



USAID | SENEGAL

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Subject: Questions & Answers (Q&A)

Reference: Notice of Funding Opportunity No. **72068524RFA00014**

Program Title: USAID Protecting Rights and Lives in the Sahel Activity

Date: August 27, 2024

Dear Prospective Applicants:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) would like to thank you for submitting questions in response to the referenced Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Your questions were reviewed and we hereby provide answers/clarifications enclosed as **ATTACHMENT A**.

Please note that a number of edits were also made to the original NOFO and USAID has uploaded the amended document (titled NOFO_72068524RFA00014_Amendment.1_8.26.24) to grants.gov. Changes to the document have been highlighted in yellow for your convenience and tracking.

Issuance of this Q&A does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of applications. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Edel Perez
Regional Agreement Officer

Enclosed:
ATTACHMENT A – Question & Answers

ATTACHMENT A

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

NOFO # 72068524RFA00014 _ USAID Protecting Rights and Lives in the Sahel Activity

1. Distinction of leader and associate: the distinction between leader and associate refers to the agreements, not the awardees or recipients (i.e. not the entities). Is this correct?

The leader with associate awards (LWA) is the main, more general award or agreement, with a more comprehensive scope. The associate awards are under that LWA, within the same scope, e.g. in a different geographical area. We do not see clarification as to who an awardee in each of the agreements may be. We understand it is all with the prime recipient, who may work with other partners and subaward as needed. <could you please confirm or further explain?

USAID's Answer: Correct. The distinction between "leader" and "associate" refers to the two separate types of cooperative agreements issued under the broader framework of a Leader with Associate Award (LWA). As described in ADS 303.3.26, "a Leader with Associate Award involves the issuance of a Leader Award that covers a specified worldwide activity (in this case, a specified regional activity). The Leader Award includes language that allows a Mission or other office to make one or more separate awards, called Associate Awards, to the Leader Award recipient without using restricted eligibility. The Associate Award must be within the terms and scope of the program description of the Leader Award and support a distinct local or regional activity."

The Leader Award recipient is the "prime" implementer of the activity and manages all Associate Awards, meaning each Associate Award will be issued to the prime. However, the prime may choose to include additional technical partners and sub-awardees and may choose to have substantial technical implementation roles for those partner organizations.

2. Could you please also kindly confirm:

- a) If LWAs are also applicable to PIOs

USAID's Answer: This opportunity is unrestricted and any PIO may apply. However, the resulting Leader Award or Associate Awards will be a cooperative agreement governed by ADS 303, and not a PIO agreement governed by ADS 308.

- b) If the LWA and associate awards are awarded all to the same prime recipient

USAID's Answer: Yes, as described in the answer to question #1, the Leader Award and Associate Awards will be awarded to the same prime.

- c) If the prime recipient can have the same or different partners under the LWA and associate awards as specified in each separate award

USAID's Answer: The prime recipient can have the same or different partners under the Leader Award and the Associate Awards (as subawards).

- d) If in case of being engaged either as prime recipient or subrecipient of the LWA or any associate award, PIOs will be subject to the conditions and Standard Provisions for PIOs pursuant to ADS 308, not subject to ADS 303 (this applies both to the terms of the resulting awards (LWA and associates), as well as to other requirements in the selection process, e.g. PIOs not having to sign forms, certifications, etc., not required under ADS 308)

USAID's Answer: The Leader Award and subsequent Associate Awards (if any) will be cooperative agreements governed by ADS 303, and will not be governed by ADS 308.

- 3. Possibility to build a consortium: In the proposed structure, is a consortium possible? While we understand there's a difference between agreements and awardees, how does this impact the role of each partner in this project? For example, if one agency takes the lead, they'd manage the LWA and the Associate Awards, and the others would sign a contract with them, not with USAID, and be subrecipients. In that case, where would the money that would be allocated to the subrecipients come from: from the 2OM under the LWA or from the 30M under the Associate Award?

USAID's Answer See response #1. Applicants may identify any consortium they would like to work with but agreements will be signed with the Leader only.

The Total Estimated Amount (TEA) of the Leader Award is \$20,000,000.00 (inclusive of a \$3,000,000 rapid response supplemental), and the total ceiling of all subsequent Associate Awards combined is \$30,000,000.00. Sub-awards can be made under the Leader and/or under Associate Awards and will be funded through either of those mechanisms.

In other words:

- a) Leader award: can it be a consortium, or can it be only one agency, in this case?

USAID's Answer: An applicant may identify a consortium but the agreement with USAID will be signed with the applicant which submits the application and that will take the role of "prime".

- b) Associate Awards: based on the above, if consortium is not possible under LWA, Sub recipients: is this the same as Associates?

