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KNOWLEDGE-BASED INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION (KISAN) PROJECT

PROPOSAL WRITING TRAINING CONSULTANT REPORT

NOVEMBER 14 TO DECEMBER 2, 2014

CONTRACT NUMBER AID-367-C-13-00004

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This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Ms. Samantha Parsons on behalf of Winrock International.

KISAN PROJECT

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DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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ACRONYMS

FtF	Feed the Future
KISAN	Knowledge-based Integrated Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition Project
PMP	Project Monitoring Plan
RFP	Request for Proposal
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 24 – 27, Proposal Development Expert, Samantha Parsons, delivered two sessions of Proposal Development Training specifically for the USAID/Nepal’s KISAN 2 Bidders. The goal of the training was to equip Nepali organizations with the necessary skills and knowledge to bid on a USAID/Nepal’s Request for Proposal (RFP). Fifty organizations signed up for the training and 46 (see Annex A) attended the training over the course of two two-day sessions. Training participants included a variety of organizations that may be eligible to bid on USAID projects. As a result of the training, 46 organizations improved their knowledge by 90% according to the results of the post-test. This will not only assist them with the preparation for KISAN 2, but also enable them to bid on future USAID proposals.

II. INTRODUCTION

The Knowledge-based Integrated Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition (KISAN) project is USAID’s five-year food security flagship project in Nepal, implemented by Winrock International. KISAN promotes sustainable solutions to reduce poverty and hunger by achieving inclusive growth in the agriculture sector, increasing the income of farm families, and linking on and off farm agribusiness enterprises. The project is being implemented in the 20 Feed the Future (FtF) districts identified by USAID/Nepal in the Western, Mid-Western, and Far-Western Regions of Nepal. These 20 districts are Baitadi, Dadeldhura, Kanchanpur, Doti, Achham, Kailali, Dailekh, Surkhet, Bardiya, Banke, Rukum, Jajarkot, Salyan, Rolpa, Dang, Pyuthan, Gulmi, Arghakhanchi, Kapilvastu, and Palpa. KISAN maintains a Regional Office in Nepalganj and four Cluster Offices with the West Cluster based in Kapilbastu district; Bheri Cluster based in Banke district and Rapti Cluster based in Dang district with both for the Mid-West; and the Far-West Cluster based in Kailali district.

In October 2014, (Year 3 of the KISAN Project), USAID/Nepal released an RFP for local organizations to bid on the **KISAN 2 Project** to manage 12 of the KISAN districts – Gulmi, Palpa, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Pyuthan, Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan, Achham, Baitadi, Dadeldhura, and Doti. These districts will be transferred from Winrock’s management to the management of a local organization. As part of USAID FORWARD, KISAN is to build the capacity of the organizations. During the last week of November, KISAN organized a two-day proposal writing training for interested organizations on how to develop and submit a proposal compliant with USAID regulations.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING

To equip Nepali organizations with the necessary skills and knowledge to bid on a USAID/Nepal’s RFP for the KISAN 2 project.

IV. TRAINING METHODOLOGY AND PLAN

The sub-objectives of the training were defined as:

- Obtain a basic understanding of the USAID procurement process;
- Learn how to read and analyze an RFP;
- Develop a responsive proposal outline;
- Gain a basic understanding of the core parts of a technical proposal;
- Design a program for results;
- How to draft a Project Monitoring Plan (PMP);
- Gain an understanding of basic cost principles and developing a budget; and
- Submitting a proposal.

Training Features

- Two-day training
- Two cohorts
- Seven sessions
- Pre- and Post-Test
- Evaluation
- E-toolkit

Participant selection: The training was announced at the KISAN 2 Bidder’s Conference where over 250 organizations attended. It was determined that only prime bidders could attend the training and they could only have one representative. This resulted in a group of 50 participants from 50 Nepali organizations or bidders.

To accommodate this number of participants and still deliver an interactive training, the Winrock team decided to hold two two-day trainings with seven sessions covering all aspects of proposal development. In total, there were 46 organizations who participated the training.

The content of the training was designed with a two-fold purpose: give the organizations the necessary tools to understand the KISAN 2 RFP and prepare a competitive response, but also give them the proposal development tools to respond to future USAID solicitations. Therefore, case studies and examples were used from a variety of proposals from multiple technical areas and regions.

