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# **BUILDING WINNING PROPOSALS: PREPARING THE NGO FOR PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT**

**PALESTINIAN HEALTH SECTOR REFORM AND  
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

**SHORT-TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT (FINAL)**

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## ACRONYMS

DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOH	Ministry of Health
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

The Palestinian Health Sector Reform and Development Project is a five-year initiative funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), designed and implemented in close collaboration with the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MOH). The Project's main objective is to support the MOH, selected non-governmental organizations, and selected educational and professional institutions in strengthening their institutional capacities and performance to support a functional and democratic Palestinian health sector able to meet its priority public health needs. The Project works to achieve this goal through three components: (1) supporting health sector reform and management, (2) strengthening clinical and community-based health, and (3) supporting procurement of health and humanitarian assistance commodities.

The purpose of this trip was to design and conduct a training for 15 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the health sector in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The training focused on proposal development for NGOs. The first day of the training was focused on overall proposal development strategy, decision-making regarding the process, and building the foundation through results framework. The second day of training was designed to go into more detail of the proposal sections and administrative aspects such as roles and responsibilities and timelines. It was planned to repeat the second day training three times for fewer individuals (five NGOs per day instead of all 15) to allow for more individualized attention and hands-on practice.

Representatives from 13 NGOs attended the two-day workshop. The selected NGOs are current or previous USAID grantees. The training workshop was held September 12 and 13, 2012 at the Project office and the Caesar Hotel in Ramallah. The training was developed by short-term technical assistance (STTA) consultant, Olivia Ungerer in conjunction with the Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) of Operations and Administration, Andrea Uribe. Ms. Ungerer was in country from August 30 – September 15, 2012.

Palestinian NGOs are an important player in the provision of health services in the Palestinian Territories. Most of these NGOs depend on individual philanthropy and grants from donors for their funding. However, the capacity to develop concise and well-structured applications is limited. The Project must often go back-and-forth with NGOs in order to receive satisfactory applications, delaying the award process for weeks at a time. These organizations need to obtain awards not only from the Project but from other donor countries and foundations as well in order to survive.

During the award process, the Project provides significant input and several drafts are shared between the Project and the NGO. The Project assists potential applicants in their project description, clinical approach, regulations, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and branding. However, this assistance is usually focused only on their specific application and not necessarily as part of a comprehensive approach to structuring an application.

As a result, the Project incorporated a series of workshops into their Year 5 Annual Implementation Plan to build the capacity of partner NGOs to develop winning applications. This training was the first of this series. Trainings will continue throughout the year to help with more specific objectives of proposal development for selected NGOs.

## SECTION II: ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

The objective of the training, to build local capacity to independently and effectively respond to solicitations, fits into the framework of USAID's new *FORWARD* initiative. It also aligns with the Project's objective to strengthen the capacity of NGOs working in the health sector. Through targeted training, the Project is seeking to build local capacity for diverse fundraising.

The training also demonstrates Chemonics International's (USAID's implementing partner for the Project) commitment to local capacity building and sustainability initiatives. The workshop provided trainees with some of Chemonics' tools and best practices related to proposal development.

The training was divided into two separate days. The first day focused on higher level strategy and planning activities surrounding proposal development. The second day involved activities that examined the proposal logistics, administration, and details of understanding a solicitation. The training was planned and facilitated by Olivia Ungerer, Grants Workshop Specialist with Chemonics International and featured segments and group activities presented by a variety of experts including Dr. Jihad Mashal, DCOP for Technical Programs; Andrea Uribe, DCOP for Operations and Administration; Narmeen Fayyalleh, Grants Officer; Nicholas Skibiak, HIS Budget & Financial Consultant; and Emily Dahl, Knowledge Management Officer.

Workshop topics included:

- *Where is the New Business?*
- *Market Research and Being Prepared/Informed*
- *Apply or Not to Apply*
- *Project Framework and Design*
- *Sustainability and Innovation in Program Design*
- *Reading and Understanding the Solicitation*
- *Organizing Your Resources*
- *Proposal/Application Sections*
- *The Frankenstein – Packaging your Proposal for Success*
- *Cost and Budget*

Participants were seated with trainees from different organizations to encourage information sharing between organizations. Grantees were thus able to get different perspectives and have the opportunity to discuss the topics presented with – and get a fresh perspective from – a new audience. The participants were also challenged with a variety of real-life activities that involved a sample solicitation. The activities forced the participants to work together as a team, solve problems and work through questions that arise during the proposal process, and come up with creative strategies to apply to future proposal submissions.

Trainees received a binder on the first day of the training filled with handouts and examples that were supplemental to the PowerPoint presentations each day. At the end of the training, participants also received a flash drive of the PowerPoint slides, electronic copies of handouts, and proposal templates. The workshop covered a wealth of

information in only two days; the take-home materials will give participants an easy tool to reference as they prepare proposals in the coming weeks and months. These materials also make it easier for workshop participants to share the information learned through the training with their colleagues.

