Issuance Date: **November 30, 2007**
Closing Date: **December 21, 2007**
Closing Time: **12:00 PM, EST**

SUBJECT: **RFTOP UNDER IQC NO. GHS-I-00-07-00002-00, TASC3-Global Health TASK ORDER FOR SERVICES: "NPI Technical Assistance"**

Dear TASC3-Global Health Contractors:

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is soliciting proposals from contractors under the Technical Assistance and Support Contract Three (TASC3-Global Health) IQC as more specifically described in this Request for Task Order Proposal (RFTOP).

USAID anticipates awarding an estimated four (4) year, Cost-Plus-Fixed Fee Task Order (CPFF TO) for these services. The purpose of this Solicitation is to establish a mechanism through which USAID will provide technical assistance (TA) to award recipients in up to fifteen focus countries of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR/Emergency Plan) which have received funding under the New Partners Initiative (NPI).

Interested contractors are requested to submit proposals in accordance with the requirements of this RFTOP.

Questions regarding this RFTOP are due no later than **December 12, 2007 at 5:00 PM, EST** and shall be submitted by e-mail to Richard Spencer (rspencer@usaid.gov) or Lisa Bilder (lbilder@usaid.gov).

Proposals are due no later than **December 21, 2007 at 12:00 PM EST** and shall be submitted by e-mail and surface mail to the following addressee:
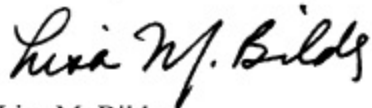
Richard Spencer
Contract Specialist
USAID/M/OAA/GH/OHA
Ronald Reagan Building 07.09-90B
1300 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20523
rspencer@usaid.gov

Issuance of this RFTOP 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 costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the US Government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

In addition, USAID cannot award the TO contemplated by this RFTOP until funds have been appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential contractors are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award. Contractors therefore submit proposals at their own risk.

Thank you for your consideration of this USAID initiative. We look forward to your organization's participation.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Bilder
Contracting Officer

TASC III Request for Task Order Proposal NPI Technical Assistance

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I. Introduction

NEW PARTNERS INITIATIVE BACKGROUND

The New Partners Initiative (NPI) is a $200 million initiative created under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR) for cooperative agreement assistance instruments to provide HIV/AIDS prevention and care in the 15 Emergency Plan focus countries. The NPI is intended to increase the number, involvement and capacity of community and faith-based organizational partners to help achieve two out of the three Emergency Plan goals: 1) to support the prevention of seven million HIV infections, and 2) to support care for ten million persons affected by HIV/AIDS, including orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). NPI programs will complement existing PEPFAR programs and host country national strategic frameworks for HIV/AIDS.

The U.S. Government implements its response to global HIV/AIDS primarily through non-governmental organizations (NGOs), both US-based and indigenous to the affected countries. However, the collective capacity of current partner NGOs is not sufficient to achieve the prevention, care and treatment goals of PEPFAR. Furthermore, more local partners and networks of partners that include local organizations are needed to ensure results and sustainability. The NPI is a means of addressing this need by establishing a process of competitive grants for organizations with the desire and ability to help implement the President's Emergency Plan, but have little or no experience in working with the US Government.

NPI awards are for prevention and care programs only (no treatment), and may be single or multi-country awards. The organizations that may receive awards include indigenous and U.S. or international-based NGOs, including faith- and community-based organizations.

To date, NPI has awarded 23 grants to partners in 13 of the 15 PEPFAR focus countries. These are three-year awards, and average $3.3 million per award. USAID manages most of these awards, while the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) manages two. Approximately half the awards are to U.S. or international organizations with indigenous sub-partners. The remaining awards are directly to indigenous partners. USAID has provided technical assistance to these Round 1 partners through a separate mechanism.

Based on Round 1, we estimate that up to 45 organizations will receive NPI grants through both Rounds 2 and 3, with projects in a majority, if not all, of the 15 Emergency Plan focus countries. Round 2 NPI recipient awards are scheduled to be made early in 2008, with Round 3 awards scheduled for later in the year. Round 2 awards will be issued concurrently, but will be awarded separately by USAID, HHS/HRSA, and the HHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Although TA to Round 3 award recipients is contemplated, contractors responding to this RFTOP shall limit their proposals to support to Round 2 awardees. If and when any assistance to be provided to Round 3 partners is required, USAID will initiate another procurement action to address this need.

TASK ORDER OVERVIEW

Services Requested

The Office of HIV/AIDS of the USAID Bureau for Global Health (USAID/GH/OHA) issues this Request for Task Order Proposals (RFTOP) for the NPI under the TASC III Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC). The purpose of this task order is to strengthen the organizational, administrative and technical capacity of select NPI partners in delivering HIV prevention and care services.

