

USAID Small Grants for Biodiversity 72036724RFA00001

Amendment 001

SN	Question	Response
1	I wanted to inquire if the regenerative farming that incorporates fruit trees, perennials, vegetable crops, livestock, poultry and aquaculture eligible for the grant.	To clarify, USAID does not seek to directly issue and manage a number of individual small subawards/grants as a result of this NOFO. Instead we seek a Recipient to manage such a small subawards/grants program (please review Section A.7 of the NOFO for more clarity on the two main areas of the technical approach). The Recipient, when managing the small grants program, should most especially focus on issuing grants that address biodiversity conservation with the intent to positively impact biodiversity. In general, regenerative farming itself should not be eligible for a small grant, but it could be sub-component of a larger biodiversity focused grant if the farming activities help address the aforementioned criteria.
2	Is a government institution eligible for this grant for the conservation of agrobiodiversity?	USAID revised Section C.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS to clarify that USAID does not envision direct support to Government of Nepal and/or Government of Nepal Parastatals, which are defined as firms operated as commercial companies or other organizations -- including nonprofits-- or enterprises in which foreign governments or the foreign agencies have a controlling interest.
3	Could you please share about the project locations (province/district) proposed for the Small Grants for Biodiversity?	As outlined in Section A.6 of the NOFO, the geographic focus of the Activity will focus on four distinct Nepali landscapes: Kailash, Karnali (proposed), Chitwan-Annapurna, and Terai-Arc. All provinces and districts within those landscapes are eligible; however, the individual calls for applications under the program may further restrict the geographical range of the applicants depending on the specifics of the call, or in order to ensure geographical disbursement of grants is equitable across the four landscapes.
4	What about working provinces, districts and municipalities? How Many Districts/Municipalities can be taken for the project?	As outlined in Section A.6 of the NOFO, the geographic focus of the Activity will focus on four distinct Nepali landscapes: Sacred Kailash, Karnali (proposed), Chitwan-Annapurna, and Terai-Arc. All provinces and districts within those landscapes are eligible; however, the individual calls for applications under the program may further restrict the geographical range of the applicants depending on the specifics of the call, or in order to ensure geographical disbursement of grants is equitable across the four landscapes.
5	Can we make a joint application?	Yes, two or more organizations can form a consortium with a prime applicant and sub-recipient(s), and submit an application. Alternatively, you may wish to form a Joint Venture, though the two businesses must demonstrate that they are legally registered to do business as a Joint Venture. Note that in Phase II, if selected, Applicants must adhere to Section D.6.1.1 bullet no. 4 for your staffing and management plan.
6	What is the number of awards?	USAID anticipates making only one award for this procurement, but reserves to make up to two awards, if needed.

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7	Estimated budget ceiling for an NGO and for a project?	USAID has reserved \$9 million for this total effort. USAID anticipates making only one award for this procurement, but reserves to make up to two awards, if needed. If two awards are made, only up to \$9 million total will be given for the two awards.
8	Estimated project period?	The anticipated period of performance is five years, as defined in Section B.2 of the NOFO.
9	<p>Looking into the NOFO, Eligible Participants (Section C: Eligibility Information, C1: Eligible Applicants), which is mentioned as- Is legally organized under the laws of Nepal. Has as its principal place of business or operations in Nepal. Is majority owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of Nepal. Is managed by a governing body the majority of who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the country receiving assistance, Nepal.</p> <p>Our question is, despite our organization is US Based, we are registered in country (affiliated with Social Welfare Council) and got the permission to operate all over the country, and governing by all the Nepalese citizen in Nepal, can we apply for this opportunity as a prime.</p>	Eligibility criteria for this NOFO is as detailed in Section C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION. Therefore, a US-based organization is not eligible to be a prime applicant for this NOFO.
10	If the call is meant for Local NGOs, can we as INGO be the sub under the local partner in the consortium, which could be an accompaniment model to support NGOs growth.	Yes, as per Section C of the NOFO, eligibility for the prime applicant is restricted to local Nepali entities. Eligibility is not restricted for subawards. Prime applicants are encouraged to propose appropriate sub-partners that enable them to best meet the NOFO/activity requirements and that adhere to the laws and regulations of the Government of Nepal.
11	Are there specific criteria set for defining local NGOs to be eligible to apply for the call or how do you define Local NGOs relevant to this call? Does it center on sectoral coverage or legal identity?	<p>Please see Section C.1 Eligible Applicants of the NOFO, which states: "The "local entity" is defined as a corporation, a nonprofit organization, or another body of persons that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is legally organized under the laws of Nepal. 2. Has as its principal place of business or operations in Nepal. 3. Is majority owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of Nepal. 4. Is managed by a governing body the majority of who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the country receiving assistance, Nepal."

