the concrete understanding of methods to be used and for a determination of technical appropriateness to be made – this could include provision of sketches, dimensions and plans for a proposed structure or an explicit process (questions, assumptions, points for analysis) for coming to the proposed method through consultation with farmers;
- The implementation focuses on the main objective of this APS – a reduction in post-harvest losses through improved storage mechanisms/methodologies. Although complementarity with other activities is encouraged, they will not be funded with this APS;
- The implementation takes farmer constraints and concerns into account, especially related to culture, environmental and agricultural context and risk aversion.
- The implementation enables quantitative and qualitative analysis of the reduction of post-harvest losses through improved seed storage mechanisms/methodologies. The program will need to measure and report out on the percentage of post-harvest loss directly attributable to the intervention.
- The activities are consistent with Section II: Programmatic Areas of Focus of this APS;
- The methodology for selecting the targeted population(s) are clear;
- The proposed indicators can be accurately measured, and the organization has made an attempt to identify impact and output indicators per OFDA's "Guidelines for Proposals and Reporting;"

- Protection and conflict mitigation issues are clearly addressed throughout the Program Description;
- The proposal demonstrates an understanding of the role that gender plays and the plan for achieving gender integration and balance in the administration of the program. A demonstrated understanding and sensitivity to the real or perceived impact that gender and other personal attributes may have on personal security.
- In addition to the above, please note that applications for research projects will be assessed based on: a) methodology, including a sound technical approach with clear and reasonable work plans, b) technical merit and innovation, c) relevance to the region proposed, and d) feasibility of approach.

### 3. Sustainability - 30 points

The applications will be evaluated on sustainability in terms of:

- For farmer-based interventions, beneficiaries should be able to maintain the structure and/or methods used for storage over the long term. In the case of a major crisis in the region (e.g., drought), beneficiaries should be able to rebuild/restock their storage facility based on technical assistance provided through this program by the successful applicant.
- For community-based interventions, there should be a commitment by the benefiting communities' leadership committees to maintain structures and methods used for storage. Communities should be able to restart the storage facility based on their own knowledge and ability to contribute to the system in the event of a disaster.
- Applications for research projects must include issues related to sustainability within the methodology proposed.

### 4. Institutional Capability and Past Performance - 5 points

Applicants will also be evaluated based on their institutional capacity and past performance, specifically:

- The organization's ability to begin research and implementation expeditiously;
- Organization's competence in the agricultural sector, particularly in combating post-harvest losses, as demonstrated by relevant experience and technical expertise in previous programs;
- The organization's strength, productivity, and positive working relationships with government officials, beneficiaries, and USAID/OFDA (as appropriate) in region proposed;

- The organization's contextual knowledge of the region proposed, including political, economic, cultural, social, and institutional norms. In particular, knowledge of traditional seed storage methods, and problems associated with these methods over time.
- For research programs, the principal investigator's demonstrated competence and experience in researching community or household seed storage systems.
- Inclusion of sufficient staff and resources to ensure successful completion of the program as proposed.

5. Seed System Linkages - 10 points

Applications will be reviewed in terms of the described level of linkages to ongoing agricultural programs and systems in the region proposed, specifically:

- For pilot programs, the thoroughness of the applicant's overview of how the planned program will fit in with ongoing agricultural programs in the proposed area of implementation, particularly related to market linkages;
- For research programs, the thoroughness of the applicant's review of seed systems within the proposed area of implementation, and careful linkages within the proposed methodology to the existing systems.
- For all programs, design which takes into account how and where farmers source seed (own seed, commercial market, informal market) and what they actually need to store is critical.

6. Cost - 10 points

With regard to cost, the following criteria will be used:

- Cost-effectiveness: percentage of overall budget which goes to direct assistance for beneficiaries, and the significance of the program impact in terms of the number of beneficiaries and/or cost per beneficiary to USAID/OFDA;
- Cost realism: Likelihood that the program can be accomplished within the stated budget.

7. Security - 5 points

In terms of security, applications will be evaluated based on:

- Assessment of the applicant's consideration of the security situation in the proposed area of implementation and if the planned program and budget are structured accordingly;
- Applicant's discussion on how the proposed program will adhere to the organization's security policy;
- Applicants contingency plan in the event activities are suspended or halted as a direct result of insecurity.

## **G. AWARD ADMINISTRATION AND RELEVANT WEBSITES FOR REFERENCE**

### **1. U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations**

Awards to U.S. NGOs resulting from this APS will be administered in accordance with the following:

- Chapter 303 of USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS-303), which is available at <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>.
- 22 CFR 226 which is available at [http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx\\_03/22cfr226\\_03.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_03/22cfr226_03.html).
- 2 CFR 220 for universities (formerly OMB Circular A-21); or
- 2 CFR 230 for non-profit organizations (formerly OMB Circular A-122); and
- OMB Circular A-133 for both universities and non-profit organizations, all of which are available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html>.
- 48 CFR 31.2 for for-profit organizations, which is available at <http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=7aec43c3df7b2501ebfc92494da2c79c&rgn=div6&view=text&node=48:1.0.1.5.30.2&idno=48>
- USAID Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations, which are available at: <http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/300/303maa.pdf>.

### **2. Non-U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations**

Awards to non-U.S. NGOs resulting from this APS will be administered in accordance with the following:

- Chapter 303 of USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS-303), which is available at <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>.
- 2 CFR 220 for universities (formerly OMB Circular A-21); or
- 2 CFR 230 for non-profit organizations (formerly OMB Circular A-122), both of which are available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html>.

- 48 CFR 31.2 for for-profit organizations, which is available at [https://www.acquisition.gov/far/html/Subpart%2031\\_2.html](https://www.acquisition.gov/far/html/Subpart%2031_2.html).
- USAID Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Nongovernmental Organizations, which are available at: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303mab.pdf>.
- 22 CFR 226 which is available at [http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx\\_03/22cfr226\\_03.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_03/22cfr226_03.html). Note that, while 22 CFR 226 does not directly apply to non-U.S. NGOs, USAID policy is to apply this regulation to non-U.S. NGOs to the extent practicable.