The following types of support are anticipated through this Task Order (TO):

1. **Organizational Development** to strengthen the capacity of NPI award partners as prime partners to administer PEPFAR agreements in accordance with the U.S. Government and Agency policies and procedures. This includes, but is not limited to, addressing pre-award survey findings, financial management, administration, human resources (HR) management, procurement, management of sub-grants, development of work plans and reporting, strategic planning and organizational strengthening.
2. **Technical Assistance (TA)** to improve the quality of interventions provided. This in-cludes, but is not limited to, technical assistance with prevention (including Abstain, Be faithful, and where appropriate, correct and consistent use of Condoms, behavior-change communication and PMTCT), confidential counseling and testing, care for orphans and vulnerable children, and home and clinical palliative care. This will also include program monitoring for reporting and evaluation purposes.
3. **Facilitation of Networking** to help integrate partners into PEPFAR programs in the country program. This includes assisting with building strong referral mechanisms, meeting in-country programming and reporting requirements, and collaborating with the in-country U.S. Government team and partners.

Support to NPI Round 2 Awardees - Base and Option Activities

The contractor selected for this TO will provide technical support for up to seven USAID Round 2 partners, with "base" services targeting USAID NPI partners, with a possible "option" to pro-vide additional services to seven HHS (i.e. HRSA; CDC) NPI awardees as determined by the needs of each respective Agency. The period of performance under this TO is expected to be four years, beginning January 2008 through December 2011.

In Round 2, USAID anticipates issuing awards to up to seven (7) partners targeting activities in the following countries: 1) Kenya; 2) South Africa; 3) Tanzania; 4) Uganda; and 5) Zambia. The contractor's base cost proposal shall address assistance to these anticipated partners implement-ing activities in these countries.

HHS, through CDC and HRSA, is anticipated to issue another seven (7) Round 2 awards target-ing the following countries: 1) Ethiopia; 2) Haiti; 3) Kenya; 4) Rwanda; 5) South Africa; 6) Tanzania; and 7) Uganda. Contractors shall submit a separate option cost proposal for assistance to these additional partners working in these countries.

Evaluation of proposals shall encompass both base and option activities; however, USAID presently anticipates any award under this TO will cover only base activities. If and when USAID chooses to exercise the option, it will do so via modification to the task order contract to include the additional option activities.

At this time, collectively, the USG expects to issue all Round 2 awards by the end of January 2008. The total value of Round 2 awards will be between $35-45 million for three year programs. We expect slightly more than half of the Round 2 partners will be U.S. or international-based organizations and that the contractor selected to implement this TO will be awarded before the Round 2 partners begin their activities. Note that as of the issuance date of this RFTOP, letters of intent have been issued to selected Round 2 finalists. Because these letters are non-binding, contractors should refrain from contacting Round 2 partners for purposes of responding to this RFTOP.

The needs assessment to be performed under this TO will determine the appropriate level of TA each NPI award partner will receive. Contractors will work with each NPI partner to determine which, if any, implementing staff or sub-partners are eligible for TA. Since the organizational structure of each partner varies, the Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO) or Activity Manager for this TO will make a final decision regarding the appropriate level of TA based on the unique needs of the partner, in consultation with the relevant U.S. Government and partner stakeholders. However the Contractor's relationship shall center on each NPI Round 2 prime recipient. Any TA to sub-recipients or other relevant implementing actors must be provided in agreement with, and at the direction of, each NPI Round 2 prime recipient.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this technical assistance is to improve the quality of programming and capacity-building of NPI award recipients, and thereby increase the quality and effectiveness of HIV/AIDS programming though NGOs in the PEPFAR focus countries. By strengthening the involvement of these local partners and networks of partners, the NPI aims to ensure results and country ownership for sustainable, high-quality HIV/AIDS programs.

We expect that by year three of each NPI award, the contractor will have provided sufficient organizational and technical capacity so that the NPI award partners are able to provide high-quality prevention and/or care service to their intended beneficiaries; to compete as prime partners; and to develop indigenous capacity to address HIV/AIDS and promote the sustainability of host nations' efforts.

II. Scope of Work

The scope of work of this task order falls into six primary tasks. First, introduce the new partners to the NPI program. Second, assess the needs of the Round 2 NPI partners. Third, create an action plan for each partner based on the needs assessment. Fourth, provide technical assistance to the NPI partners based on the action plans and other needs that arise during the implementation of their grants. Fifth, coordinate with the stakeholders. And finally, close out the project. These tasks are outlined in detail below.

TASK 1: PROVIDE NEW PARTNER ORIENTATION

The contractor for this task order will work with the relevant implementing agencies to introduce the new partners to the NPI program after award. Whether done regionally or country-by-country, the orientation should set the foundation for the remainder of the grant, and include an overview of the NPI program, a timeline for implementation, and an introduction to the immediate next steps, including the needs assessment and the development of a workplan. It will be critical in this orientation to set expectations with the partners as to when they might expect to receive funding, and when they will be able to begin implementation and reporting of results. Actual implementation of awards is subject to correction of deficiencies in the pre-award surveys conducted by the USAID Office of Acquisition Assistance (OAA).

TASK 2: CONDUCT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. Pre-award survey. The contractor for this task order will review the pre-award survey findings with the recipient and determine if they have corrected all the deficiencies. Additionally, the contractor will ensure that the prime recipient has notified the Agreement Officer of the corrections so that the conditions in the cooperative agreement can be removed.

