



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Date: October 7, 2022

Subject: Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance's (BHA) responses to questions received on the Augmenting Humanitarian Capacity for Infectious Disease Emergencies with Epidemic or Pandemic Potential Request for Applications (RFA) released on August 4, 2022 - Funding Opportunity Number 720BHA22RFA00001

Greetings:

The Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) has provided below Answers (As) the Questions (Qs) received prior to the deadline for questions on the subject Request for Applications (Funding Opportunity Number 720BHA22RFA00001):

Q1: Because we are a relatively new organization, we do not yet have our audited financials returned. Tax returns are available for 2020 and 2021 (unaudited), would we still be eligible to apply for this funding opportunity?

A1: Please review the NOFO to determine if your organization meets the eligibility requirements in Section C of the NOFO. As stated in section C of the NOFO, "BHA welcomes applications from organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID (new partners) and local organizations. Awards to new partners may be significantly delayed if BHA must undertake necessary pre-award surveys of these organizations in order to determine whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills in order to achieve the objectives of the program, or whether specific conditions will be needed (see Section D of this NOFO). These organizations should take this into account and plan their implementation dates and activities accordingly."

The NOFO also includes application submission information in Section D.

Q2: Although this program indicates global scope, are there priority regions and/or countries that applicants should consider?

A2: While there are no specific priority regions or countries, applicants should prioritize humanitarian settings for proposed interventions.

Q3: Key strategic alliances, across all levels, are fundamental to achieving program objectives, create common advocacy platforms that address longer term solutions, strengthen multi-sectoral collaborations for effective IDs and pandemic readiness and readiness". Is there a limit to the number of partners submitting one application?

A3: BHA did not include in the NOFO a limit to the number of partners submitting one application. Eligible applicants interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read the NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought and application submission requirements.

Q4: USAID intends to award up to three Cooperative Agreements pursuant to this NOFO, subject to funding availability. The total funding for this NOFO is \$15 million for all the awards”. Is there a limit to the number of applications within which an organization can participate as a sub in response to this NOFO?

A4: BHA did not include in the NOFO a limit to the number of applications within which an organization can participate as a sub-awardee in response to this NOFO. Per section C.3 of the NOFO, sub-awardees may be on more than one application.

Q5: Can CDC provide technical input? Can they be a stated partner but receive no funds?

A5: Eligibility is addressed in Section C: Eligibility Information. Applicants should review eligibility requirements addressed in Section C of the NOFO. As stated in section A Program Description and the Implementation Approach, the applicant is strongly encouraged to work with other organizations as necessary per the applicant’s proposed activities; however, principal responsibility for implementation of the program will rest with the prime applicant. Further, the applicant’s implementation approach should harmonize and align accordingly to adapt programs to existing programming to avoid duplication of efforts to ensure linking up to existing platforms (i.e. to USAID, CDC, other donor funded programs) or other efforts to maximize overall effectiveness. Please also note that in accordance with Section C.1 of this NOFO, “BHA will not accept applications from, or provide awards to individuals, parastatal organizations, or other U.S. Government departments and agencies. These organizations are also excluded from being sub-recipients under this NOFO.”

Q6: “Readiness” is defined in the NOFO as an organization’s capacity to rapidly respond to large-scale ID Events of Epidemic or Pandemic Potential in a humanitarian setting, capable of engaging in internationally recognized coordination structures, and responding through an integrated humanitarian - ID response approach. Does this apply to a large scale ID event that has the potential to evolve and become a humanitarian crisis if not dealt with appropriately?

A6: Yes, the primary objective of this initiative is to build infectious disease “readiness to respond” capacity for outbreaks of epidemic and pandemic potential that are in or become humanitarian contexts.

Q7: Is there a preferred funding percentage distribution across the three objectives?

A7: BHA does not have a preferred funding percentage distribution across the three objectives. The distribution of funding across the objectives must be dependent on the proposed activities.

Q8: Can USAID please clarify how will this new activity will coordinate with the existing READY project ending in March 2024, to avoid duplication of efforts during the anticipated one year overlap between these projects?

A8: This new activity is intended to build on, complement and coordinate as needed with all relevant USAID funded programming such as the READY Initiative.

Q9: Page 14 of the NOFO references the Management Plan and Governance Structure, including 3 required positions (Chief of Party, Deputy Chief of Party, and Senior Technical Advisor). Can USAID please confirm that named candidates for these Key Personnel positions are only

required if invited to submit the full application after concept notes are evaluated?