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12	Is cost sharing a prerequisite for eligibility in Phase 1 of this call, and if so, what is the appropriate ratio for consideration?	As stated in Section C.2 of the NOFO, cost sharing is voluntary. Note cost share is a component that should be addressed by the Applicant, if desired, if the Applicant is invited to Phase III of this process.
13	Can we have international expat as a team member in our application?	USAID seeks that entities propose an staffing structure that enables them to best meet the activity requirements and that adheres to the laws and regulations of the Government of Nepal.
14	Can an applicant leading one consortium participate as a sub-partner in another consortium?	Yes, an applicant leading one consortium may participate as a sub partner in another consortium. Note that a prime applicant may not submit more than one application, as detailed in Section C.3 of the NOFO.
15	Can an organization who is currently a partner of the current USAID Biodiversity Activity apply in this opportunity?	Section C does not preclude current partners or sub-awardees from responding to this solicitation. All eligible organizations are encouraged to apply.
16	Should sub-awardee(s) be identified in the beginning and mentioned in the application?	Listing sub-awardees in phase 1 is not a mandatory requirement though applicants may elect to include them to strengthen their response.
17	Regarding the geographic location “western mid-hills” for this project [USAID assumes you mean for a response to the scenario], from which part of the country are considered as western Nepal?	For a response to the scenario, USAID considers the Western Mid-Hills as those areas west of Kathmandu marked as "Middle Mountain" in the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation's Department of Survey map published @ https://dnpwc.gov.np/en/ .
18	Is there a mechanism for evaluating all consortium members, or is the evaluation focused primarily on the lead organization?	Please see E.1.1.a of the NOFO. USAID will evaluate the extent to which the Applicant (and, if applicable, their proposed sub partners) convincingly demonstrates capacity, expertise, and experience relevant to implementing USAID Small Grants for Biodiversity.
19	Does the past budget expenditure of an organization play a role in the awarding process for this call?	Institutional Capacity is one of the Merit Review Criteria(Section E.1.1a). Please also see Section D.5.3.2 under D.5 PHASE I-SUBMISSION PROCEDURES. Past award size (budget value) is a datapoint that must be included in the submission and will be reviewed.
20	Organizations currently involved in other USAID projects or those that have previously carried out USAID projects?	This question is not clear. However, USAID seeks to clarify that Section C does not include a restriction that current or past partners or sub awardees may not respond to this solicitation.
21	Could you please provide more information on the selection criteria for Phase I submissions, particularly regarding the evaluation of institutional capacity and response to the hypothetical scenario?	All information regarding the evaluation of applicants is found in Section E.1 of the NOFO.

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22	Can you clarify the timeline for Phase II - Oral Presentation, including when successful applicants invited to Phase II can expect to present their proposals?	USAID does not have a timeline at this time and will send supplemental instructions, including timeline, to those applicants invited to Phase II.
23	How will USAID ensure transparency and fairness in the selection process, particularly regarding the invitation of applicants to Phase II and Phase III?	The U.S. Federal Government requires that USAID adhere to systems and procedures that ensure fairness and integrity in the selection process. In addition, USAID policy (ADS 303.3.6.4 b) requires that the Agreement Officer protect the integrity of the competitive process by ensuring a fair and impartial consideration of all applicants. As such, USAID will review all applications in adherence to what is contained in Sections D and E of the NOFO.
24	Can you elaborate on the role of the apparently successful applicants during Phase III - Co-Design and Cost Application, and what level of collaboration with USAID and other stakeholders is expected?	The procedures for Phase III will be shared with the apparently successful applicants via a future email communication.
25	Are there any restrictions or limitations on the types of activities or interventions that can be funded through the small sub awards for biodiversity conservation?	Activities supported by the small subawards must demonstrate clear linkages to applicable GON policies and procedures, and USAID Biodiversity Policy. This is explained in detail under Section A.7.1 of the NOFO.
26	Can you provide more details on the pre-award costs that may be authorized for apparently successful applicants, and what steps need to be taken to obtain approval for these costs?	USAID may authorize pre-award costs in Phase III as described in Section D.10 of the NOFO. More details and procedures will be shared during that stage, but will likely include costs to run the co-design workshop with stakeholders, like the cost of venue rental and other logistics, plus any other ancillary costs.
27	What are the key components required in the Budget and Budget Narrative section of the Cost Application for the USAID Small Grants for Biodiversity program?	Please see Section E.1.3 PHASE III - CO-DESIGN AND COST APPLICATION for more details. A budget is not required for Phase I.
28	What documentation and procedures are involved in the pre-award responsibility determination and risk assessment process outlined for organizations new to working with USAID ?	Please see Attachment 2, Section 2: PRE-AWARD RESPONSIBILITY DETERMINATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT (Pages 57-58 of the NOFO) where the documentation and procedures are addressed in detail.
29	What collaboration mechanisms are established between the recipient and USAID for providing technical input, project updates, and addressing significant developments or challenges during project implementation?	Regular meetings will be set up between the USAID Agreement Officer's Representative and the Recipient to share updates. Please review Section F.3 Deliverables and Reporting Requirements of the NOFO to learn more about the requisite written documents that must be submitted for this award.