B. Needs Assessment. The contractor for this task order will conduct a needs assessment of each NPI Round 2 partner. This needs assessment must cover the organization's administrative capacity and its technical capabilities to make sure the HIV/AIDS program proposed in its grant has plans for improving and sustaining HIV/AIDS interventions, meets PEPFAR and host-Government standards, and incorporates best practices.

Each needs assessment must evaluate the capabilities of each partner's overall project team. This must include some level of assessment of the prime recipient's staffing plan for program implementation, which could be comprised of staff located in-country offices and/or indigenous sub-partners. For example, if a U.S. or international-based organization is relying heavily on one in-country sub-partner or a network of smaller partners for direct implementation, it will be critical to evaluate each sub-partner institutional capabilities along with the prime recipient's capacity for sub-award management.

This needs assessment should assess the current level of capacity and quality of programs offered by the Round 2 partners. This will include (though not be limited to) a review of the following:

Organizational Capacity

- Compliance with U.S. Government and PEPFAR Regulations – Has the organization worked with the U.S. Government in the past, either directly or as a sub of another grant? What is its level of understanding of U.S. Government rules and regulations in general, and under PEFAR grants specifically?
- Strategic Planning and Management – Does the organization have good project planning and management practices? Does the organization have a Board of Directors, a mission statement, and short and long term strategies, including diversified funding and grant writing capability.
- Financial Systems and Management Processes – Is the partner financially sound? Are systems and processes in place and do they meet U.S. Government requirements? Does the partner have a good procurement process? Can they account for all funds in accordance with USG and in-country audit requirements, analyze unit costs, make financial projections, and track funds?
- Human Resources – Does the organization have the appropriate number and type of staff to execute the proposed program? Does the organization have proper HR management practices in place (both documented and in practice)? Do they have an established personnel system for recruiting, paying, retaining, training and supervising staff at all levels of the organization?
- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) – Does the organization have a good understanding of its own monitoring and evaluation needs? Does the organization have a plan to meet these needs? Does the organization have the experience or expertise on staff to take on the tasks required for M&E? Does the organization have experience in using M&E to monitor projects, and can it make adjustments to improve its programs based on analysis and feedback from M&E activities – a quality improvement process?
- Community and Local Coordination – Is the partner's proposal understood and supported widely within the organization and the community, and did the partner develop it through a consultative process?
- Sustainability – How sustainable is the organization in the long term? What is its ability to adjust, take on additional projects in the future, or manage multiple streams of funding? Can it mobilize resources and develop quality proposals? In the third year of the grant, determine the partner's long-term ability to provide quality care and/or prevention activities, maintain accountability to stakeholders, and access various sources of revenue that increase its financial independence.

Technical Capacity

- General HIV/AIDS Capacity – What level of understanding of HIV/AIDS and/or other health and development issues does the partner possess to build upon?
- Specific Program Expertise – What technical capabilities does the partner have to effectively execute the projects it proposes under the NPI grant? (For partners that propose multiple program areas and/or propose programs in multiple countries, please assess their abilities in each program area in each country.) Is the organization familiar with PEPFAR best practices in the program areas?

- Country Context – Is the organization familiar with the local cultural context? Has it taken this into account in its programming? Is the organization aware of specific in-country regulations and reporting requirements, such as host-Government standards? Has the program been designed in accordance with the host country national HIV/AIDS plan?

Partner Networking Systems

- Networking/Referrals – Do the proposed HIV/AIDS interventions have an optimal impact through collaboration among other NGO partners and commitment to developing information-sharing and referral systems with other organization and NPI partners? Has the partner coordinated with in-country partners and programs to ensure there is no duplication of effort, but rather, effective reach to beneficiaries?

TASK 3: DEVELOP ACTION PLANS

The contractor for this task order will then collaborate with each NPI Round 2 partner to create individual action plans. These action plans will outline the technical assistance each NPI partner will receive, and include a timeline that will show when the assistance will be provided over the three-year period that coincides with the partners' grants.

In the case of US and International organizations, these action plans will not only cover the partners' headquarters, but could also involve direct assistance to the indigenous sub-partners. Since each project will be different, and the capacities of the US and International organizations will be different, there cannot be one approach. Therefore, the contractor shall work with all the stakeholders to determine the best approach to leverage resources efficiently, and ultimately achieve the goal of building both HQ and indigenous capacity. For example, this could mean that if both a US and International organization and its indigenous sub-partner have little or no M&E expertise, the priority might be to provide the M&E TA directly to the indigenous sub-partner. However, if the US and International organization has many indigenous sub-partners, and part of the project includes providing capacity-building to other organizations, it may make more sense to provide some assistance to the US and International office, which will in turn be passed on to the indigenous sub-partners.

In developing the action plan, the contractor will engage key NPI award recipient staff to review the pre-award survey conducted by the USAID Office of Acquisition Assistance (OAA) and the needs assessment to discuss priorities for technical assistance. (OAA pre-award survey results for each NPI recipient will be provided, and any Special Award Conditions flagged by OAA will receive particular attention during the review of the needs assessment and remediation discussions.) The contractor will also consult and coordinate with in-country PEPFAR teams and agency PEPFAR CTOs in the development of the action plans.

