



# USAID | NICARAGUA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Amendment Issuance Date:

**June 19, 2020**

Closing Date and Time for Submission of Concept Papers:

**June 29, 2020, 12 noon Local  
Nicaragua Time**

**SUBJECT : Amendment No. 1 -Nicaragua Youth and Communities Secure, Empowered and Resilient (NYCSER)Addendum/ RFA No. 72052420RFA00001 under YouthPower (YP2) Annual Program Statement APS No.: 7200AA20APS00007**

Dear Prospective Applicants:

The purpose of Amendment 01 is: 1) to provide answers to questions received under subject Addendum; 2) to update the NYCSER addendum; and, 3) to update the Concept Note Template.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Craig Riegler  
Agreement Officer

**USAID RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR RFA No. 72052420RFA00001  
Nicaragua Youth and Communities Secure, Empowered and  
Resilient (NYCSER) Addendum UNDER YOUTHPOWER 2  
(YP2) ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT (APS) No.: 7200AA20APS00007**

**Question 1:** Greetings from Center for Victims of Torture, a US-based torture and trauma rehabilitation center that operates clinics in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Atlanta, as well as several offices overseas. We have reviewed the Nicaragua Youth and Communities Secure, Empowered and Resilient (NYCSER) funding solicitation (APS No.: 7200AA20APS00007), and feel there may be ways our specialized expertise could make a useful contribution to a larger initiative as a sub-grantee/partner.

Do you have recommendations as to which organizations CVT might reach out to in order to introduce, or perhaps re-introduce ourselves to, for the purposes of potentially contributing to a proposal and program?

**USAID Response:** The applicant is expected to conduct market research, discuss this activity with all stakeholders and propose any sub-partners based on its approach. USAID therefore will not provide or prescribe stakeholders for potential applicants.

**NYCSER ADDENDUM**

**Question 2:** (Page 6) The theory of change states that “If marginalized and vulnerable youth in target geographic areas have access to basic services ...”. Can USAID please provide a definition of the types of basic services that are envisioned under NYCSER?

**USAID Response:** Under NYCSER, the basic services envisioned are included but are not limited to education, technical-vocational training, life skills, and psychosocial support.

**Question 3:** (Page 10) USAID states the “NYCSER activity will target youth in Managua, Masaya, Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas), and Waspmam.” Will USAID kindly clarify if the activity should target the municipalities or the entire departments of Managua and Masaya?

**USAID Response:** NYCSER is expected to target municipalities within the departments of Managua and Masaya focusing on those with higher risks such as Ciudad Sandino, Managua, and Masaya.

**Question 4:** (Page 10) USAID/Nicaragua is “seeking concept notes that are scenario-based”. Could USAID please provide further guidance on the scenarios that it is expecting on the concept note?

**USAID Response:** The applicant should describe anticipated political scenarios and how it could respond to each scenario.

**YOUTHPOWER 2 APS**

**Question 5:** (Pages 6 and 9, Annual Program Statement) USAID states more efforts are needed to design youth activities that better engage and support youth with specific needs such as young women and girls, youth with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) youth, and youth in crisis and conflict areas. Page 9 under USAID's Policy Framework and Education Policy and Intermediate Result 1.1. (Increased equitable access to knowledge and training opportunities) both highlight the importance of promoting equity and inclusion. Could USAID clarify if youth involved in illicit trades such as prostitution, gangs, and others should be included as part of NYC SER?

**USAID Response:** In the current Nicaraguan context, USAID does not expect to include youth involved in illicit trades such as prostitution, gangs and drug trafficking as part of NYC SER.

#### CONCEPT NOTE TEMPLATE

**Question 6:** (Overall) Can Letters of Support from Nicaraguan Organizations be included beyond the 5-page limit?

**USAID Response:** Yes, as annexes to the concept paper.

**Question 7:** (Overall) The template provided includes a summary budget and detailed/structured narrative. Can USAID please confirm that no detailed budget is required?

**USAID Response:** No detailed budget is required at the concept paper stage.

**Question 8:** Page 1, YP2 Concept Note Template) The template states the main body of the Concept Note (Sections I, II, and III) must NOT exceed (5) pages. However, on Page 2 of the Concept Note USAID states Section II may NOT exceed 5 pages, whereas on Pages 1 and 3 USAID states Sections I and III are NOT included in the 5-page limitation. Can USAID confirm that for the NYC SER addendum a cover page and summary budget are not included in the 5-page limit?

**USAID Response:** The cover page (Section I) is not included in the 5-page limit. No summary budget is required for the NYC SER addendum.

**Question 9:** (Page 17, NYC SER Addendum) Could USAID please confirm that the 5-page concept note must not exceed five (5) pages single-spaced?

**USAID Response:** The five-page concept note should be single-spaced. The NYC SER Addendum has been updated to reflect this change.

**Question 10:** (Page 17, NYC SER Addendum) Would USAID consider accepting tables, text boxes and

figures in Times New Roman no smaller than 10-point font?