USAID's Answer: Sub-recipients are organizations receiving sub-awards under either the Leader Award or under an Associate Award. Please see above, the prime recipient will be the holder of all awards (the Leader Award and any Associate Award).

- c) Sub awardees: can both leader award and Associates have sub awardees? (For ex, X would be a sub under Y as leader award; Z as Associate, would identify local partners as subs).

USAID's Answer: Only the prime will hold the Leader Award and any Associate Award(s). However, the prime may issue sub-awards. Using the example provided, if Y is the prime, then Y would hold the Leader and all related Associate Awards. However, they may choose to issue sub-awards to X—awarding funding and technical work to a sub-recipient. However, Y would still hold the award, and ultimately be responsible for all work completed under the award.

- 4. Do we align the proposed intervention entirely to the program structure proposed in the USAID ToC for the Sahel? That is, do we need to include all the listed sub-objectives in our proposed intervention? Or could we include a selection that we think we are best positioned to deliver?

USAID's Answer: Applications must address the Theory of Change proposed by USAID (page 57-58 of the NOFO) and interventions proposed under the Leader Award must incorporate the objectives and sub-objectives outlined in the NOFO (pages 58-63).

- 5. Referring to the localization approach, how are local organizations contracted?

USAID's Answer: Local organizations can apply to this NOFO independently, and can be proposed as subrecipients under either the Leader Award or under an Associate Award.

- 6. Management Approach/key personnel requirements: do they apply only to the leader award or also to Associates?

USAID's Answer: The recipient who manages the leader award is also responsible for the oversight of associate awards; therefore, the management approach should cover the management of the entire LWA including associate awards. Should USAID issue a request for applications for an associate award, USAID will specify requirements for the management approach and key personnel for that associate award at that time. It is not expected that applicants to this NOFO can or should anticipate USAID requirements for potential associate awards.

- 7. 30M USD envelope for Associates: is there a ceiling to the amount to be allocated for each Associate? Is there a limited number of Associates?

USAID's Answer: Yes, there is a ceiling of \$10M USD for each Associate Award, but there is no limit on the number of Associate Awards that may be considered or issued.

8. What timeline will the **financial disbursement** follow? Will the Associates be able to start implementing after the Leader has concluded their programming, or is concurrent implementation permissible?

USAID's Answer: This NOFO is only for the Leader Award. Associate Award(s) will be made based on subsequent Requests for Application (RFAs) to be issued to the Leader once the Leader Award is in place. Payments for the LWA or for subsequent Associate Awards will be made following the procedures detailed in each cooperative agreement. The Leader Award and Associate Awards are separate awards and will have their own respective period of performance.

9. Implementing partners:

The Notice includes the following sentence "2 CFR 200.308 requires the recipient to obtain the AO's prior approval for the subaward, transfer, or contracting out of any work under an award": Does this mean that the budget for the Leader Award can include potential costs related to implementing partners?

USAID's Answer: Yes, potential costs related to the applicant's proposed sub-awardees for the Leader Award should be included in the applicant's budget.

In relation to **implementing partners**, are there parameters to be met in the choice of the implementing partners? If so, what are these parameters?

USAID's Answer: Information on parameters for approval of subawards can be found in section 6.f., Approval of Subawards, in the section on the Business (Cost) Application Format.

10. Roles of LWA and Associates:

Table 1. Distinguishing the roles of the Leader Award and Associate Awards under this program	
<i>Leader Award</i>	<i>Associate Awards</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Single award, regional in nature ● Prime mechanism for advancing the objectives of PRL in countries covered by SRO: Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, and The Gambia ● Focus on rapid response to urgent human rights needs as described under Objective 4 ● TEA of \$20,000,000.00, of which the core component is \$17,000,000.00, plus up to \$3,000,000.00 for rapid response interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Multiple awards, country-specific or regional ● Prime mechanisms for advancing PRL Objectives in other countries in the broader Sahel region; they can also address specific needs in one or more SRO countries ● TEA of \$30,000,000.00 for all Associate Awards combined

- a) Associates can operate regionally or in the country specifically. What does that mean exactly? What is the difference with the leader award who can also operate regionally? Can associate awards operate regionally (and not only at country level)?

USAID’s Answer: While it is required that the Leader Award be implemented in multiple countries, as discussed in section A.1. of the NOFO (page 63-64), associate awards could be country-specific or multi-country. For example, USAID could issue an associate award that will be implemented in Burkina Faso alone, and then could issue a separate associate award that would be implemented in The Gambia and separately in Guinea-Bissau. This will depend on USAID’s needs.

- b) And can the leader award operate in one or more specific countries?

USAID’s Answer: As detailed in section A.1 of the NOFO, the leader award will be implemented in multiple countries. These countries are named in the NOFO, they are: Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and The Gambia.