The action plans will contain the following two components: 1) Assistance related to organizational development; and 2) Programmatic HIV/AIDS technical assistance. The action plans will also clarify if any technical assistance must be completed prior to program implementation, or

other critical benchmarks. Each action plan will contain details of organizational weaknesses and/or gaps, by specifically identifying TA requirements and organizational development needs. The contractor will work with the partner to create a timeline to chart the technical assistance arranged to address these needs. The TA will build capacity that expands the organization's capability so that by the end of their respective three-year grant period, each partner will have a solid foundation, be able to compete for funding on its own, and execute quality programs effectively.

In addition, the action plan will include key dates related to the implementation of the partner's NPI project, including due dates for workplans, quarterly financial reports, and semi-annual and annual reporting. While some of these dates will be standard for all NPI partners, others could vary based on in-country requirements. The contractor will work with the partner, the CTOs and in-country PEPFAR teams to gather all these dates. The contractor will also brief the in-country PEPFAR team and CTOs to obtain feedback and validate the action plan recommendations and TA requirements. Copies of the final action plans will be shared with the partners, in-country PEPFAR teams and with CTOs.

TASK 4: PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Once the action plans are finalized, the contractor will begin providing technical assistance to the prime partner and their indigenous sub-partners. This technical assistance task has three sub-tasks: TA in organizational development, programmatic HIV/AIDS TA, and TA in grant implementation. Each of these sub-tasks is described in greater detail below.

In the case of US and International organizations, the contractor will work in partnership with the US and International headquarters to build capacity of in-country implementers, and that indigenous capacity will be the measure of success.

Once the fourth task begins, it will be critical for the contractor to address each partner individually, and allow each organization to progress at an acceptable rate. We do not expect all partners to need the same level of assistance, and some will be stronger than others. The CTOs and activity managers can help address any concerns with progress that the contractor or partner raises.

Below are illustrative examples of TA that contractors might provide to the partners under each sub-task.

Sub-Task 4.A: Provide Organizational Development Technical Assistance

- Provide intensive training on USG regulations and requirements for implementing a cooperative agreement;
- Conduct a strategic planning exercise with partners to determine their short and long term plans for sustaining their programs over the long term;
- Coordinate the management of resources and the tracking of funding from multiple sources/donors;
- Establish effective budgeting practices;

- Create and/or strengthen coordinated systems to monitor resources that support decentralized implementation by public and private partners;
- Assist the partners to comply with audit requirements (third parties contracted and paid for directly by the partners will conduct the audits).
- Take action to ensure the ability of partners to compete successfully for future solicitation of resources on national, regional and local levels for HIV/AIDS programs, including proposal development.
- Assure adequate client record keeping that provides the basis for program improvement and U.S. Government program reporting.
- Identify and design any desired evaluation studies.
- Develop staffing, retention and implementation plans, and assist with HR and staff training.

Sub-Task 4.B: Provide HIV/AIDS Programmatic Technical Assistance

Provide technical assistance in program areas to address programmatic weaknesses identified through the needs assessment with regular monitoring. Also, provide assistance to help the partners use resources effectively, and integrate programmatic areas, when possible. All program areas should include the following:

- Establish effective methods and approaches, including best practices;
- Establish how to apply these methods in a culturally appropriate way in the local context;
- Guide partners on how to use resources most efficiently, including effective budgeting;
- Help the partners adopt innovative approaches;
- Help the partners develop sustainable programs;
- Assist partners in establishing referral networks; and
- Assist partners in the development of skills that will enable high quality abstract writing in order to share accomplishments and lessons learned.

Contractor's must assure that specific programmatic areas include the following:

- Prevention (AB/ABC and Behavior Change) - Give guidance on the most effective and innovative components of a successful HIV Prevention program;
- PMTCT –Provide confidential counseling and testing services to determine which women need assistance and guidance on prevention strategies;
- Confidential Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) - Work with NPI award recipients to provide confidential VCT in a more efficient, way, and in local languages. Help establish referral systems, mobile testing with rapid HIV testing, home-based testing, provider-initiated testing, etc.
- OVC - Design programs that meet the requirements of PEPFAR, including providing at least the minimum number of interventions; and
- Palliative Care - home-based, community-based, and clinical care for people who are living with AIDS.

Sub-Task 4.C: Provide Support in Understanding USG Assistance Rules and Regulations

This sub-task will require both regular and ad hoc assistance to the partners in the following areas:

- Annual work plan development;
- Target setting and correcting them to the Emergency Plan targets;
- Emergency Plan Country Operational Plan (COP) narrative development;
- USAID Standard Form (SF) 269 reporting or the CDC or HRSA equivalent;
- USAID SF270 financial requests or the CDC or HRSA equivalent;
- Semi-annual and annual reporting;
- Responding to in-country PEPFAR team requests and requirements;
- Respond to changes in needs, or other unforeseen circumstances that could require the partners to adjust their programs, geographic locators, or budgets;
- Calculating allowable costs;
- Understand and following procurement restrictions and regulations; and
- Comply with other comparable HHS/CDC or HHS/HRSA requirements for partners funded under those agencies.