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30	Please elaborate more on the eligibility of applicants.	Please see Section C.1 Eligible Applicants of the NOFO, which states: "The "local entity" is defined as a corporation, a nonprofit organization, or another body of persons that: 1. Is legally organized under the laws of Nepal. 2. Has as its principal place of business or operations in Nepal. 3. Is majority owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of Nepal. 4. Is managed by a governing body the majority of who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the country receiving assistance, Nepal."
31	The system is not allowing us to submit an application.	Please see Section D.5.1 of the NOFO, which documents that responses to this NOFO must be submitted by email to the Agency Point of Contact indicated in Section D.1 by no later than the closing date and time indicated on the cover page of the NOFO, which is currently Friday, April 5, 2024 at 5pm Nepal Time.
32	In addition to the prime applicant, what are the processes of the sub-awards?	Please see Section A.7.1 of the NOFO to learn more details, including that the "Recipient must foster a well-planned, cost-effective, market-driven, and innovative small subawards management program." It is incumbent upon the Applicant/Recipient to propose/implement a satisfactory subaward program.
33	Is there any guideline on how many partner organization[s] can be included in partnership by primary applicant?	There is no specific guidance on the number of partner organizations that can be included. It is up to the applicant to propose a consortium, if desired, that demonstrates that they can effectively implement the activity.
34	Please send us full application.	For the full NOFO, please go to https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/352203 and click on the related document tab of the announcement.
35	Is there any maximum and minimum number of consortium members for an application?	There is no specific guidance on the number of partner organizations that can be included. It is up to the applicant to propose a consortium, if desired, that demonstrates that they can effectively implement the activity.
36	Does the primary applicant need to work in all four landscape/project area?	The prime recipient will be responsible for implementation of the entire award, which includes all four landscapes. Please see Section A.6 GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS AND TARGET POPULATION
37	How do you share the slides?	Please see Appendix 3 of Amendment Number 01 of this NOFO.
38	Can any INGOs, also registered in Nepal as per the Nepali law, submit Concept Note?	Eligibility criteria for this NOFO is as detailed in Section C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION. An international nongovernmental organization is not eligible to apply as a prime applicant in response to this NOFO.

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39	In regards to the institutional capacity, would the capacity of all the consortium partners be given equal weightage or would it just be that for the lead organization?	Please see E.1.1.a Institutional Capacity. USAID will evaluate the extent to which the Applicant (and, if applicable, their proposed subpartners) convincingly demonstrates capacity, expertise, and experience relevant to implementing USAID Small Grants for Biodiversity. USAID will evaluate the capacity of proposed consortium as a whole.
40	Can academic Institution lead or remain as the sub-awardee in the consortium?	There is not any restriction for academic institution to lead or serve as a sub-awardee in the consortium. However, please note the restriction contained in Section C of the NOFO, which states: "USAID does not envision direct support to GON and/or GON parastatal entities under this award." As such, if an academic institution is considered a GON parastatal entity, it may not be considered eligible.
41	Shall we need SAM ID no.during PCN submission?	As per the cover page of the NOFO, applicants are not required to submit a Unique Entity Identification number issued via www.sam.gov with their Phase I submission. However, please note that USAID may not award to an Applicant unless the Applicant has obtained a Unique Entity Identifier and possesses an active status in SAM.gov.
42	Question: Can any university organization worked on biodiversity and having SAM submit the concept note?	There is not any restriction for academic institution to lead or serve as a sub-awardee in the consortium. However, please note the restriction contained in Section C of the NOFO, which states: "USAID does not envision direct support to GON and/or GON parastatal entities under this award." As such, if an academic institution is considered a GON parastatal entity, it may not be considered eligible.
43	Why Scenario of NOFO is not covered the aquatic biodiversity?	Recognizing the Nepal's long experience and several existing examples on terrestrial biodiversity, we selected terrestrial biodiversity focused scenario for the concept note. The selected recipient is expected to work on both terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity issues as addressed in the NOFO.

