

## RFA 674-08-0015

### Skills Development Activity USAID/Southern Africa Office of Economic Growth

#### **SECTION B --- SELECTION CRITERIA**

##### **B.1. GENERAL INFORMATION**

The criteria presented below have been tailored to the requirements of the Skills Development Activity Request for Applications (RFA). Applicants should note that these criteria serve to: a) identify the significant matters that applicants should address in their applications, and b) set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated. To facilitate the review of applications, applicants should organize the narrative sections of their applications in the order of the selection criteria.

The technical applications shall be evaluated in accordance with the Technical Evaluation Criteria set forth below. Thereafter, the budget/cost applications (based on the announced proposed life of project funding levels provided by USAID South Africa as specified in the cover letter) of all applicants submitting a technically acceptable application will be opened and budgets shall be evaluated for general reasonableness, allowability, and allocability. To the extent necessary, negotiations will then be conducted with all applicants whose application, after discussion and negotiation, has a reasonable chance of being selected for award. A single award shall be made to the responsible applicant whose application offers the greatest value, cost effectiveness and other factors considered. USAID may award a cooperative agreement without discussions with applicants.

A Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) in accordance with the Technical Evaluation Criteria set forth below, will evaluate the technical portion of applications. The evaluation committee may include industry experts and/or host country officials who are not employees of the U.S. Government. USAID intends to evaluate applications in accordance with this Section B. and make a cooperative agreement award to the responsible applicant whose application represents the best value to the U.S. Government within the available funding.

##### **B.2. EVALUATION FACTORS**

The evaluation criteria listed below are presented by major category, with weightings indicated, so that applicants will know which areas require emphasis in the preparation of the technical application. Applicants should note that these criteria serve as the standard against which all technical applications will be

evaluated, and serve to identify the significant matters which applicants should address.

The proposal will be evaluated based on the following factors listed under the six broad qualitative categories set forth below. A total of 100 points will be used with the factors assigned weights as set forth below.

<b>OVERVIEW of Scoring Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>A. Technical Approach:</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>B. Implementation Management Approach:</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>C. Personnel:</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>D. Past Performance:</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>E. Cost Effectiveness:</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>100</b>

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**Detail of Scoring Criteria (points)**

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**A. Technical Approach (30) :** This criterion evaluates the technical quality and responsiveness of the application to the RFA and includes:

1) Activity Design/Plan (15 pts):

- Soundness, practicability, feasibility and sustainability of the approach and Life of Project Action Plan;
- Quality and responsiveness of interim work-plan;
- Quality and level of effort devoted to the various tasks;
- Recognition and satisfactory attention given to building working relationships with the South African Department of Education, private sector stakeholders and targeted FET institutions;
- Overall understanding of the latest developments in South Africa’s skills development sector;
- Ability to conduct HIV-related support activities within the South African FET colleges as described in the Scope of Work.

2) Realistic Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (10 pts):

- Realistic and workable monitoring and evaluation plan to monitor implementation progress as well as to measure and report on impact;
- Monitoring and evaluation plan is adaptable for use by the Department of Education after the expiration of the contract.

3) Integration of Gender Equity (5 Pts):

- Activity design and approach demonstrates an understanding of gender issues within the South Africa skills development sector and FET colleges and integrates these issues into the overall project plan and approach.

**B. Implementation Management Approach (25):** This criterion evaluates the management/administrative quality and responsiveness of the application to the RFA including, as applicable, implementing partners (sub-awardees or sub-contractors). Sub-criteria are as follows:

Technical Implementation Capacity (15 pts):

1) Demonstrated management experience with similar complex, technical interventions, preferably in South Africa and/or southern Africa.

Experience in:

- Assisting youth to increase their knowledge and understanding of the opportunities afforded by skills development programs in which they are enrolled, e.g. programs of study, job placement opportunities, and other supports;
- Assisting skills development institutions or programs to provide a wide range of support and referral services to students;
- Building capacity of skills development institutions to link with business, industry, and other advanced education and training programs;
- Providing staff development for skills development instructors, allowing them to link classroom experiences with practical, employer-based learning experiences – for themselves and for their students;
- Helping skills development institutions to build capacity to partner with programs that create and incubate small enterprises;
- Supporting youth in skills development programs to be engaged in HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment measures, as well as to be educated themselves in measures of prevention;
- Developing monitoring, assessment and evaluation tools to capture relevant data in their programs;

Organizational Management Capacity (10pts):

1. Demonstrated ability to provide full managerial, financial and technical support and oversight for an award of this type, complexity and size.

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2. Quality and responsiveness of proposed management structure. Presents an organization and staffing plan that clearly defines roles and responsibilities, delegates authority within the norms of prudent business practice, defines clear lines of communication, and mobilizes and positions suitably qualified staff in a timely manner.
3. Demonstrated ability to provide and retain key personnel/key implementing partners with relevant/satisfactory managerial and technical competence. Employs strategies to coordinate activities in order to make the most efficient and effective use of the staff and capabilities, and of those of key partners.
4. Demonstrated ability to provide qualified short-term specialists in a timely manner.
5. Provides strong in-country backstopping, administration, logistic and other management. Chief of Party must be based in South Africa. Demonstrated ability to provide sub-award/(sub)contract management services (including purchasing and management of supplies and equipment).