Because regulations vary by agency, the contractor will be expected to help provide guidance to the partners tailored to the specific agency their agreement is with (USAID or HHS). Additionally, guidance must be specific and appropriate to each country.

Please note that a key approach to the NPI program is to build the capacity of these partners to manage U.S. Government-funded projects on their own. The approach the contractor for this task order shall take is to provide assistance to the partners, while ensuring the partners themselves are doing the work.

Please also note, however, that if a particular NPI partner is not performing or meeting benchmarks, or otherwise not meeting the obligations either of its cooperative agreement or the items in the action plan, the CTO for that award will work in cooperation with the contractor and the Agreement Officer to consider remediation which could include withholding funding or even ceasing the cooperative agreement.

TASK 5: COORDINATE AND COMMUNICATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS

A key task for the contractor will be to coordinate and communicate with all relevant stakeholders throughout the lifespan of the task order. Key stakeholders will vary across partners and countries, but could include some or all of the following:

Partners

- Partners' Headquarters (may be indigenous or US and International);
- Partners' In-Country Offices; and
- Indigenous sub-partners

U.S. Government CTOs/Activity Managers

- USAID, HHS/CDC, or HHS/HRSA and OGAC HQ staff;
- In-Country Activity Managers;
- U.S. Government Emergency Plan Teams, and other In-Country PEPFAR Implementers

Some countries could request/require greater coordination with in-country Emergency Plan teams. We encourage the partners to build strong relationships with the in-country USG teams, and to build networks with existing implementers. Where needed, the contractor will help facilitate meetings and increase the involvement of the partners in the in-country networks, including participating where possible in events such as partner meetings and technical working groups.

Coordination with NPI Round 1 TA Provider

The Academy for Educational Development (AED) is implementing the NPI Round 1 Grantee Capacity Building Program Associate Award under USAID's Capable Partners Program Leader with Associates Cooperative Agreement. The TA provider selected under this TO should make every effort to harmonize its activities with Round 2 NPI partners in coordination with AED to use resources efficiently over the life of this TO. For example, if AED is hosting a training in a specific country for Round 1 partners, the Round 2 TA provider should explore the involvement of Round 2 NPI partners and vice versa. Illustrative activities USAID anticipates will be applicable to all NPI partners include NPI award orientation, cooperative agreement compliance and administration, program implementation and management, monitoring and evaluation including PEPFAR indicators, and organizational best practices.

AED is additionally building a website that allows all NPI partners to communicate and share resources, and allows USG staff and TA providers to communicate with the partners. It is expected that this site will be extended to Rounds 2 partners as well. Although AED has the task of developing the website, the Round 2 TA provider should contribute to and participate in this web forum, and encourage and assist the Round 2 partners to participate.

TASK 6: PROJECT CLOSE-OUT

At the end of the NPI project, the contractor will work with each partner to develop a customized roadmap for the future, based on that organization's goals and capabilities. The roadmap should include the following:

- A review of the progress made by the partner;
- A report on which areas the organization still needs to improve;
- A program opportunity analysis looking at how the partner could expand in the future, which may include geographic expansion as well as program area expansion; and
- A funding opportunity analysis that will give the partners a sense of what funding might be available to it, and any recommendations that might help them succeed in securing future funding.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The period of performance for work under this TO is estimated to be four (4) years effective from the date of contract award. Illustrative dates for milestone relevant to the work anticipated under this TO include the following:

Illustrative Dates	Event
January 2008	Round 2 partners are awarded and TA provider conducts needs assessment and creates action plans. Partners begin work on workplans.
Summer 2008	Majority of Round 2 partners have approved workplans and begin implementing.
Winter 2011	Round 2 partners complete their three-year grants.
December 31, 2011	Final date for completion of all TO work.

III. Staffing

PERSONNEL STAFFING PLAN

The Contractor should propose key staff members, other full- or part-time staff, and any consultants or intermittent staff necessary to fulfill the requirements of the scope of work. The CTO or Activity Manager will approve key staff members, and the USG may make changes in the final staffing pattern, depending on the final contracting configuration.

Recognizing the complex array of stakeholders, including partners, sub-partners, and USG in-country and headquarters personnel, the Contractor should address communication flows in the staffing plan.

IV. Performance Monitoring

CONTRACT OVERSIGHT

The CTO for this Task Order, the CTO of TASC III or the designated Activity Manager who is responsible for the overall performance of the entire contract, and the Contracting Officer will monitor and evaluate the contractor's overall performance. The contractor should propose a simple Performance-Monitoring Plan (PMP) for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the six key tasks required under this Task Order. The CTO or Activity Manager, in consultation with the contractor, may modify the proposed PMP, and will approve it.