The basic agenda was as follows (see detailed agenda, Annex B):

Session 1: Introductions, Objectives, Pre-test

Session 2: USAID Procurement Process and Getting Started

Session 3: How to Read and Analyze an RFP

Session 4: Proposal Outlining

Session 5: Core Components of the Technical Proposal

Session 6: Basics of the Cost Proposal

Session 7: Overview of Available Resources

Final Test and Evaluation

Methods: Each session included a powerpoint slide set (see Annex E) delivered by the facilitator and a short interactive activity where participants could apply their knowledge and skills. Sample activities included: doing a mock proposal evaluation, preparing a general proposal outline, preparing a detailed outline, a pop quiz, drafting a results framework, and describing detailed activities.

Participants were given examples and job aids to assist with the activities. Some activities were done in groups while the option to conduct the activity alone was always given due to the competitive nature of the group. We also developed an e-toolkit with all of the examples and powerpoint slides for participants to access after the training.

Some activities used the KISAN 2 RFP directly, but other activities incorporated different RFPs and mock RFPs as appropriate. Many activities were designed to assist participants with the creation of their KISAN 2 proposal, allowing them the space and time to create parts of the proposal during the two-day training.



Figure 1. Trainer providing local organizations with the tools and skills to write a competitive proposal in response to a USAID solicitation.

Each training session also included a pre-test and post-test (see Annex C). This was a twelve-question test administered as a baseline on day one and retaken on day two. We saw a significant increase in skill level during both sessions (see Section V for details). Additionally, we conducted a training evaluation of the course and the trainer. More than 90% of the reviews were good or excellent in all categories (see Section V for details).

The training was held at the Dhokaima Café and Conference Space. We had boardroom-style seating and used the garden for break out groups.

V. OVERALL RESULTS

Tests: As a result of the pre- and post-test, there was an average increase in knowledge and skills of 90% across the two groups. Areas of difficulty included results-based terminology (objectives, results, activities, etc.) and confusion on cost terminology and concepts. See Sections VI and VII for details on areas of weakness identified.

Evaluations: The evaluations noted that more than 90% of participants from both groups rated all aspects of the training at “good” or “excellent.” Particular strength areas were:

- 98% rated good or excellent for their overall satisfaction with the training;
- 97% rated good or excellent for their trainer's grasp of the subject matter;
- 98% rated good or excellent that their questions were answered effectively by the trainer; and

Test Results

Group 1:

Average Pre-test score: 5.30
 Average Post-test score: 9.55
 % increase: 80%

Group 2:

Average Pre-test score: 4.45
 Average Post-test score: 8.95
 % increase: 101%

- 97% rated the trainer’s skills as good or excellent.

Participants noted that the length of the training could have been longer and that a participant manual would have been helpful. They also noted some additional training needs which are addressed below. The majority of participants expressed a continued desire and interest in USAID procurements and answered “yes” when asked if they plan to bid on future USAID solicitations.

“I found proposal outlining and the results framework sessions particularly useful.”
- Training Participant



Figure 2. Participants in one of the two-day trainings on proposal writing.

See Annex D for a summary of the evaluation.

VI. CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF ORGANIZATIONS

As a result of the training, we were able to do a general assessment of the capacity of organizations interested in bidding on USAID solicitations like KISAN 2. Overall, the training participants fell into three groups in terms of their skills in proposal development and readiness as an organization to respond to a USAID solicitation as shown in Table I.

Table I. Assessment of Participants

Group	Description
Basic group	This group had very low baseline knowledge of USAID and understanding of the solicitation process. Many had not read the RFP or did not yet have a copy of it or had been unable to find it on the internet. Let alone, have read it or begun preparing a response. This group was able to gain basic skills in the training, but would require significantly more training and skills acquisition to be able to bid on USAID solicitations.
Mid-level group	This group had perhaps read the RFP cover to cover, absorbed some of the key concepts, but had not taken any steps beyond reading the RFP. The majority had not yet started proposal preparation, but showed a greater capacity and ability to respond in the future to USAID solicitations. However, the majority will not be in a position to bid on KISAN 2 because they will not be able to complete their proposals on time due to the limited time left.
Top-tier group	This group was clearly the most prepared and qualified to bid on a USAID solicitation of this size and scope. Most of these organizations already held EU and ADB contracts or grants and some were also receiving USAID subcontracts. They had more proposal development experience and showed that they had at least started on their proposals for KISAN 2. There were also a few in this group that would have benefited from a

more advanced training on technical writing and more of the nuancing of writing winning technicals.

Training to these three distinct skill levels was a bit of a challenge, but everyone's skill level was still improved. Activities and one-on-one mentoring allowed us to address the multiple levels in the room. We were surprised by how many groups had not started their proposals yet. This does tell us more about the groups that are actually serious about bidding on a USAID solicitation.