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44	Is the project strictly restricted to sub-award/sub-grants or can the main implementing agency/prime awardee directly implement some specialized activities such as human-wildlife conflict management. community-based tourism?	Yes, the prime Recipient is expected to implement technical activities, as outlined in Section A.7.2 DIRECT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE of the NOFO.
45	In [the] case of joint application, is it necessary that all consortium partners should be equally eligible?	This question is not clear. Regardless, if asking if consortium members should have equal equities and receive equal payment for implementation, the answer is no. Applicants may propose a consortium of partners that enables them to best meet the activity requirements, and the allocation of work and payment is at the discretion of the prime applicant.
46	Are national organizations registered outside the Project district eligible to apply?	Please review the eligibility requirements contained in Section C.1 of the NOFO, which does not restrict eligibility to organizations registered to work in the geographic locations named in Section A.6 of the NOFO.
47	If the JV wish to apply, is it required to have SAM and UEI for all consortium partner or would it be sufficient if only the prime has the UEI and SAM?	If two or more organizations legally form a joint venture, then the UEI and SAM registration should be in the name of the Joint Venture.
48	Can government organizations (or any organizations under Nepal Government) apply?	This NOFO is intended for the local entity as described in Section C.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS. USAID does not envision direct support to GON entities or GON parastatal entities under this award.
49	After getting the UEI, what are the processes to start application process?	In accordance with Section D.5.1, responses to this NOFO must be submitted by email to the Agency Point of Contact indicated in Section D.1 by no later than the closing date and time indicated on the cover letter. The submission procedures are described in detail in Section D.5 PHASE I-SUBMISSION PROCEDURES.
50	How much time does it take to publish result from concept note submission date?	We are not able to provide a specific timeline at this point. However, the successful applicant(s) will be invited to the next stage within a reasonable time and USAID will notify unsuccessful applicants around the same time.
51	Can the joint application compose of a prime NGO and another one a company? And should both the org have SAM number?	Yes, there is no restriction on proposing a consortium with a prime local NGO and a private company serving as a subrecipient. The prime applicant should have a Unique Entity Identification (UEI) number and have an active registration in SAM.gov, and the subrecipient must have a UEI number prior to award.
52	Mostly the registered NGO have PAN instead of VAT. Could you please provide some clarification on this?	PAN and VAT are the requirements of the Government of Nepal. Organizations can have PAN or VAT registration as prescribed by the law.

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53	Please elaborate on the number of awards in total?	USAID anticipates making only one award for this procurement, but reserves the right to make up to two awards, if appropriate.
54	INGOs and International organization/universities are looking/seeking interest to join the consortium for application. How can they be engaged in the application? Can they access the funds from the SGB?	Per Section C of the NOFO, eligibility for the prime applicant is restricted to local Nepali entities. Eligibility is not restricted for subawards. Prime applicants are encouraged to propose appropriate sub-partners that enable them to best meet the NOFO requirements, and that adhere to the laws and regulations of the Government of Nepal. As per the current USAID procedure, USAID will disburse funds to the prime recipient. The transfer of funds to a subrecipient should be managed by the prime recipient following its procures.
55	How much sections should be dedicated to GESI and MEL elements in the concept note? Is it necessary to specify indicators for GESI and MEL in the concept note?	USAID seeks that Applicants propose an approach that aligns with the instructions contained in Section D.5 and within the page limitations prescribed in Section D.5.2 of the NOFO. It is the discretion of the Applicant of what content they want to present within the parameters of Section D.5 and with consideration to Section E.1.
56	The presentation mentions USD 1 million worth of award. How is this related to a single award of 9 Million?	According to section D.5.3.3, applicants must assume a budget of \$1 million for the purpose of responding to the hypothetical scenario only. Per Section B.1 of the NOFO, USAID intends to provide up to \$9,000,000 in total USAID funding for this award.
57	Are sub-recipients allowed to make sub-granting at local level to CSOs/CBOs?	This NOFO does not contain restrictions that limit subrecipients from issuing small subawards. Please note that for the purposes of responding to this NOFO, USAID is not seeking to directly issue and manage a number of individual small subawards/grants as a result of this NOFO. Instead we seek a Recipient to manage such a small subawards/grants program (please review Section A.7 of the NOFO more clarity on the entire technical approach).
58	Could you please tell us proper locations?	For the purpose of responding to the Hypothetical Scenerio, the applicant must identify a municipality or district in the Western Mid-Hills region as a contextual setting. Please see Section D.5.3.3.
59	Is there template for phase I ?	There is no template for Phase I. Instead, please follow the instructions for Phase I submissions, which is contained in Section D.5 of the NOFO.
60	Is an organization with the same name as registered in Europe but registered with the same Name in Nepal eligible for Nepal? Example: CNN Nepal registered in Nepal with Nepalese in Board.	Having a name that is same name as of a foreign organization does not affect eligibility for this NOFO. Please just ensure eligibility in accordance with the requirements outlined in Section C.1 of the NOFO.