REPORTING

Reports include yearly work plans, semi-annual and annual reports, and quarterly financial reports. A final report that synthesizes the work, deliverables and results of the project over the entire Task Order duration will be due after the Task Order ends. In addition to regularly scheduled meetings with the Task Order CTO, the Contractor should give informal briefings in coordination with USAID to the OGAC NPI Director as well as CDC and HRSA NPI leads, should the Contractor be providing TA to an NPI award recipient under a CDC or HRSA award.   The Contractor should also provide regular informal briefings to USG in-country contacts on the principal activities and accomplishments throughout the implementation period.

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

The Task Order CTO will conduct yearly performance reviews of the Contractor by using the PMP proposed by the Contractor (above), and other indicators mutually agreed upon by the Task Order CTO, the Contract Officer (CO), and the Contractor in the first 90 days of the contract. A final performance review of Task Order will be scheduled for the final year of the Task Order. An external evaluation of the Task Order will be held in conjunction with any evaluations scheduled for the overall TASC III contract.

V. Proposal Submission Instructions

USAID will review all proposals received by the deadline for responsiveness to the technical specifications in the format outlined below. Contractors must submit proposals to the location indicated in the cover letter that accompanies this solicitation by the date and time specified. Proposals that are submitted late or are incomplete will not enter the review process.

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL FORMAT

The technical portion of the proposal must not exceed 20 pages, excluding attachments. Proposals must be on pages of 8-1/2 inch by 11-inch paper (210 mm by 297-mm paper), single-spaced, 12-point or larger type in a single column, with one-inch margins on all sides, with tabs to distinguish each section. Proposals may contain text boxes, but all text must be in 12-point font, and the boxes formatted as to not unduly interfere unduly with readability. Contractors must include résumés of proposed key personnel (two-to three pages maximum) and other proposed staff (one page maximum) in an annex. Cover pages, dividers, table of contents, and attachments (i.e., key personnel resumes, and letters of commitment) do not count against the 20-page limitation.

The contractor should submit one original and two hard copies of the technical proposal and the cost proposal, as well as an electronic copy by e-mail or CD. Please also submit on CD an electronic copy of the technical proposal in MS Word or Adobe PDF format and the cost proposal in MS Excel (software versions 2003 or newer.) Contractors may submit proposals in the binding of the bidder's choice, but must index sections in a Table of Contents. USAID must receive both the electronic copy (CD or email) and the hard copies by the submission deadline for the proposal to be eligible for consideration.

The cost proposal should have a cover page with the title of the program, name of the organization(s) submitting the Proposal, contact person, telephone numbers, address, and e-mail.

The technical evaluation criteria, with the hierarchy for each element, appear below. Illustrative line items contractors should include in the cost proposal also appear outlined below.

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL CONTENT

The proposal should demonstrate the contractor's capabilities and expertise with respect to undertaking the activities outlined in Section II, Scope of Work, above. The contractor must show it understands the complex issues involved in providing technical support to new partners. An important consideration in evaluating this proposal will be how the contractor proposes to approach the technical assistance program for the partners and to communicate effectively with all stakeholders.

The contractor shall describe how it will staff this effort and explain its past experience and re-

sults with building the capacity of new partners, including indigenous organizations. The contractor may divide the 20-page limit as it desires; however, the areas listed below must be included.

Contractors may present, in an Annex, tables showing levels of effort, and a timeline associated with the activities outlined.

Technical Approach

Generally

The contractor should explain its proposed approach to meet the technical support needs described in Section II, as well as its capacity-building approach. The contractor should also include a description of how it will coordinate with all relevant stakeholders, including the Round 1 technical assistance provider, in-country PEPFAR teams and contacts at the participating USG agencies.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

The contractor should explain how it will assess and provide technical assistance to support adequate client record keeping that is linked to the service delivery configurations and needs of new partners. Please propose how international and PEPFAR (both country and headquarters) output and outcome reporting requirements will be considered in the assessments and support of client monitoring systems. Please see the Performance Monitoring Plan described in Section IV of this document in writing a response to this section.

Personnel and Staffing Plan

In this section, the contractor should propose the names of key personnel, other personnel and consultants, and describe how proposed staff will accomplish the tasks required. Contractors may provide, as an annex, a matrix charting skills and expertise of proposed staff that meet the requirements of the tasks in the Scope of Work.

Past Performance Providing Similar Technical Assistance

Contractors for this Task Order should have competences, sensitivities, and experience in dealing with faith-based and community-based organizations – groups who often will have had little experience with government funding and are the target group for the New Partners Initiative. Contractors should demonstrate a track record of quality, timeliness, good business practices, customer satisfaction and attention to cost control, all performed while working in challenging political and developmental contexts.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARATION OF THE COST/BUSINESS PRO-POSAL

Budget Submission

The Cost/Business Proposals must be completely separate from the contractor's technical pro-posal. The Cost/Business Proposals should both cover a period of four (4) years and be broken into two budgets: one for the base TA activities for USAID award recipients; and 2) a second for option activities targeting HHS awardees. In addition to two (2) hard copies, cost/business pro-posals must be submitted on a CD in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF for the narrative portion, and Excel for the budget tables (software versions 2003 or newer.)