We estimate that:

- Five to eight groups will submit high quality proposals for KISAN 2;
- Up to 12 groups may submit a proposal, but more than likely not meet the basic requirements of the RFP or be easily dismissed on non-compliance factors; and
- The remaining organizations have improved their capacity to bid on future USAID solicitations and could benefit from further training.

Overall, the training was beneficial regardless because 46 organizations received the training and improved their skills to bid on a USAID solicitation. However, if USAID would like to increase the pool of qualified groups to bid on solicitations, follow-on training targeted at the mid-level group would probably be the most beneficial. Possible further training areas could be:

- Preparing the Cost Volume (Two-day training);
- Technical Writing (Two-day workshop);
- Pre-proposal Positioning, Tracking, and Processes (One-day training); and
- Additional proposal development training that would take place over a longer period of time. For example one course per week over the course of a month or a three- to five-day course. This would allow for more homework, reading, activities, and experiential learning.

VII. OBSERVATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

As a result of the training, we identified some areas of the RFP that participants had trouble grasping or difficulty understanding. Here are the main items that came up during the training:

- **Fixed Fee Deliverables Based Schedule:** This concept and organizations ability to formulate these numbers accurately is way beyond the current capacity of the organizations. Although fixed fee tied to results is critical, participants struggled with the concept of fee (as many were non-profits) and most were not able to grasp how to calculate fee on deliverables. Overall, the group could benefit from more extensive cost training.
- **Indirect Costs:** This is also a harder concept for individuals to grasp, but necessary for them to pursue USAID contracting. After more time, more of them grasped it, but it is still an area of confusion. This can only be remedied with further training.

- **Joint Venture:** The language in the RFP reads as if the preferred partnering mechanism is a joint venture, which is a more complex partnership for a local organization to form. The groups understood the concept of subcontracting and partnering, but were confused by the joint venture language. They were also a bit confused by whether they could subcontract at all. This is an area that can be very confusing for local organizations.
- **Number of Technical Proposal:** In Section L, there were instructions for the Technical Proposal that showed two sets of organization, one for years 1-3 and one for years 4-5. This read as if two proposals were required, not one (as USAID/Nepal confirmed during our meeting).
- **Paper Size:** The RFP stipulated 8 ½ x 11 Letter size paper. This paper is not widely available in Nepal and may be costly for organizations to purchase. When targeting local organizations, making restrictions that accommodate for the local context is more important.

Lessons Learned

Training Timing: It would have been potentially more beneficial for participants if the training was held prior to the KISAN 2 solicitation being issued. With a live solicitation, participants had to be more guarded and we had to be more careful about what could and could not be said because the solicitation had already been issued. There was also some benefit as we could address issues specific to the KISAN 2 RFP, but generally, training prior to the solicitation being live would be more beneficial.

Participant Level: It could be more beneficial if we split the groups into two skills levels; beginner to mid-level and mid-level to advanced. This would allow each session to be at the appropriate level and allow for increased interaction.

Answers to Questions: When the training was delivered, answers to questions had not yet been issued. If they had been issued during or prior to the training, it would have assisted with clarifying areas that were still confusing and we could have walked through them with the group to ensure that everyone understood the answers and did not have further questions.

Length of the Training: Although two days allowed us to cover many areas of proposal development, we were not able to go in-depth on topics that normally require a longer training. A minimum three days should probably be budgeted for a group of this skill level. A more advanced group could do a more advanced course for two days.

VIII. ANNEXES

ANNEX A: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FOR PROPOSAL WRITING TRAINING TO BIDDERS ON USAID/NEPAL'S KISAN 2 PROJECT

Date: November 24 to 27, Dhokaima Café, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur

Table II. List of Participants

Batch / Date	SN	Name	Organization	Type
Batch I Nov. 24 and 25, 2014	1	Dr. Chandra Prasad Pokhrel	Integrated Community Development Movement Nepal	NGO
	2	Dr. Narayan Khanal	FORWARD Nepal (Forum for Rural Welfare and Agricultural Reform for Development)	NGO
	3	Dr. Shreeram Prasad Neopane	ECARDS-Nepal	NGO
	4	Mr. Bhakta Bahadur Khatri	ENDO (Environment and Nation Development Organization)	NGO
	5	Mr. Bidhan Pokhrel	Agriculture Empowerment Nepal (AEN)	NGO
	6	Mr. Ganesh Bahadur Rawat	Karnali Community Development Center (KCDC)	NGO
	7	Mr. Hemant Shahi	Rural Environment Development Center (REDC) Dadeldhura	NGO
	8	Mr. Ishwar Man Shrestha	Good Neighbors Nepal	NGO
	9	Mr. Jagannath Kharel	Center for Health Analysis and Genuine Effort (CHANGE)	NGO
	10	Mr. Jiyam Shrestha	CONCERN Nepal (Concern for Children and Environment Nepal)	NGO
	11	Mr. Keshab Datta Joshi	Center for Environmental and Agricultural Policy Research, Extension and Development (CEAPRED)	NGO
	12	Mr. Khadga Bahadur Shrestha	DEVTEC Nepal	NGO
	13	Mr. Krishna Prasad Lamsal	FFN (Food Foundation Nepal)	NGO
	14	Mr. Laxman Pokhrel	Kathmandu Institute of Applied Sciences	Institute
	15	Mr. Manjul K. Manandhar	Full Bright Consultancy Pvt. Ltd.	Pvt. Ltd.
	16	Mr. Narayan Sharma Rimal	Forest Action Nepal	NGO
	17	Mr. Pradeep Shah	Indreni Rural Development Center Nepal	NGO
	18	Mr. Pragati Sipkhan	Agricultural Technology Center (ATC)	NGO
	19	Mr. Pushpa Lal Moktan	Institute for Sustainable Agriculture Nepal (INSAN)	NGO
	20	Mr. Raju Kunwar	Nepal Food Scientists and Technologists Association	Association
	21	Mr. Sagar Pandey	Gandaki Multiple Institute, Kathmandu	Institute

Table II. List of Participants

Batch / Date	SN	Name	Organization	Type
Batch 2 Nov. 26 and 27, 2014	22	Mr. Shibalal Bhandari	Aashis Social Services Nepal	NGO
	23	Ms. Roshani Malla	CREEW (Center for Research for Environment, Energy and Water)	NGO
	1	Mr. Ashim Pandey	Nepal Agriculture Cooperative Central Federation Limited (NACCFL)	Federation
	2	Mr. Fatik Bahadur Thapa	Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN)	NGO
	3	Mr. Hari Prasad Sapkota	SAHAVAGI	NGO
	4	Mr. Krishna Chandra Neupane	Project Research and Management Associates (PRAMA) P. Ltd.	P. Ltd.
	5	Mr. Lok Shastra Shrestha	Support Activities for Poor Producers of Nepal (SAPPROS Nepal)	NGO
	6	Mr. Mohan Singh Sunar	Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO)	NGO
	7	Mr. Nirendra Basnett	Nepal Water Conservation Foundation (NWCF)	NGO
	8	Mr. Pashupati Chaudhary	Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)	NGO
	9	Mr. Pradip Bhattarai	Rural Women Development Center (RWDC)	NGO
	10	Mr. Praseed Thapa	Multi-dimensional Resource Center (MRC) Nepal	NGO
	11	Mr. Ramananda Gupta	Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)	NGO
	12	Mr. Ramesh Adhikari	Unity Service Cooperation Nepal (USC Nepal)	NGO
	13	Mr. Ramu Joshi	United Youth Club (UNYC)	NGO
	14	Mr. Ratna Bahadur Budha	Social Service Center (SOSEC), Dailekh	NGO
	15	Mr. Ratna Karki	South Asia School of Rural Reconstruction (SARR)	Education Institute
	16	Mr. Ravi Thapa	Social Empowerment and Building Accessibility Center (SEBAC Nepal)	NGO
	17	Mr. Shankar Thapa	Organic Vegetation Training Institute	Institute
	18	Mr. Shyam Upadhyay	Kapilvastu Integrated Development Society (KIDS)	NGO
	19	Mr. Sirjan Adhikari	Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (ACORAB)	NGO
	20	Mr. Sudarshan Sitaula	United Nations Millenium Development Goal (UNMDG) Nepal	NGO
21	Ms. Amrita Paudel	Nepalese Farming Institute (NFI)	Non Profiterring Organization	
22	Ms. Bhawana Ghimire	Rural Self-reliance Development Centre (RSDC)	NGO	

Table II. List of Participants

Batch / Date	SN	Name	Organization	Type
	23	Ms. Nishtha Rajbhandari	METCON Consultants P. Ltd.	P. Ltd.

ANNEX B: TRAINING AGENDA

DAY ONE

8:30 – 9:15 Registration

09:15 – 10:00 – Session 1: Intros, Objectives, Pre-test

- Introductions
- Training Objectives
 - Obtain a basic understanding of the USAID procurement process
 - Learn how to read and analyze a Request for Proposal (RFP)
 - Develop a responsive proposal outline
 - Gain a basic understanding of the core parts of a technical proposal
 - Designing a program for results
 - How to draft a Project Monitoring Plan (PMP)
 - Gain a understanding of basic cost principles and developing a budget
 - Submitting a proposal
- Activity: Pre –Test (15 min)

Hand out question cards that people can use to ask questions throughout the day.