- c) For example, if an Applicant is the LWA and another is an Associate, can both organizations implement joint or separate activities in given countries, through their respective country offices?

USAID’s Answer: Please see previous answers.

- d) In other words, how is LWA’s involvement in the implementation of activities defined and organized?

USAID’s Answer: All activities will be organized under the leader award. USAID has designed the leader award to cover the implementation of the four objectives of the activity (described on

pages 58 -63) in the five countries covered by SRO as described in section A.1. and starting on page 63.

- e) And what does this mean: “Associate Awards may be awarded in order to implement bilateral programs. »?

USAID’s Answer: The term “bilateral” in the NOFO means single-country. This means that associate awards may be issued to conduct activities in just one country. They can also be issued for the purpose of implementing activities in multiple countries.

- f) Does the table above confirm that both LWA and Associates can operate in the five countries covered by the SRO?

USAID’s Answer: Please see answers above.

- g) And what does “other countries” refer to under Associates?

USAID’s Answer: The focus of the LWA is the Sahel region, however, an LWA is a USAID mechanism that is open to all USAID missions and operating units worldwide as long as the proposed Associate Awards are within scope and approved. Please see ADS 303.

11. Signature of Agreements: do they happen at the same time for LWA and Associates?

USAID’s Answer: There is no associate award included in this NOFO. A Request for Application for each proposed associate award will be issued separately to the Leader.

12. “Buy ins” (page 6): can you please clarify what this is and how it works? Is it applicable before and/or after the award? Is 10M USD additional to the 50M of the NOFO?

USAID’s Answer: An associate award is a separate assistance agreement under the Leader Award that is funded by a USAID Mission, USAID Bureau, or USAID office and awarded to the Leader award recipient to support a distinct local or regional activity that fits within the scope of the program description in the Leader award. For the purposes of this activity, a “buy-in” allows multiple operating units or missions to contribute funding into an Associate Award rather than establishing an individual or separate Associate Award. This may occur for instance, if a mission is requesting highly technical or a very specific and specialized program element and it lacks the field or staff capacity to manage such an activity, and this element is available through an Associate Award. See NOFO Amendment #1.

13. The NOFO reads (p. 6), “Buy-ins” will be permitted under the LWA. The PRL LWA allows all USAID operating units to issue Associate Awards supporting activities that fit within the scope of the PRL Programmatic Framework. Individual buy-ins for Associate Awards have a ceiling of \$10,000,000.00.”

Question: Could you kindly provide an explanation of what “buy-ins” mean in this context?
Would this be buy-ins from Missions or other USAID units?

USAID’s Answer: Please see response to number 12.

14. The NOFO (p.9), “USAID is planning to allocate a combined ceiling for the Leader with Associates Awards of \$50M, due to extensive field consultations in Burkina Faso, Chad and Mauritania, and conversations with other USAID Country Offices and Missions in the region.”

Question: Does it mean that the 3 countries to start with are Burkina Faso, Chad and Mauritania?

USAID’s Answer: No. Please refer to section A.1. Geographic Scope (page 63-64) for the discussion on which countries the program is centered on.

15. Under Technical Application, there is a list of Annexes, including:

Key Personnel:

CVs (maximum 3 pages/key personnel)

Letters of commitment (maximum 1 page/key personnel)

References (maximum 1 page/key personnel)

Question: Could you please clarify the requirements for the References?

USAID’s Answer: Below are the required annexes, (see page 16):

A. Organizational Chart

B. Staffing Plan (matrix)

C. Key Personnel:

i. CVs (maximum 3 pages/key personnel)

ii. Letters of commitment (maximum 1 page/key personnel)

iii. References (maximum 1 page/key personnel)-3 references see NOFO Amendment#1

D. Draft AMELP

E. Draft 3-month Work Plan

16. The NOFO reads, “The Cost Application must contain the following sections (which are further elaborated below this listing with the letters for each requirement):

A. Cover Page

B. SF 424 Form(s)

C. Required Certifications and Assurances

D. Budget and Budget Narrative

E. Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407

F. Approval of Subawards

- G. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM Registration
 - H. History of Performance - (Past Performance Information - Attachment F)
 - I. Naming, Branding Strategy & Marking Plan
 - J. Funding Restrictions
 - K. Conflict of Interest Pre-Award Term”
- Question: Could you please kindly clarify which documents/sections should be submitted as part of the Business (Cost) Application at this stage?

