

## **Notes – USAID DISABILITY PROJECT PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE**

**Notice of Funding Opportunity No. 72044020RFA00001**

**Hanoi, Vietnam - December 19, 2019**

### **AGENDA:**

#### **1. Introduction - Chris Abrams, Technical Office Director**

Good to see many people with whom we USAID have been working.

How we got here we are today... USAID began its support 1989. 30 years ago, Leahy Fund made its journey. Many things happened. Evolution made. From a humanitarian mindset to a more system-based approach, from direct support with service provision to a more technical assistance. Started with inclusive education, vocational training, and policy advocacy and development, the 2015 evaluation of USAID disability program found out that rehab sector is in need of development and overhaul reform. We are today in seven provinces with the program goal is to build a network supporting provinces and connecting GVN agencies. Eight implementing partners (5 of which local organizations and 3 int'l organizations) are working on direct assistance, home-based care, speech therapy, occupational therapy, building rehab capacity, supporting hospitals at district and provincial levels to provide assistive devices, training and counseling services, etc.

Over the years USAID has worked with GVN on disability policies and rights advocacy. The New Disability Program aims to build a comprehensive model of care and treatment for persons with disabilities (PWD) and continue to be there until the improvement of PWD life. At the beginning, USAID Disability Program worked with US organizations, and local organizations work with us as partners. Now we work directly with local orgs and local partners in Vietnam. Vietnamese organizations know best how to provide support to PWD in Vietnam. USAID has worked hard for a while on how to build partnership with Vietnamese partners. We are here to work with you and find the best way to work together.

#### **2. NOFO introduction (Agreement Officer)**

Hope you read the NOFO before. If you have questions, feel free to ask. Our success of the event is to make sure you understand what we are trying to do and how we intend to do it.

NOFO – key aspects – your understanding of the NOFO is critical. Let us know your feedback, as a learning organization we welcome your recommendations for any necessary improvements.

Just to note, being here is not pre-condition to application. Anyone can apply, whether here or not.

All changes to the NOFO will be done in writing as an amendment to the NFO. You should be always checking the website, every couple of days – keep tracking the site to make sure you are updated with all the changes.

#### **3. New Disability Program (Technical Office)**

Introduction of the new USAID Disability Program. Pg 7 – logical and results framework. Three main objectives: improved health and rehab services, improved social services, and improved policy development and implementation. Capacity building for labor force and working in policy advocacy is

our continued commitment. New element: home-based care, in addition to institution-based support. Home-based palliative care is a focus at the present time. Still in existing provinces plus new provinces of Kon Tum. Beneficiaries: incl. AO victims.

Participatory approach: wide range of counterparts, incl. ministries, prov committees, VAVA, hospitals, academia, anyone have an interest and capacity.

We are now looking to fund a mechanism to support our objectives which include management elements.

Prime awardees: Prime awardees go thru necessary steps, incl. set up mechanism for effective management of subawards.

Capacity building: sub-awardees: both international and local orgs, and counterpart orgs who might need to build capacity.

#### **4. Eligibility (Agreement Officer)**

Eligibility - who may apply? Local Vietnamese organizations only. Make sure your organization is eligible. The NOFO includes a clear definition of a "local Vietnamese organization".

How we do competition process? Potential applicants?

Competition structure: 2 stages: (i) Summary application; and (ii) Full application. i.e. Later if you make it, you'll be asked to submit a full application. At this point, we only ask for ten pages of the summary application.

Technical Evaluation – Organizational qualifications

- Experience/success
- Present capacity

You don't need every aspect of the experience/qualifications to apply. Tell us your best experience. We look at your quality of experience submitted rather than a mere checklist. We want to open the door for you to explain why you are interested to work with USAID and how you will work with us - put your best foot forward.

- Key reminders: (i) DUNS Registration: begin to register now. You should be able to register on your own. Don't wait until the last minute. (ii) Format and Page Numbering: be aware that we have format that you should pay attention to it.

#### **5. Financial Management (Financial Management Office)**

PRE-AWARD SURVEY: the applicant, if passes stage I and enter the 2<sup>nd</sup> part. We'll look at your accounting system, internal control, and reporting capacity.

Documents needed: - management policies; financial info; procurement policies and procedures; organizational structure and personnel.

Audit: ADS 591 – annual audit requirements – award requirement

Audit threshold: \$750,000 spent during the reporting period.

Annual audit requirements also applied for sub-awards.

Recipients' responsibilities

## **6. Next steps (Agreement Officer)**

Application due (Feb 4, 2020 @ 16:00 hours Hanoi time). Estimated Timeline Attachment to the NOFO. We encourage you to apply.

### **Q&A Session**

Q1: I am from an INGO working in Vietnam, we are interested in this call and we know that INGOs are not eligible for this. We hope to cooperate with the Prime as sub-contracts. Our question: when you plan to announce timeline of Prime award is May 5, what about sub-awards?

A1: In terms of sub awards, the timing is yet to be determined. This process will be managed directly by the Prime.

Q2: What's mechanism for the potential Subs to work with the Prime (information, procedure, etc)? When Prime Applicant already submits the full application, is there any chance for the Subgrantee discuss with the Prime to change the program design? It looks like we (sub applicants) don't have the opportunity to discuss with the prime about the contents of the program. In the full proposal the Prime submits to USAID, does USAID require the Prime to submit the details of the program design or is there any rooms for the Prime to change the design. Another participant comments to clarify the question Q2 above: Between the Summary Application and Full Application, should the potential subawardees try to ally with the Prime as part of Full Application so the Prime may have a say they would work with this or that partner?