Throughout the course of the training, participants were actively engaged and were eager to learn more. They spoke up and offered their opinions about solicitation processes, asked questions, and provided recommendations for improvements on the current workshop and suggestions for additional training topics.

## SECTION III: RECOMMENDATIONS

While the training was very successful, as demonstrated by the active participation of the trainees and the evaluations completed at the end of the second day, there were suggestions for improvement and follow-up trainings.

The main suggestions can be broken down as follows:

- More in-depth training with hands-on activities.
- Technical writing and strategy.
- Implementation: what to do after winning an award, with a specific focus on USAID rules and regulations.

Ideally, the Project grants team could spend time in the final year of the Project following up with these grantees, providing direct one-on-one assistance with grant applications and administrative processes—such as online submission requirements, understanding solicitations, and more. Many grantees expressed the need for assistance, or someone to help answer questions during the initial proposal process. Having Project staff available to answer questions from the NGOs about regulations and compliance would help to improve their applications.

The trainees also found the exercise on activities, objectives, results, and indicators very helpful. They expressed the desire to learn more regarding this subject and practice the concept in more detail. This would be an ideal topic for further training. Greater value would be added if this training included a USAID representative.

The most common suggestion we found was to hold a longer workshop. “Two days are not enough time to get a better knowledge of USAID regulations,” explained one participant. They enjoyed the activities, but wanted more time to go through the sample solicitation, present high quality results as a team during the report-out, and practice what they were learning.

## **ANNEX: TRAINING AGENDA**

**Day I**  
**Conference: Preparing the NGO for Proposal Development**  
**8:30am – 3:00pm**  
**Wednesday, September 12, 2012**  
**Location – Flagship Office, Ramallah**

**Day I Objective:** Gain an understanding of the main challenges WB/G NGOs currently face in proposal development and learn the importance of developing a strategy for the who, what, and how of proposal development.

- 8:00 – 8:30:**           **Coffee, Meet, and Greet**
- 8:30 – 8:45:**           **Welcome and Objectives** (Facilitated by Narmeen Fayalleh and Olivia Ungerer)
- 8:45 – 9:15:**           **Introductions and Ice Breaker** (Facilitated by Narmeen Fayalleh and Olivia Ungerer)
- 9:15 – 10:15:**       **Where is the New Business?** (Facilitated by Dr. Jihad Mashal and Andrea Uribe)
- 10:15 – 10:30:**       **Coffee Break**
- 10:30 – 11:15:**       **Market Research and Being Prepared/Informed** (Facilitated by Kirk Ellis)
- 11:15 – 12:00:**       **Apply or Not to Apply** (Facilitated by Nick Skibiak)
- 12:00 – 1:00:**         **Lunch**
- 1:00 – 2:00:**           **Project Framework and Design** (Facilitated by Olivia Ungerer)
- 2:00 – 2:30:**           **Sustainability and Innovation in Program Design** (Facilitated by Olivia Ungerer)
- 2:30 – 3:00:**           **Wrap Up** (Facilitated by Narmeen Fayalleh and Olivia Ungerer)

**Day 2**  
**Building Winning Proposals – Preparing the Application/Proposal**  
**9:00am – 4:30pm**  
**Thursday, September 13, 2012**  
**Location – Flagship Office, Ramallah**

**Day 2 Objectives:** Gain a better understanding of application/solicitation requirements, learn to design programs incorporating evaluation criteria, and understand the importance of administrative organization and timelines to create strong grant applications.

- 8:00 – 8:30: Coffee**
- 8:30 – 9:00: Welcome and Objectives of Day 2** (Facilitated by Narmeen Fayalleh and Olivia Ungerer)
- 9:00 – 9:30: Ice Breaker** (Facilitated by Narmeen Fayalleh and Olivia Ungerer)
- 9:30 – 11:00: Reading and Understanding the Solicitation** (Facilitated by Olivia Ungerer)
- 11:00 – 11:15: Coffee Break**
- 11:15 – 12:30: Organizing Your Resources** (Facilitated by Olivia Ungerer)
- 12:30 – 1:30: Lunch Break**
- 1:30 – 2:30: Proposal/Application Sections** (Facilitated by Andrea Uribe)
- 2:30 – 3:00: The Frankenstein – Packaging Your Proposal for Success** (Facilitated by Emily Dahl)
- 3:00 – 3:15: Coffee Break**
- 3:15 – 4:00: Cost and Budget** (Facilitated by Andrea Uribe)
- 4:00 – 4:30: Wrap-up** (Facilitated by Narmeen Fayalleh and Olivia Ungerer)