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61	Regarding eligibility, our organization is US Based, we are registered in country (affiliated with Social Welfare Council) and got the permission to operate all over the country, and governing by all the Nepalese citizen in Nepal, can we apply for this opportunity as a prime.	Eligibility criteria for this NOFO is detailed in Section C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION. A US-based organization is not eligible to apply as a prime applicant for this NOFO.
62	If the call is meant for Local NGOs, can we as INGO be the sub under the local partner in the consortium, which could be an accompaniment model to support NGOs growth.	Yes, as per Section C of the NOFO, eligibility for the prime applicant is restricted to local Nepali entities. Eligibility is not restricted for subawards. Prime applicants are encouraged to propose appropriate sub-partners that enable them to best meet the NOFO/activity requirements and that adhere to the laws and regulations of the Government of Nepal.
63	Can Nepal Agricultural Research Council apply for this NOFO?	If Nepal Agricultural Research Council is a Government of Nepal owned organization, USAID does not envision direct support to GON entities or GON parastatal entities under this award. Please see Section C.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS of the NOFO (Amendment No. 01)
64	As this call budget volume is significantly good one for the local organization, is the past transaction of prime local organization is vital for this award? This might be challenging.	Applicants need not to have been prime implementers in the past; however, applicants must respond to the Institutional Capacity Merit Review Criteria in the NOFO (see Section D.5.3.2 under D.5 PHASE I-SUBMISSION PROCEDURES). As stated in Section E.1.1.a, USAID will evaluate the extent to which the Applicant (and, if applicable, their proposed subpartners) convincingly demonstrates capacity, expertise, and experience relevant to implementing USAID Small Grants for Biodiversity.
65	Is it ok applying the grant procedure by a local government ?	This NOFO is intended for the local entity as described in Section C.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS. USAID does not envision direct support to GON entities or GON parastatal entities under this award.
66	Can we get the PPT in email?	The file containing slides is shared in grants.gov as Appendix 3 of the NOFO amendment
67	What is the due date for applying to this NOFO?	The closing date for concept paper is Friday, April 5, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. Nepal Time as stated on the NOFO cover page.
68	Can the NGOs working for females, marginalized community also apply?	The eligibility requirements for Applicants are contained in Section C.1 of this NOFO.
69	We were registered for SAM more than a year ago while applying for grant under another USAID activity. Is that SAM registration made for the earlier activity eligible for this application?	Organizations should use the same SAM.gov registration and Unique Entity Identification (UEI) number to apply for all U.S. Government business opportunities. Please note that SAM registration must be updated and renewed each year to remain in an "active" status.

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70	There was a different announcement made by USAID Biodiversity activity implemented by DAI. but we did not receive any information. Is this related to the same or different requirement?	This NOFO is different than the USAID Biodiversity (Jal Jangal) award.
71	Regarding relevant experience in three projects, is it only for completed projects or can we include experience of ongoing projects?	Experience of both ongoing and completed projects can be included under institutional capacity. The NOFO language in Section D.5.3.2 has been updated to include the ongoing projects.
72	Can experience gained under a project implemented by DAI be included as project's experience in the institutional capacity?	Any past experience that aligns with USAID Small Grants for Biodiversity can be included under Institutional Capacity.
73	Should the three relevant experiences be related to biodiversity or experience of other environment related projects also considered?	Please see NOFO Section D.5.3.2 Institutional Capacity. Experience of at least three past or current projects that align with USAID Small Grants for Biodiversity is requested.
74	Does UEI number expire? If so, how frequently we need to renew?	The Unique Entity Identification number does not expire. However, SAM registration must be updated and renewed each year to remain "active."