Budget Format

Contractors must submit two budgets, one base and one option, each with narratives providing a detailed justification of costs anticipated under this task order in the following format:

- For each line item proposed, a breakdown by element should be provided of the respec-tive anticipated costs of performing activities under this task order. Elements include: salaries, fringe benefits, consultant fees, subcontracts, travel/transportation/per diem, other direct costs including equipment, indirect costs (overhead, G&A, etc., if applica-ble), and fee.
- A detailed level of effort and estimates of labor cost in accordance with the Statement of Work must be provided. Please indicate separate line items for each proposed individual and identify each by name, labor category, daily rate, and the level of effort for that indi-vidual. Please provide a salary history for the prior three years, for "key" individuals and professional staff.
- Submit a detailed level of effort and cost estimates for consultants who will perform un-der the task order. Additionally, please provide ceiling rates for consultant positions for which an individual is not specifically named according to the following position classifi-cation: US Senior Level, US Junior Level, CCN Senior Level, CCN Junior Level, TCN Senior Level, and TCN Junior Level.
- The cost proposal should have a cover page with the title of the program, name of organi-zation(s) submitting Proposal, contact person, telephone number, address, and e-mail.

Budget Categories

The cost/business proposal should contain the following budget categories:

- Salary and Wages: Direct salaries and wages should be proposed in accordance with the contractor's personnel policies;
- Fringe Benefits: If the contractor has a fringe benefit rate that has been approved by an agency of the U.S. Government, such rate should be used and evidence of its approval should be provided. If a fringe benefit rate has not been so approved, the cost proposal should propose a rate and explain how the rate was determined. If the latter is used, the

narrative should include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., unemployment insurance, workers compensation, health and life insurance, retirement, FICA, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in dollars and as a percentage of salaries;

- Consultants: Any goods and/or services delivered by a consultant;
- Subcontracts: Any goods and services delivered by a subcontractor (no sub-grants are anticipated under this TO);
- Travel and Transportation: This includes per diem, international and in-country air travel;
- Other Direct Costs: This includes communications, report preparation costs, equipment, office rent abroad, office supplies and other related supply items related to this activity;
- Indirect Costs: The contractor should support the proposed indirect cost rate with a letter from a cognizant US Government audit agency, a Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement (NICRA), or with sufficient information for USAID to determine the reasonableness of the rates. Indirect Costs shall be in accordance with an approved NICRA but not to exceed indirect cost ceilings set for your organization in the IQC.
- Fee: Proposed fee, if any, not to exceed the ceiling set forth in the IQC.

To support the proposed costs, please provide detailed budget notes/narrative for all costs that explain how the costs were derived.

UNNECESSARILY ELABORATE PROPOSALS

Unnecessarily elaborate brochures or other presentations beyond those sufficient to present a complete and effective proposal in response to this RFTOP may be construed as an indication of the contractor's lack of cost consciousness. Elaborate artwork, expensive paper and bindings, and expensive visual and other presentation aids are neither necessary nor wanted.

CONTRACT AWARD

The Government may, without discussions or negotiations, award a task order resulting from this RFTOP to the responsible contractor whose proposal conforms to this RFTOP and offers the best value. Therefore, the initial proposals should contain the contractor's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. However, the U.S. Government may reject any or all proposals, accept other than the lowest cost proposal, and waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals received, should it be in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

Although technical evaluation factors are significantly more important than cost factors, the closer the technical evaluations of the various proposals are to one another, the more important cost considerations become. The Contracts Officer may determine what a highly ranked proposal based on the technical evaluation factors would mean in terms of performance and what it would cost the Government to take advantage of it in determining the best overall value to the Government.

AUTHORITY TO OBLIGATE THE GOVERNMENT

The Task Order Contracting Officer (TOCO) is the only individual who may legally commit the US Government to the expenditure of public funds. The contractor may not incur costs chargeable to the Task Order proposal may be incurred before receipt of either a contract signed by the TOCO or a specific, written authorization from the TOCO.

VI. EVALUATION CRITERIA

OVERVIEW

The criteria listed below are presented by major category in descending order of importance for evaluation purposes so that contractors will know which areas require emphasis in proposals. Sub-criteria within each criterion are of equal importance. Contractors should note that these criteria serve as the standard against which all technical information will be evaluated.

These technical evaluation criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this RFTOP to allow USAID to choose the highest quality proposal. These criteria serve as the standard against which the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) shall evaluate all acceptable proposals. USAID will award to the contractor whose proposals best meet(s) the Scope of Work description and Performance Standards and represent(s) the best value to the U.S. Government, all things considered.