USAID’s Answer: The following are the required documents for the cost Application as mentioned in the Business/Cost section, please see the response in blue:

- A. Cover Page **YES**
- B. SF 424 Form(s) **YES**
- C. Required Certifications and Assurances **YES**
- D. Budget and Budget Narrative **YES. Prime budget and budgets for proposed subrecipients.**
- E. Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407 **No. This will be requested only for the Apparently Successful Applicant.**
- F. Approval of Subawards **No. This will be requested only for the Apparently Successful Applicant.**
- G. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM Registration **YES. The prime applicant must submit UEI & SAM registration at time of application submission, and the UEI will be requested of subrecipients prior to award.**
- H. History of Performance - (Past Performance Information - Attachment F) **YES**
- I. Naming, Branding Strategy & Marking Plan **YES, related costs should be part of the budget considerations. The actual BSMP will be submitted only by the Apparently Successful Applicant.**
- J. Funding Restrictions **YES. This applies for budget preparation and consideration.**
- K. Conflict of Interest Pre-Award Term **YES. This applies for application and budget preparation and consideration.**

17. The NOFO reads (p.19), “The cost Application must illustrate the entire period of performance, using the budget format shown in the SF-424A.”

Question: the budget to be detailed for 5 years is \$20 million or \$50 million ?

USAID’s Answer: The total estimated budget available for the five year period of performance is \$20,000,000, this amount will be allocated to the prime recipient for the Leader activities. Please note that this amount is inclusive of a \$3,000,000 rapid response line item.

18. The NOFO reads (p.21), "The subrecipient budgets must align with the same requirements as the Applicant's budget, including those related to fringe and indirect costs.

Question: Does it mean that each subrecipient is entitled to a NICRA.

USAID's Answer: Only applicants with an official NICRA issued by a USG agency may use that NICRA. For others, please see the different methods described under Section D.6.d.8 (Indirect Costs).

19. Question: Could you please kindly explain the difference between the Management Plan, Staffing Plan, and Key Personnel sections?

USAID's Answer: Please see details on what is requested for each of these sections of the application that are part of the broader Management Approach starting on page 16. Also, see NOFO Amendment #1.

20. The NOFO reads (p. 18), "Institutional Capacity and Experience. The applicant must provide a concise description of their organization, and all proposed subrecipients/associates, justifying the inclusion of the proposed subrecipients/associates and other organizations if it is a consortium. Within the application, the applicants must provide summary information about significant past and current activities/projects, for themselves and each subrecipient/associate, related to the set of activities and responsibilities specified in this NOFO. USAID reserves the right to contact references other than those provided in the application."

Question: Does this sentence "USAID reserves the right to contact references other than those provided in the application." mean that we need to provide reference details for "past and current activities/projects" in this section (part of the Technical Application), while the Attachment on past performance is under the Business (Cost) Application?

USAID's Answer: Please see clarification in NOFO Amendment #1.

- Could you please clarify which documents exactly should be submitted under the Business (Cost) Application's section on c) Required Certifications and Assurances; namely (1) ADS 303mav Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient ? Does the applicant need to sign only "Part I – Certifications and Assurances"?

USAID's Answer: With respect to the list provided above, the applicant must complete the following documents and submit a signed copy with their application for any proposed subawardee/subrecipient:

(1) See the amended NOFO for updated 2024 Interim ADS 303mav Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements

of the Recipient...please sign ALL PARTS.

(2) Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B) (see link in the above table).

(3) Certificate of Compliance: Please submit a copy of your Certificate of Compliance if your organization's systems have been certified by USAID/Washington's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA).

21. Would USAID allow applicants to provide letters of support from resource partners and other potential collaborators?

USAID's Answer: No, please submit the required documents and follow the submission instructions in the NOFO.

22. Would USAID allow applicants to provide CVs for senior level staff who will be instrumental to project success?

USAID's Answer: CVs are requested for Key Personnel (see page 15). No other CVs are needed in the application.

23. Would USAID allow applicants to use a 10-point Calibri font in text boxes?

USAID's Answer: Yes, applicants should use a 10-point Calibri font for text boxes, as in graphs and charts.

24. Would USAID be amenable to applicants providing information, such as charts and graphics, in additional annexes?

USAID's Answer: USAID will not accept additional annexes. All technical information, including charts and graphics, must fit within the Technical Application and within the page limit, and include the specified annexes only as detailed in the submission instructions.

25. On page 35, the NOFO says that Associate Awards may have "crisis modifiers" and requires "implementers develop a Shock Plan to address crises." How does USAID define "crisis" for this activity?

USAID's Answer: This does not apply to this NOFO but to the Sahel Resilience Activity.

26. On page 63, the NOFO states, "The Applicants are encouraged to propose working with local civil society organizations (CSOs) and local governments (as possible) in key technical areas and administrative regions to develop policies and regulations supporting the technical focus of this NOFO." What is meant by "policies and regulations supporting the technical focus" of the NOFO? Can USAID provide an example of the policies and regulations to which it is referring?

USAID's Answer: This does not apply to this NOFO but to the Sahel Resilience Activity.