A9: Named candidates for Key Personnel positions will only be required if invited to submit a full application.

Q10: On page 48 of the NOFO, under institutional Experience and Capability for the full application evaluation criteria, USAID notes that applicants must demonstrate that proposed key personnel have requisite experience and expertise to meet or exceed the attributes specified in the NOFO. Can USAID please advise if there are specific required qualifications for these candidates?

A10: Key personnel should have experience providing senior leadership in relevant public health capacity building projects and have significant experience with and knowledge of the humanitarian architecture and humanitarian health standards and approaches.

Q11: The NOFO refers to building internal capacity on page 9. Can USAID please clarify if applicants are encouraged to build their own internal operational and technical capacity in addition to the internal capacity of other local and international organizations through this project?

A11: BHA understands that applicants may need to use some resources to build their own internal operational and technical capacity in order to achieve the identified objectives, but the primary focus of proposed activities should be to build the operational and technical capacity of the humanitarian community.

Q12: For the concept note submission, will BHA kindly clarify whether applicants should submit the summary budget in a separate excel document, or as a table within the technical application? If it should be included as part of the technical application document, can BHA please confirm if it can be considered outside of the 7-page page limit?

A12: As stated in Section D Application and Submission Information, the Concept Paper submission package must include:

1. A Cover Page - (no page limit)
2. Concept Technical Information, inclusive of an Executive Summary (7 page maximum)
3. Budget Summary (**no page limit**)

If partner organizations are identified, letters of commitment should be included. Letters of commitment do not count towards the page maximum.

Q13: Is it possible for applicants to propose shortened objectives?

A13: Applicants should review the NOFO and its objectives including section A Program Description of the NOFO to clearly understand the objectives of the NOFO and the types of program sought. Please note that, while applicants may refer to the objectives in shortened form, they must not change the content of the objectives.

Q14: How long will applicants have to prepare a full application after receiving notification that they have passed the Concept Paper phase? Will USAID allow applicants to ask additional questions during the full application phase?

A14: As stated in Section D Application and Submission Information, if a concept paper

is approved, the applicant(s) with successful/approved concept paper(s) will be invited to submit a full application by the date given in the approval email. It will be at the discretion of the Agreement Officer whether USAID/BHA will allow applicants to ask additional questions during the full application phase.

Q15: Page 5, Section A.1, Background: The NOFO states that the “TPQ intends to continue an initiative to build infectious disease (ID) ‘readiness to respond’ capacity for outbreaks of epidemic and pandemic potential that are in or become humanitarian contexts” (emphasis our own). Could USAID kindly provide information on this referenced initiative?

A15: BHA has supported several projects under the current Infectious Disease and Pandemics Initiative with the broader aim of building ID readiness to respond in the humanitarian community. These have included investments in building humanitarian actors’ readiness to respond to outbreaks, elevating risk communication and community engagement, and developing guidance on integrating health and protection during outbreak response, among others.

Q16: Page 6, Section A.1, Background: The NOFO states that, “Throughout the past year, the IDAP team has conducted extensive market research in order to better understand the current landscape of ID readiness and response capacity” (emphasis our own). Could USAID please share the market research with interested applicants?

A16: The market research is an internal USAID document and cannot be shared externally. However, the NOFO’s Program Scope and Statement of Objective(s) is a result of the findings from the extensive market research.

Q17: Page 10, Section A.3, Geographic Scope: It says that “Applicants can include focus at local, national, and regional levels as needed. Applicants must include robust assessment information from primary and/or secondary sources to justify interventions in the proposed area.” However, on Page 12, Section A.5, BHA Program Design Guidelines, it states that “Response capacity strengthening programs should be worldwide in scope.” Could USAID kindly provide clarity on what it means by a worldwide scope?

A17: BHA expects applicants to prioritize building capacity of the humanitarian community, and program(s) should impact the humanitarian community at the worldwide level, but BHA recognizes that applicants can conduct activities at local, national, and regional levels to achieve the desired objectives.

Q18: Page 13, Section A.8, Management Plan and Governance Structure: Could USAID please confirm which positions should be designated as “Key Personnel”?

A18: Key Personnel include the 3 required positions indicated on page 14 of the NOFO. These include Chief of Party, Deputy Chief of Party (or equivalent), and at least one Senior Technical Advisor (expert for the objectives/areas identified in the Program Description).