1. TECHNICAL APPROACH

- Contractors must propose an <u>overall approach</u> to meet the technical support needs of NPI award recipients. The level of technical support by the end of the contract should be ambitious, but feasible, and in clear areas. The contractor must convey clearly how the proposed approach will improve performance as measured by the partner performance ratings and expenditures, and help achieve results towards the indicators proposed in the contractor's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan.
- Contractors must propose a <u>technical approach</u> which is feasible, complete, state-of-the-art, creative and innovative, evidence-based and appropriate to achieve the objectives and results under the contract. The proposal should present comprehensive understanding of the NPI and how it works, how to work effectively with NPI partners, and a realistic approach for planning, implementing and tracking the technical support work effectively. The technical approach must address capacity-building at the implementation level. The proposed <u>capacity-building approach</u> must be logical and timely and ensure the transfer of technical skills to the local organization. Each contractor should propose its approach for capacity building targeting each NPI partner's program implementation actors.
- <u>Monitoring &Evaluation (M&E) Plan</u>. Contractors should propose output and outcome indicators for the tasks listed, as well as how they will measure them in a cost-effective manner. The M&E Plan should be comprehensive, include proposed indicators, and propose a routine and systematic approach to monitoring and reporting annual and end-of-contract achievements, filling in information gaps as needed, and assessing periodic performance of the entire contract.

2. PERSONNEL

- Proposed technical key personnel must meet or exceed requirements to carry out key functions of each position. Contractors must propose key personnel within a staffing plan

which will give them defined duties and enable the contractor to effectively execute the contract. Proposed key personnel must demonstrate experience in working in with the key technical areas, have experience working in difficult organizational contexts, and ideally, have experience working with large, multi-donor, health grantees on addressing systemic areas and have experience at least one of the three diseases. The staffing pattern proposed must provide an adequate skill mix to meet the needs for technical implementation and management of the Task Order.

3. PAST PERFORMANCE

- As stated above, contractors must demonstrate the capacity to provide similar services with a strong track record of work in complex contexts. USAID reserves the right to obtain past performance information from other sources, including those not named in this RFTOP. The TEC may use any other past performance information obtained as part of the review and evaluation of contractor past performance.

4. COST / BUSINESS PROPOSAL

Cost is of significantly less importance than the technical evaluation criteria. However, where proposals are considered essentially equal, cost may be the determining factor. The overall standard for judging cost will be whether the cost proposal presents the best value for the cost. The cost proposal will be judged on: (i) whether it is realistic and consistent with the technical proposal; (ii) overall cost control (avoidance of excessive salaries, excessive home office visits, and other costs in excess of reasonable requirements); and (iii) amount of proposed fee.

EVALUATION RATINGS

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following adjectival ratings:

OUTSTANDING
The proposal exceeds the fullest expectations of the Government. The offeror has convincingly demonstrated that the evaluation requirements have been analyzed, evaluated, and should result in outstanding, effective, efficient, and economical performance under the contract. The proposal is comprehensive, thorough and of exceptional merit. No deficiencies or significant weaknesses have been found.

When applied to criteria and/or the proposal as a whole, an outstanding rating indicates that no deficiencies or significant weaknesses exist within any sub-criteria that represent a performance risk within the criteria and/or the proposal as a whole.

VERY GOOD
The proposal demonstrates overall competence, meets all TO minimum requirements and exceeds requirements in some areas but not all. No deficiencies or significant weaknesses are apparent. Strengths outbalance any weaknesses that exist. No more than a few minor weaknesses have been identified that are easily correctable and do not represent a performance risk.

When applied to criteria and/or the proposal as a whole, a very good rating indicates that no deficiencies or significant weaknesses exist within any sub-criteria that represent a performance risk within the criteria and/or the proposal as a whole. No more than a few minor weaknesses have been identified within the criteria and/or proposal that are easily correctable and do not represent a performance risk.

GOOD
The proposal is reasonably sound and meets the TO minimum requirements. The proposal may contain weaknesses and/or significant weaknesses that are correctable but no deficiencies. If any weaknesses and/or significant weaknesses are noted, they should not seriously affect the offeror's performance.

When applied to the criteria and/or the proposal as a whole, a good rating indicates that there are no deficiencies within the criteria and/or proposal that will represent a performance risk. Any significant or minor weaknesses that have been identified within the criteria and/ or proposal are correctable. They should not seriously affect the offeror's performance.

MARGINAL
The proposal demonstrates a shallow understanding of the TO requirements and approach and marginally meets the minimal requirements for acceptable performance. The proposal contains weaknesses and/or significant weaknesses and may contain deficiencies. If deficiencies exist, they may be correctable with a significant revision of the proposal. The offeror may complete the assigned tasks; however, there is a moderate risk that the offeror will not be successful.

When applied to the criteria and/or the proposal as a whole, a marginal rating indicates that there are deficiencies and/or significant weaknesses within the criteria and/or proposal that represent a moderate performance risk. Only a significant revision of the proposal would correct these areas of concern.

UNACCEPTABLE
The proposal fails to meet minimum TO requirements or contains one or more major deficiencies. The proposal is incomplete, vague, incompatible, incomprehensible, or so incorrect as to be unacceptable. The evaluator feels that the deficiency or deficiencies is/are uncorrectable without a major revision of the proposal. The deficiencies, weaknesses and/or significant weaknesses would seriously affect the offeror's performance and represent a high risk that the offeror will not be successful.