**C. Personnel (15):**

- 1) Identifies high caliber staff for key positions. Appropriateness of proposed personnel's experience to their functions and responsibilities in the project.
- 2) Staff or consultant experience and education: demonstration of experience in the full range of workforce development and education issues, skills program development, education and training issues; staff experience in different aspects of research and capacity building.
- 3) Demonstrated qualifications and capabilities of key implementing partners (sub-awardees and [sub] contractors). Higher points will be given for experience in South Africa and other developing countries and magnitude of experience related to specific tasks.
- 4) Responsiveness and realism of proposed staffing plan/teaming arrangement.

**D. Past Performance (15):** Past performance includes that of proposed implementing partners and covers the criteria listed below.

- 1) Demonstrated quality of past performance in implementing and managing complex programs of a similar technical nature and magnitude, including production of meaningful outputs and significant measurable results, preferably in South Africa and/or southern Africa and in activities related to those described in this RFA.
- 2) Demonstrated success in accessing and collaborating with a broad range of local and national governmental, non-governmental, and private sector entities.
- 3) Demonstrated success at achieving activity-level outputs and/or achieving (or using its best efforts to achieve) measurable results.
- 4) Quality of services: a demonstrated record of conforming to award requirements and to standards of good workmanship.
- 5) Timeliness of performance: a demonstrated record of adherence to award and performance schedules, including management and administrative aspects of performance (e.g., reporting).

**E. Cost Effectiveness (15):**

- 1) Cost-effectiveness (10 pts):
  - a. Ratio of direct program costs to administrative/indirect costs.
  - b. Recurrent costs minimized.
  - c. Significance of program impact (including cost-sharing/matching, GDAs or other alliances, and in-kind contributions).
  - d. Evidence of, and the extent to which, non-USG sources provide a comparative advantage in meeting the goals and objectives of the program. (Organizations that respond to this RFA are required to include **cost share of at least 15%** of the value of the expected USAID resources, in cash or in kind, and describe how these resources would contribute to the sustainability of the project over time.)
- 2) Cost-realism (5 points):
  - e. Likelihood that the program can be accomplished within the budget parameter provided by USAID plus the levels of cost sharing proposed.
  - f. Costs realistically reflect proposed inputs and program activities.

**B.3. EVALUATION OF COST/MANAGEMENT APPLICATIONS**

While the proposed life of project funding levels for the Skills Development Activity will be provided by USAID South Africa (as specified in the RFA cover

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letter), the budgeting of these projected costs will be evaluated for reasonableness, necessity, allocability, and allowability, under the applicable USG cost principles (*i.e.*, 41 CFR 31.2 for for-profit businesses, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organizations, and OMB Circular A-21 for universities). Management information will be evaluated to determine the responsibility and eligibility of the applicant, and to address/resolve issues which may impede performance and implementation (*e.g.*, “restricted goods” pursuant to paragraph [a][3] of the standard provision entitled “USAID Eligibility Rules for Goods and Services”), with an eye toward reducing post-award administrative requirements and burdens by resolving issues and providing approvals as part of the pre-award and award process.

#### **B.4. SELECTION PROCESS**

The selection process will be as follows:

##### **(a) "Shortlisting", Negotiations, and "Best and Final"**

Based on the above evaluations, a "shortlist" will be established, consisting of the most highly rated applications, the above evaluation factors considered, except that the Agreement Officer may further limit the number of applications on the shortlist to the greatest number that will permit an efficient competition amongst the most highly rated applications. To the extent that they are necessary, discussions and negotiations will then be conducted with all such applicants, and applicants may be requested to develop "best and final" proposals or revised applications or addenda to the initial applications, as necessary.

##### **(b) Revised Applications/Addenda to Initial Applications**

- 1. Technical Application:** The revised technical application or addendum thereto, if requested, will be reviewed by the evaluation committee for the applicant's response to any questions, comments, or suggestions which are conveyed to the applicant during the “best and final” process. The criteria set forth above shall be used in assessing and evaluating the applicant's response.
- 2. Cost/Management Application:** The revised cost/management application or addendum thereto, if requested, will be reviewed in accordance with Section B.3. (above).

**(c) Award Criteria:** Award of cooperative agreement will be made in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFA to the responsible and eligible applicant whose costs are fair and reasonable, allowable, necessary, allocable and realistic, and whose application offers the best value for the available funding. Award may be made based on the initial applications or based

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on the first submission of revised applications/addenda. However, if necessary, USAID reserves the right to further narrow the shortlist and/or conduct subsequent negotiations, followed by submission of subsequent revised applications/addenda.