



Amendment #01 NOFO Issue Date: **September 9, 2022**
Initial NOFO Issue Date: **August 16, 2022**
Deadline for Questions: **September 6, 2022, 4.00 pm South Africa Time**
Concept Paper Closing Date: **September 26, 2022, 10.00 am South Africa Time**
Co-Design Kick Off Meeting: **TBD (October/November 2022)**

SUBJECT: Amendment No. 1 – Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) No.: 72067422RFA00006

Program Title: USAID/Lesotho / Local Entities Advancing and Driving Health Responses (LEADR) Activity

Catalog of Federal Assistance Listing (CFDA) Number: **98.001**

Dear Applicants:

The subject amendment is being issued to:

- 1) Provide answers to the questions that were received on/about September 6, 2022. The NOFO has been revised to reflect these answers and it is attached to this amendment.

All other terms and conditions of the NOFO remain unchanged.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

**Nya kwai
Boayue**

Digitally signed by Nya kwai
Boayue
Date: 2022.09.09 13:42:40
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Nya Kwai Boayue
Agreement Officer
Regional Office of Acquisition and Assistance

ANNEX 1

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS RECEIVED NOFO: 72067422RFA00006, LEADR ACTIVITY

GENERAL

- 1) Page 1, In the cover letter USAID indicates that it ‘strongly discourages the use of exclusive agreements with organizations and key personnel as this limits the program’s potential to receive the best services. On pg. 22 under the heading ‘Consortium’ the document stipulates that applicant are encouraged to partner with local, regional or international organizations to enable successful implementation. In our experience, members of a consortium confirm their participation by a letter of intent. Can USAID please further clarify its understanding of partnerships and exclusive agreements

USAID Response: Letters of intent are not requested nor required.

- 2) Could USAID kindly consider extending the closing date for submission of the concept paper

USAID Response: The closing date for the submission of concept papers has been extended. Please see the cover page.

SECTION A: FUNDING DESCRIPTION

- 3) Page 4, can USAID please clarify if current employees of the MoH Lesotho can be one of the co-applicants?

USAID Response: USAID has restrictions on funding to partner government entities therefore sub-awards to current employees of the MoH may not be possible. In addition given the nature of the work requested there are a number ethical and conflict of interest concerns that would need to be addressed.

- 4) Page 4, Should entities work throughout the districts of Mokhotlong and Butha-Buthe in their entirety or must they work in specific constituencies and/or communities within these districts?

USAID Response: Entities will work throughout both Mokhotlong and Butha-Buthe districts use a Direct Service Delivery approach in health facilities (public, private, or Christian Health Association of Lesotho (CHAL)) that have at least 200 patients on ART and a technical assistance (TA) approach focused on devolving services for health facilities with lower patient volumes. Applicants should ensure the support at all levels meets national and USAID standards for people-centered comprehensive services along the continuum of care, including innovative

**approaches for Family Planning access for beneficiaries seen within CHAL facilities
Applicants are encouraged to form consortiums that will
enable full program coverage in all community councils and health facilities in
these districts.**

- 5) Page 4, Could USAID kindly clarify whether comprehensive facility and community-based DREAMS services will be expanded to Butha Buthe and Mokhotlong under this award and others, or is the expectation to complement DREAMS like activities currently supported by The Global Fund in these districts?

USAID Response: The PEPFAR DREAMS program will not expand to Butha Buthe and Mokhotlong. The applicant will be expected to actively link eligible Adolescent girls and young women to the DREAMS-like activities currently supported by The Global Fund in Butha Buthe and Mokhotlong districts.

- 6) On page 4, the introduction states that support is to be given at the subnational levels with limited support at the national level. Please confirm if the proposed office structure and support should be budgeted for district-level offices and staffing in Butha-Buthe and Mokhotlong only and not Maseru-based MOH TA support?

USAID Response: The Health Systems Strengthening support on page 4 of the NOFO prioritizes subnational level (i.e., District, health facility, and community) level health systems strengthening technical assistance and limited TA at the national level to reduce duplication across other PEPFAR-supported programs e.g. laboratory, supply chain management, Health information systems. The LEADR activity health systems TA at national level will be limited to participation in MOH Technical Working Group (TWG) activities for policy formulation, devolution and decentralization of health systems management, dissemination of policies and guidelines in Butha Buthe and Mokhotlong, and coordination. Applicants are expected to propose a management and staffing structure that they perceive will be most appropriate to meet this health system strengthening deliverables.

- 7) Page 4, please clarify if 1) the primary clients listed are only in the Butha-Buthe and Mokhotlong districts and 2) the secondary clients, the general population, are only in Butha-Buthe and Mokhotlong districts, and not at the national level or within other PEPFAR-supported districts in Lesotho.