**USAID Response:** USAID will accept tables, figures, and diagrams in Times New Roman, no smaller than 12-point font.

**Question 11:** (Page 17, NYCSER Addendum) The NYCSER Addendum states respondents should submit concept notes with the file name saved as: "Applicant Name/NYCSER Concept Note" while instructions under the YP2 APS Concept Note on Page 2 state respondents should use both the email subject line and document file name following the scheme: "Name of Addendum\_CN\_[respondent's institution]". The NYCSER Addendum and Concept Note Template Instructions reflect two different file name requirements. Can USAID confirm the file name?

**USAID Response:** The file name should be "Applicant Name/NYCSER Concept Note."

**Question 12:** (Page 18, NYCSER Addendum) The document includes the following aim for the virtual co-creation process: "to discuss responses to USAID's clarifying questions on the concept note, further define proposed interventions, review the management approach, develop indicators, align timelines, and discuss budgets." Can USAID please clarify if a management approach needs to be included as part of the 5-page concept note for NYCSER?

**USAID Response:** Yes, please include the program management approach under B. Technical Expertise including PYD Approach and Alignment with USAID Programming Priorities.

**Question 13:** The concept note template refers to "implementing organization(s) and new and under-utilized partners." For this concept note, how does USAID define and distinguish between these different types of organizations?

**USAID Response:** The concept note template has been updated and there is no longer any reference to new and under-utilized partners.

**Question 14:** The concept note template refers to "implementation research" multiple times. How does USAID define implementation research and can USAID provide an example of research that qualifies as implementation research?

**USAID Response:** The concept note template has been updated and there is no longer any reference to implementation research.

**Question 15:** Can USAID please define "on-demand field support buy-ins" in the concept note template?

**USAID Response:** The concept note template has been updated and there is no longer any reference to "on-demand field support buy-ins."

**Question 16:** Can USAID please specify if there will be a match requirement upon award?

**USAID Response:** There will be no cost-share requirement in this award. However, USAID welcomes cost-share contributions.

**Question 17:** Does USAID anticipate that submissions include illustrative activity descriptions, and if so, under which component of Section II should they be detailed?

**USAID Response:** Illustrative activity descriptions can be included in component B. Technical Expertise including PYD Approach and Alignment with USAID Programming Priorities of Section II of the concept note.

**Question 18:** While not directly referenced in the concept note template for Nicaragua Youth and Communities Secure, Empowered and Resilient, will the evaluators consider "Criterion 4 -Conflict and Crisis Sensitivity" in the evaluation of the concept note, or only criteria 1-3?

**USAID Response:** USAID will consider "Criterion 4 - Conflict and Crisis sensitivity" throughout the evaluation of the entire concept note.

**Question 19:** The Concept Note states that the NYC SER Activity will target youth in Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas). Should only Bilwi (as the "municipal head" of Puerto Cabezas) be targeted, or can other rural communities of Puerto Cabezas be included?

**USAID Response:** Bilwi and selected rural communities based on risks levels may be included

**Question 20:** Would USAID consider funding entrepreneurship initiatives in cash or in-kind?

**USAID Response:** USAID could consider funding entrepreneurship initiatives in-kind.

**Question 21:** On the Concept Note format, can USAID clarify that Sections I,II,III should be double-spaced, or if this only applies to Section II - PROPOSED APPROACH and ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY?

**USAID Response:** Section II of the concept note should be single-spaced. The NYC SER Addendum has been updated to reflect this update.

**Question 22:** Is a detailed or summary budget required at the concept note stage? If yes, what format should the applicant use?

**USAID Response:** A detailed budget is not required at the concept note stage

**Question 23:** The Attachment A concept note template only has three Merit Review Criterion, while the NYC SER APS includes a fourth Criterion 4 - Conflict and Crisis Sensitivity. In order ensure that the

concept note addresses all four criterion, would USAID consider expanding the page limit to six pages instead of five pages?

**USAID Response:** USAID will consider “Criterion 4 - Conflict and Crisis sensitivity” throughout the evaluation of the entire concept note.

**Question 24:** The Attachment A concept note template asks applicants to provide supporting documentation **Contact Information for Proposed Partners** (*2 pages maximum, Not included on 5-page limitation*). Are applicants required to provide this documentation for NYCSE for the concept note?

**USAID Response:** Yes. This is not included in the 5-page limitation, however there is a 2-page maximum of this attachment.

**Question 25:** The Attachment A concept note template appears to ask the applicants to respond to/answer each Merit Review Criterion individually. Should the applicant structure their concept note narrative in four sections based on the four Merit Review Criterion, or should the applicant structure their concept note based on the Goal, Outcomes, IR and related approaches and activities?

**USAID Response:** The application should follow the Concept Paper Note Template and answer each merit review criterion individually. USAID will consider “Criterion 4 - Conflict and Crisis sensitivity” throughout the evaluation of the entire concept note.