Q19: Page 21, Section C.4(b), Qualification Factors: It states that the applicant must “Have institutional experience in delivering international or national level capacity strengthening programs for humanitarian actors.” We understand this to mean that any member of an applicant’s consortium may have this experience. Could USAID kindly confirm this

understanding is correct?

A19: As stated in section A Program Description, the applicant is strongly encouraged to work with other organizations as necessary per the applicant's proposed activities; however, principal responsibility for implementation of the program will rest with the prime applicant. Applicants should have this institutional experience within their consortium.

Q20: Page 27, Section D.3.C, Concept Paper and Full Application Requirements: It states that "10 point font can be used for graphs and charts." Could USAID kindly allow applicants to use 10 point font for text boxes?

A20: Applicants can use 10 point font for text boxes.

Q21: Page 46, Section E.1, Review and Section Process states that "Based upon the evaluation of the Concept Paper, USAID may request a full application. Applicants judged to have submitted the best concept paper(s) will then be requested to submit full applications for further consideration." Does USAID have a maximum number of full applications it will request?

A21: Only the applicant(s) with successful/approved concept paper(s) will be invited to submit a full application by the date given in the approval email. USAID does not have a maximum number of full applications to be requested, and the number of applicants invited to submit full applications will be dependent on the quality of the applications received and the availability of funds, and will be at the discretion of the Agreement Officer.

Q22: Page 26, Section D.3.A, General Content and Form of Application Submission: Could USAID please provide a template for the Budget Summary to provide additional clarification on how the applicant should show the breakdown by BHA sector?

A22: An example of a Budget Summary is available at the following site: [USAID-BHA Budget Template - IDA](#). An example of a budget narrative for the full application is available at the following site: [Budget Narrative Example | U.S. Agency for International Development \(usaid.gov\)](#)

Q23: Page 37, Section D.6.D.3, Travel and Transportation: Given the global scope and undefined/flexible nature of the work, could USAID please provide a plug figure for Travel expenses to guide budget development?

A23: BHA cannot provide a figure for travel expenses. Travel expenses must be dependent on the proposed activities and be reasonable. All costs must represent a realistic and efficient use of funding to implement the applicant's program and be allowable in accordance with the cost principles in 2 CFR 200.

Q24: Is this a multi-country opportunity? Can one organization apply for this funding across its different country offices?

A24: This NOFO is worldwide in scope, and there are no specific priority regions or countries, but applicants should prioritize humanitarian settings for proposed interventions.

Q25: Can an organization prime in one consortium and sub in another consortium?

A25: As stated in section C.3 of the NOFO, prime applicants may only submit one application under this NOFO. Sub-awardees may be on more than one application.

Q26: Countries such as Kenya and Uganda are not classified as humanitarian contexts but host large numbers of refugees. Would including such countries be acceptable under this project?

A26: BHA's funding is intended to support Internally Displaced Populations (IDPs), and refugee populations are supported programmatically by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) at the Department of State. As stated in the NOFO, applicants should prioritize work in countries and regions with humanitarian contexts.

Q27: Would a partnership with a governmental organization such as EAC and IGAD be allowed under this project?

A27: Eligibility is addressed in Section C: Eligibility Information. Applicants should review eligibility requirements addressed in Section C of the NOFO. As stated in section A Program Description, the applicant is strongly encouraged to work with other organizations as necessary per the applicant's proposed activities; however, principal responsibility for implementation of the program will rest with the prime applicant.

Q28: BHA states that each applicant may only submit one application under this NOFO. Can BHA clarify if country missions within a UN agency would be considered a separate applicant? (ie. Can multiple country missions from the same UN agency apply for this NOFO).

A28: USAID's [ADS 308 maa](#) lists the organizations that are considered Public International Organizations (PIOs) and UN organizations at a country level are not considered separate organizations, PIOs apply as one organization with one SAM and UEI registration number.

Q29: Are applicants eligible to prime their own submission and be included as subs on other consortiums?

A29: As stated in section C.3 of the NOFO, prime applicants may only submit one application under this NOFO. Sub-awardees may be on more than one application.

Q30: The NOFO is clear that applicants must address all three objectives, which narrows the ideating possibilities. As BHA has not decided if one CoAg or up to three CoAgs will be awarded a suggestion from industry is to allow concepts that address at least two objectives rather than all three.

A30: All applicants must address all three objectives in the concept note submission.