USAID Response:

- **Primary Clients:** All children, adolescents and adults living with HIV, pregnant and breastfeeding women, HIV exposed infants, key populations, TB patients, and communities affected by the HIV, TB, and COVID-19 pandemics in Butha-Buthe and Mokhotlong districts.
- **Secondary Clients:**
 - The general population, health care workers, community service providers, and policy makers in Butha Buthe and Mokhotlong districts.
 - National Level: Ministry of health

- 8) Page 6, Can entities choose to work in one district, or should they work in both?

USAID Response: Project scope covers both Butha Buthe and Mokhotlong districts. Applicants are encouraged to form consortiums before or during the co-creation workshop to enable submission of a proposal that covers the full geographic scope of the award. USAID reserves the right to issue one or more awards based on the outcomes of the merit review process.

- 9) Page 7, With the recent change in the Government of Lesotho's COVID-19 response prioritization, is there flexibility for the USAID to amend Result 2?

USAID Response: Result 2 has been amended, please the amendment to the NOFO.

- 10) Page 7, Please confirm if combined COVID-19 and PEPFAR outcomes are expected under this award.

USAID Response: Yes, combined COVID-19 and PEPFAR outcomes are expected.

- 11) Page 7, Please confirm how the local institutions will work with the current iNGO (non-local) partners in the two districts?

USAID Response: The scope of work of USAID awards for international NGOs is complementary to the scope of the LEADR activity. A successful applicant will be expected to coordinate and engage with other USAID and PEPFAR partners. Strategic partnerships, coordination, and/or resource leverage with other non-PEPFAR implementing partners is highly encouraged.

- 12) On page 7, VI. Geographic Focus, the RFA states that the “successful applicant must collaborate with existing USAID PEPFAR implementing partners to effectively transition activities. Some of these partners include the Expanding Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Clinical Services (ETHICS) and USAID/Providing Universal Services (PUSH) projects...” Will the implementing partners for ETHICS and PUSH remain in place under separate agreements or will additional locals be brought on to transition from these partners?

USAID Response: The LEADR activity will not have a significant overlap with the ETHICS activity. The ETHICS activity will only focus on the transition to the successful applicant of the LEADR project in collaboration with the MOH, DHMT, and other stakeholders in the Butha Buthe and Mokhotlong districts. In addition, the PUSH COVID-19 activities in Butha-Buthe and Mokhotlong will have ended before the issuance of a new award..

- 13) On page 7-13, Are applicants required to address all result areas, sub-IRs, and related deliverables in their proposals or are applicants allowed to propose work that is aligned with their best practice area under each result and IR?

USAID Response: At the concept paper stage, applicants should address all the result areas at a high level. Innovations and interventions under these areas may also be included.

- 14) Should the technical approach speak to all result areas, or can it speak to only one or two of them?

USAID Response: Please see the responses to question #13

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

- 15) Page 15, Section B (1) of the NOFO indicates that USAID intends to award one Cooperative Agreement. However, Section B (3) indicates that the award type will be a Fixed Amount Award (FAA) and/or Cooperative Agreement. Could USAID kindly clarify the intended award type?

USAID Response: USAID anticipates the resulting award will be a renewal Fixed Amount Award (FAA) Cooperative Agreement with milestone-based payments. However, the type of award will be determined further in the solicitation process.

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

- 16) Page 19, Cost sharing or matching, the section starts with the mention that ‘there is no cost share requirement for awards issued under this NOFO’. The paragraph thereunder however ends with the sentence that ‘USAID policy is that cost sharing is an important element of the USAID recipient relationship’. This latter sentence appears to contradict the first sentence. Can you please clarify?

USAID Response: Cost share is not required.

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

- 17) On page 20, In the NOFO, it is unclear who we are to submit our email application. Kindly confirm if the Agency point of contact mentioned in the NOFO is to be the recipient of our application?

USAID Response: Please see NOFO p.20 Section 1: Agency Point of Contacts.

- 18) In the NOFO, it was unclear when we would receive feedback after submitting our application. Can you confirm?

USAID Response: After submission of the concept paper, USAID will provide feedback on whether the concept paper has been selected for further consideration.

- 19) On page 22, the NOFA states, “A Concept Paper is a short, seven (7) page document.” Please confirm if this includes the cover page. Can the cover page be less than 1 page to accommodate more narrative?

USAID Response: Page limit for Concept paper should be seven, excluding the cover page. USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits and applications are encouraged to comply with the page limitations.

- 20) On page 22, The page limit is max. 7 pages, does this include the references or the cover page? Please confirm?

USAID Response: Please see the response to question #18.