A2: The final program, including the working mechanism between the Prime and the Subs, will be discussed as a part of the co-creation process. We are hoping to include the stakeholders, the applicants, and USAID in this process.

No. That is not necessary. It's an important point. A Prime could propose a subaward with their Summary Application and Full Application. That subaward would be to share the management responsibilities of the Prime. If the Prime wants to divide their responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation and capacity building, this is possible and that would be a sub relationship to be described in the summary application. Subawards to contribute towards the objectives in the disability sector will be selected after the award is made to the Prime. Again, if there is Sub organizations that the Prime would like to partner with, that helps the Prime to fulfill their management responsibilities (i.e., monitoring and evaluation, capacity building, etc.), that is up to the Prime to decide and should be included in the summary application.

Q3: If the Prime can share the responsibilities of management process with the Subawardees, could that shared responsibilities be with the INGOs? What are eligible sub-awardees?

A3: Eligibility that we discussed is relative to the Prime applicants only. There is no restriction on the potential sub-awardees.

Q4: When you have pre-award surveys, is it focusing with the Prime awardees, or will you do it with sub-awardees also?

A4: Pre-award survey will be conducted on the Prime. All the funding will be provided to the Prime, not to the Sub organizations. The Prime needs to be prepared to fully account for the management of the funds. To some degree, it's possible that consideration will be given to the Subs, exactly what the relationships are as proposed to USAID to give some context to the pre-award survey, but in general the survey will be conducted on the Prime.

Q5: It means that everything will be decided on stage II. It seems that it is too short time to make a good full application within two weeks

A5: We will be realistic and flexible. The time for program description is within two weeks after the co-creation is just to bring together all ideas and inputs into one single document. At the Summary Application stage, we are looking for a limited information. At the Full Application stage, you will have worked with us.

Q6: This call disposes a high capacity and high maturity, well concentrated on the local NGOs sector. It is expected a very capable high level of a player to manage the project as a Prime. Did you do your base-line survey and do you expect the Prime available?

A6: We considered these issues. This is an invitation for organizations to put their best efforts forward. We will choose the strongest partners with which to work. It's possible that we will need to provide capacity building.

Q7: Our experience as INGO with local organization is financial management. With transfer funding from USAID, how do you handle the currency exchange, for instance?

A7: Many of our implementing agencies have USD accounts. Gain or Loss of exchange rate can be documented in the financial report.

Q8: Sub-awardees are not involved at this stage, but project approval at subaward level must be in consideration. May 5 is when the Prime award to be made, but 15 days after the award the Prime will have to start the process of registration. How do you foresee the approval at the subaward level? Also, after May 5, timeline for the Prime is of 30 months, how you consider the subawards process who will implement 80% fundings of the project?

A8: There are 2 types of sub-awards. There might be sub-awardees come with Full Application. Sub-awards under assistance delivery will only take place after the award is given to the Prime.

Timeline of 30 months, 80% of the funding for the sub-awardees (for direct implementation).

It is noted that 30 months is short. USAID will have an assessment of how it is working; what needs to be done; what we can do to make it more effective, etc.

Q9: There are two levels of management: Prime and Sub. If I'm an implementer as a Prime, I cannot receive grants as a Prime. If I am in the Prime level, can I receive part of the 80% funding?

A9: We will discuss in the co-creation phase whether the Prime may implement different aspects of the program itself.

Q10: Earlier you mention local organizations as the Prime. Capacity building is not explicitly between the Prime and Subs? In the learning process, how Prime and Subs measure that?

A10: This Q&A will be more clarified what USAID expects. We look for the co-collaboration with the organizations. We hear from the recipients on what works best.

Q11: Can you provide any guidance to the Prime to ensure the transparent mechanism of how subawards can get to work with the Prime – i.e. the work between the Sub and the Prime can be transparent?

A11: This is to be determined in terms of how the subgrant process will be operated by the Prime. Thank you for your comments.

Q12: Do you have any contingency time between the timescale of 24 months when the evaluation takes place for project implementation in practice versus the 30 months at the end of the first stage, provided that the project gets its approval in time?

A12: We will take into account partners' concerns. USAID will discuss with the Prime to make adjustments where necessary.

Q13: How USAID consider to channel the big funds in a short period of time?

A13: AID knows certain things that we want. We want to work in 8 provinces; 3 lines of work: rehab – social – policy. Each province is different. Each local partner has certain strengths. We want a model. Fill the gap in province. USAID envisions counterparts do the best work. It can be a variety of actors and activities. Recognize at provincial level: one department can move much forward. Provide flexibility and to adjust what to move in provinces. No perfect solution.

Old project with MOLISA – 2 years for umbrella approval, and then needs approval in each province. We are flexible to move quickly with partner. Hope to have momentum to move to what we want.

Q14: selection on sub-awardees. So, after Prime awardees selected, then it may take a few months for the procedure of selecting sub-awardees?

A14: Details concerning the subawards have yet to be determined.

Q15: Clarification of the threshold and financial regulations?

A15: The threshold of \$750,000 does apply to the amount spent, not the amount received by the awardees. Prime is responsible for the project management.

Q 16: Can the Prime provide disability services, in other words can they apply to be their own Sub?

A 16: The focus for the Prime is to manage Sub-awardees who provide disability services. This issue will be further discussed at the time of the co-creation.

**Conclusion (Technical Office Director):**

Thanks so much about spending time with us this morning. We want to see what out there. USAID interested in finding organizations to work with, not the perfect organizations. All people in this room can join at different roles. It's been wonderful to work with you, and with you in the future.

-- The end --