**Question 26:** The NYCSE Addendum (p.17 says), “*Respondents are asked to download the template from grants.gov in Word format, provide their responses in that document ... Concept notes must be five (5) pages or less, double-spaced with 12 point Times New Roman font and one-inch margins on the electronic equivalent of 8.5 x 11 inch paper.*” However, the template provided is in Times New Roman 11 pt (and the underlying font is set to Calibri) and is single spaced Would USAID please clarify the required font type, font size and spacing for the Concept Note?

**USAID Response:** The concept note should be in Times New Roman 12-point font, single-spaced, and one-inch margins, on the electronic equivalent of 8.5 x 11 inch paper. The NYCSE Addendum has been updated to reflect this guidance.

**Question 27:** The NYCSE Addendum (p.17 says), “*Respondents are asked to download the template from grants.gov in Word format, provide their responses in that document*”. That Concept Note Template includes Merit Review Criterion from a previous APS and does not match the Merit Review Criterion found on pages 25-26 of the NYCSE APS. Can USAID please confirm which is the correct Merit Review Criterion the bidder should follow for this concept note?

**USAID Response:** Applicants should follow the merit review criterion in the NYCSE Addendum.

**Question 28:** The NYCSE Addendum (page 17) directs respondents to “... *email a PDF saved copy of the document to oaanicaragua@usaid.gov with the file name saved as: ‘Applicant Name/NYCSE Concept Note’*” However, the template provided says that “*Both the email subject line and document file*

*name should the following scheme: 'Name of Addendum\_CN\_[respondent's institution]'.* Would USAID please clarify the required format for the concept note file name for submission?

**USAID Response:** The file name should be “Applicant Name/NYC SER Concept Note.”

**Question 29:** If we opt to avoid using some of the language in the APS such as “state intimidation” or “state-led violence” in order to avoid doing harm with existing and constructive relationships with the government of Nicaragua, would that negatively impact our potential for winning this award? In other words, is it acceptable to focus in on violence in general without calling out violence that is “state led”?

**USAID Response:** Yes, however, this is a risk factor to consider when selecting target beneficiaries and geographical locations.

**Question 30:** Because our ability to implement programming in Nicaragua is dependent upon maintaining a working relationship with the government, we do not want to jeopardize that ability and therefore jeopardize this or other USG-funded programming in the country. How sensitive will USAID be to the need to avoid incendiary and potentially counterproductive criticism of the government?

**USAID Response:** USAID is committed to supporting U.S. policy and development priorities in Nicaragua. USAID is sensitive to the difficult operating context of our IPs.

**Question 31:** Can USAID please clarify what is meant by a ‘scenario-based’ concept note? Is USAID looking for scenarios of target groups in a target municipality? Or is USAID wanting to know how Implementing Partners would respond to ‘what-if’ scenarios (for example extended impact of COVID-19, a change of government in November 2021, continued state harassment of organized youth activists, etc)?

**USAID Response:** USAID would like to know how implementing partners would respond to potential “what-if” scenarios in general.

**Question 32:** Can USAID clarify if a budget will be needed for the submission of the concept note? The concept note template states “Each addenda under the YouthPower 2 (YP2) Annual Program Statement (APS) will include budget information *IF* a budget is required with the submission of the Concept Note.” As budget information is *not* included in the addenda, our interpretation is that a budget is *NOT* needed for the concept note submission phase.

**USAID Response:** A budget is not required at the concept note stage.

#### Full Application

**Question 33:** On p. 21, the RFA asks for the Unique Entity Identifier on the cover page. However, our organization has not been issued a UEI, and gsa.gov says that “the IAE has shifted the UEI transition date

from December 2020 to a future, to-be-determined date.” In the absence of a UEI, would USAID please confirm that our DUNS number will satisfy the requirement as an organizational identifier?

**USAID Response:** Yes, a DUNS number will satisfy the requirement.

**Question 34:** May applicants invited to submit a full application include a list of acronyms and abbreviations that does not count toward the page limit?

**USAID Response:** Yes.

**Question 35:** On p. 23, the solicitation states, “USAID relies on the prime organization’s review of partner/sub recipient institutions. However, if deemed necessary to ensure prudent use of USG funds, USAID may conduct its own past performance review of proposed partners/sub recipient institutions. “Would USAID please confirm that this means that prime applicants should not provide past performance information for proposed sub recipients with the initial submission of the full application?”

**USAID Response:** Past Performance information should only be provided for the prime recipients. Primes are responsible to perform due risk assessments for proposed sub-recipients.

**Question 36:** Can USAID confirm it has provided no requirements for proposed key personnel? Can the applicant provide references on an additional page to the CV?

**USAID Response:** References on CV should be included in the 2-page maximum per person. Key personnel requirements will be shared during the co-creation phase.

**Question 37:** The Concept note template asks for single-spaced content but the addendum is asking for double-spaced. Could you please confirm the right formatting that should be followed for the concept note?

**USAID Response:** The concept note should be single-spaced. The NYC SER Addendum has been updated to reflect this guidance

**(END OF QUESTIONS & ANSWERS for RFA No. 72052420RFA00001/Nicaragua Youth and Communities Secure, Empowered and Resilient (NYC SER)Addendum)**