- 21) On page 23, Co-design process, the document states that ‘None of USAID’s communication during the co-creation process should not be interpreted as a commitment to making an award of USAID funding’. We are confused by the double negation in the sentence, can you please clarify?

USAID Response: Corrected statement: “None of USAID’s communication during the co-creation process should be interpreted as a commitment to making an award of USAID funding”.

- 22) On page 25, Phase 3, the NOFO states that applicants should include “the following worksheets or tabs and contents” for the budget. There is also mention of a one-page summary budget. Please clarify what is required for the budget under Phase 3: a one-page summary budget or a series of worksheets and tabs.

USAID Response: The AO will provide guidelines to applicants who qualify to proceed to Phase III, including Full Technical Application Format, Merit Review Criteria, and Submission Instructions. In addition, during Phase I, applicants should attach a one-page summary budget (Note that the total page limit in Annex I, Concept Note of the NOFO is six (6) pages, and an additional page for the summary budget).

- 23) On page 26, Concept paper merit review criteria. The first paragraph under Phase I: Concept Paper states that ‘A concept paper is determined to be successful if it receives a Pass overall based on the three criteria below, which are all equally important’. On that same page there are however 4 criteria specified. Can you please clarify?

USAID Response: Corrected statement: “A concept paper is determined to be successful if it receives a ‘Pass overall’ based on the four criteria in the NOFO, which are all equally important”.

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

24) Page 41, The NOFO states, “Applicants shall provide a preliminary Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (ME&L) plan in their response. Upon confirmation of the award, the successful recipient will work in consultation with the Agreement Officer’s Representative (AOR) and other USAID/ Lesotho staff to develop and execute a final ME&L Plan.” Can you confirm that our understanding that the ME&L plan will only be required from the recipient when the award is confirmed and developed in consultation with the AOR, and USAID/Lesotho staff is correct?

USAID Response: Confirmed, your understanding is correct.

ANNEXES

25) Page 50, Period of Performance. Can you clarify the desired start date? Can you also clarify if the concept paper is to be submitted for the initial 3-year period or for the projected 5-year period? (This is also relevant information to complete the Total Amount of Funding requested from USAID.

USAID Response:

- **The desired start date is the second quarter of FY2023. For the concept paper budget applicants must use March 2023.**
- **The concept papers should focus on the initial 3 year period.**

26) On page 50, Content: can you clarify if a budget file is to be submitted for the concept Phase? The 5th bullet point refers to excel for budget files and the sixth bullet point mentions a ‘cost’ application. This bullet point also refers to Enclosure C of the NOFO which mentions an estimated start date. We have only identified Section C in the NOFO document and have not found a reference to the said estimated start date. Can you please clarify?

USAID Response: See response to question #25 for the anticipated start date. Please follow the budget format on page 23 for submission of the Concept Paper budget.

27) On page 50, Annex 1 Concept Paper Template does not include a requirement of a budget. On page 25, there is a description of an estimated summary budget table up to one page, but this is for Phase 3. Please clarify if the summary budget table is required during Phase 1 and if an additional page is acceptable in the concept paper, which will increase the page limit from seven to eight pages.

USAID Response: During Phase I, the Estimated Budget Summary is required and is part of the concept paper's seven (7) pages. In addition, the format provided on page 23 of the NOFO offers additional details on the summary budget.

28) Page 50 of the NOFO, Annex 1, references enclosure C - “The estimated start date identified in enclosure C of this NOFO must be used in the cost application.” Could USAID kindly clarify the anticipated start date of the award and whether submission of a cost application is required at this stage?

USAID Response: See response to question #25 for the anticipated start date. A budget summary is required for the concept paper stage.

29) On page 50, the NOFO says, “The estimated start date identified in Enclosure C of this NOFO must be used in the cost application;” however the start date was not found. Please confirm the period of performance/ start and end dates of the project.

USAID Response: Please see the response to question #25.

30) On page 50, In Annex 1, Concept Paper Template, please clarify whether the beneficiaries requested in Section C of the concept paper template are the primary clients described on page 4, paragraph 3.

USAID Response: Yes, these are the same beneficiaries outlined in Section A.1. of the NOFO (page 4) for both primary and secondary clients.

31) Page 50: “USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent section” – however, subsequent sections add up to 5 and are marked as “approximate” section lengths. I assume these are indeed approximations that we may exceed as long as we do not exceed 7 pages overall, please also confirm.

USAID Response: Yes, the page numbers are approximations as indicated in each section. Concept Paper applications must not exceed the total page limit of seven pages.

32) Any guidelines regarding literature references (and confirmation that these do not contribute to the word count)?

USAID Response: Literature references will be considered as part of the Concept Paper page limit. The NOFO does not provide any limitations on word count.