



Request for Information (RFI)

Subject: USAID/Central Asia Regional Water and Environment Program

Reference: RFI NO. 72011519RFI00011

Issued: September 20, 2019

Due Date: October 4, 2019, 09:00 AM Almaty Time

The United States Government, represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)/Central Asia, is seeking input from interested organizations, individuals and potential offerors who may provide comments, input, opinions and recommendations in response to the proposed questions outlined in this Request for Information (RFI).

Responses to this notice are not considered a proposal or application and will not be accepted or evaluated by the Government as a result of this RFI. Only responses with the information requested in this RFI will be reviewed. Responses received may be used for planning and design purposes.

Release of this RFI in no way obligates the United States Government or USAID to release a funding opportunity or solicitation for this proposed activity, nor are either responsible for any costs incurred in preparing responses to this RFI.

Responses must be submitted electronically to AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov with a copy to Tatyana Timoshenkova, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist, at timoshenkova@usaid.gov and Joshua Schramm, Contracting Officer at jschramm@usaid.gov under the title: RFI No 72011519RFI00011 for USAID/Central Asia Regional Water and Environment Program. The submitted information must not exceed 3 pages, including annexes/attachments. Submissions will receive an electronic confirmation acknowledging receipt. USAID will not provide feedback or responses to questions submitted in response to this RFI and no applications or resumes will be accepted or considered. Your responses will not be made public. Thank you for your interest in this Request for Information.

Sincerely,

/s/

Joshua Schramm
Contracting/Agreement Officer

Request for Information

I. PURPOSE

USAID is in the process of designing its new environment and water activity that will tackle current and emerging transboundary water and environmental challenges in the region as well as the linkages between water, energy and agriculture sectors. This Request for Information (RFI) is a preliminary call for information offered by interested organizations and individuals to provide information, opinions, strategies and recommendations to achieve the objectives and results stated below. Interested parties should provide a short 3-page submission addressing the issues and questions discussed in Section V below.

II Background

With population growth projections of 30% by 2050, outdated water infrastructure, and low institutional capacity to address water and environmental challenges, Central Asian countries and Afghanistan must find a path for future cooperation in order to effectively manage shared environmental and water resources to promote sustainable economic growth and regional stability.

Balancing water, food and energy security is crucial for long-term sustainable economic growth and human wellbeing in the region, as there are strong linkages and interdependencies among all three sectors. In Central Asia and Afghanistan, weak inter-sectoral linkages and the lack of mechanisms to exchange regional and local data and information, and the lack of understanding of the needs and impacts of each sector impede governments' ability to take actions to develop integrated solutions. However, opportunities for interventions that enhances cooperation among stakeholders in those sectors is possible and will allow decision-makers to develop appropriate policies, strategies and investments.

III Strategic Results

USAID Central Asia's current and past water and environmental activities continue to work towards achieving the following strategic objectives:

- Promote regional cooperation and coordination on shared water and environmental resources among central Asian countries and Afghanistan
- Improve water and natural resources management to sustain regional stability, economic prosperity, and healthy ecosystems.
- Address emerging environmental challenges impacting central Asian countries;

These results will be further realized by building on successes and lessons learned from previous and current USAID activities and other donor funded projects, focusing on emerging challenges, and utilizing social and political opportunities in the region to achieve objectives.

IV Current USAID Water and Environmental Activities

Smart Waters seeks to build a cadre of professionals in Central Asia and Afghanistan who are capable of managing shared water resources to maximize the economic value of water equitably over the long term in the face of climate change and other pressures. USAID has created 13 Small Basin Councils at 8 small transboundary rivers which take ownership and provide leadership in water management and collaboration, across the rivers and in regional forums. These Small Basin Councils have brought Afghans into events in Central Asia as partners: they have reconnected academia of water management who now proactively serve as mentors to colleagues, established a network of students throughout the region through a long-term Master's program in integrated water resource management, and formed a steering committee consisting of national partners from five Central Asian countries and Afghanistan to maintain sustainable linkages among key stakeholders.

Partnership for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER) is a grants program that funds scientists in developing countries to partner with U.S. government-funded researchers to address global development challenges such as climate change and transboundary water management.

C5+1 Project Supporting National and Regional Adaptation Planning has helped countries in Central Asia to develop national adaptation plans that identify and prioritize climate related risks to key economic and development sectors and select options for addressing those risks.

V Questions

USAID will continue to promote regional connectivity and sustainability of shared water and environmental resources, and would like to gather information on the following questions:

1. What are the challenges to achieving regional connectivity on shared water resources, and how should those challenges be addressed?
2. What are the gaps in the capacity of public, research, and educational institutions responsible for addressing efficient management of water and natural resources among Central Asian countries and Afghanistan, and how can they be filled?
3. How can the Small Basin Councils, created under USAID's Smart Waters project, sustain its current success, and what interventions are needed to scale up the idea of Small Basin Councils into larger rivers to address higher level issues in the region?
4. What is needed to improve the dialogue on the water energy and agriculture nexuses? Are there any bilateral or regional initiatives we can consider as an opportunity for such dialogue?
5. What is the capacity/experience of your organization to address water and environmental challenges in the region?

Please do not copy information from publicly available reports but you are free to include citations or references.

VI How to submit a response

All comments must be submitted electronically to AlmatyAASolicitations@usaid.gov under the title: RFI 72011519RFI00011, USAID/Central Asia Regional Water and Environment Program. Responses to this RFI will be accepted through October 4, 2019, 09:00 am (Almaty Time). You will receive only an electronic confirmation acknowledging receipt of your response but will not receive individualized feedback or suggestions. No basis for claims against the U.S. Government shall arise as a result of a response to this request for information or from the U.S. Government's use of such information. Specific questions about this RFI should be directed only to the email addresses identified above. This office will not respond to any telephone or other inquiries regarding this notice.

The submitted response must not exceed 3 pages, including annexes/attachments, if needed and should include the following information:

Reference Number: RFI 72011519RFI00011, USAID/Central Asia Regional Water and Environment Program

Date:

Affiliation/ Organization:

Business Address:

Representative Name / Email:

A short technical narrative that includes responses to the Questions in the RFI

Please note that USAID is not seeking technical or cost applications at this time. Do not submit any application in response to this RFI. Issuance of this notice does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation of comments.