10:00 – 10:45 – Session 2: USAID Procurement Process and Getting Started

- Overview
- What to expect
- Importance of deadlines, organization, instructions, editing, etc.
 - Sample calendar, example roles for proposal development

10:45 – 11:00 Tea Break

11:00 – 12:30 – Session 3: How to Read and Analyze a RFP

- Reviewing the minimum requirements
 - Activity: Find the minimum requirements
- Section M
 - Activity: Sample evaluation
- Section L

- Walk through instructions
- Section C
- Overview of other relevant sections

12:30 – 13:30 - Lunch - location

Ask the Trainer: During lunch, Samantha will be on hand in the conference room to answer any questions on an individual basis.

13:30 – 16:00

- The Importance of Outlining
- General Outline
- Activity

15:00 Break

- Detailed Outlines
- Outlining Exercise

DAY TWO

09:00 – 09:30 - Pop Quiz (Review of key points from Day One)

09:30 – 11:30 – Session 5: Core Components of the Technical Proposal

- Strategy and Results
 - Activity: Results Framework
- Technical Approach
 - Activity: Write a mini-technical, describe one activity

11:00 – 11:15 Tea Break

- Management/Staffing Pattern,
 - Activity: Evaluate a candidate
- Organizational Structure
- Mobilization Timeline

11:15 – 12:30 - Technical Proposal Continued

- Past Performance
 - Example Form
- Geographic Focus

- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- Branding and Marking Plan
- Gender Statement (GESI)

12:30 – 13:30 - Lunch - location

Ask the Trainer: Samantha will be available during lunch for individual questions.

13:30 – 15:30 – Session 6: Basics of the Cost Proposal

- Format
- Requirements
- Fixed Fee
- Indirect Costs
- Biodata Sheets
- Repts and Certs
- Cost Notes

15:30 – 15:45 Tea Break

15:45 – 16:00 Session 7: Overview of Available Resources

16:00 – 17:00 Final Test

- Final Evaluation
- Certificates

ANNEX C: PROPOSAL TRAINING TEST

Name: _____

1. What does RFP stand for?
 - Request for Program
 - Request for Proposal
 - Requisition for Project

2. In a RFP, what section do you find instructions to offerors?
 - Section A
 - Section F
 - Section L
 - Section M

3. The evaluation criteria for the proposed program are found in Section:
 - C
 - M
 - L
 - J

4. During drafting a proposal, you should use the same terminology as in the solicitation?
 - True
 - False

5. All evaluation criteria below are of equal value and importance, true or false?

Technical	30
Mgt and Capacity	10
Personnel	20
Cost	10
Past Performance	20
Sustainability	10

6. Is it a good idea to show concurrent activities in a technical response?
 - No, it shows that too much work is being done by one organization
 - No, it shows strict timelines which are not always reliable
 - Yes, it shows a time conscious project with a wise use of resources

7. This framework connects Strategic Objectives to Project Objectives, Activities, and Results
 - Log Frame

- Results Framework
- Strategic Framework

8. “Farmers receive improved and increased agricultural inputs” is an example of a:

- Result
- Activity
- Outcome
- Goal

9. “Building the capacity of financial institutions to work with small holder farmers and emerging village based agribusinesses, to support innovative, demand-driven financial products.” Is an example of:

- Result
- Activity
- Outcome
- Goal

10. What does CPFF stand for?

11. You should make costs appear as low as possible, regardless of the real costs.

- True
- False

12. When technical evaluation factors are significantly more important than cost or price, but cost is still a significant factor, this is called:

- Cost value
- Cost savings approach
- Best value
- Best cost approach

ANNEX D: EVALUATION SUMMARY

Table III. Class Evaluation

Class Evaluation Criteria	% Poor	% Fair	% Good	% Excellent
1. Did this class meet your expectations?	0.00	0.08	0.73	0.20
2. Was the level of instruction appropriate?	0.00	0.08	0.50	0.43
3. Was the length appropriate?	0.00	0.20	0.55	0.25
4. Did the class begin on time?	0.00	0.08	0.40	0.53
5. Was all of the equipment working properly?	0.00	0.03	0.38	0.60
6. How would you rate the manuals?	0.00	0.10	0.67	0.23
7. Was the training facility adequate?	0.00	0.05	0.50	0.45
8. What is your overall level of satisfaction with this training?	0.00	0.03	0.70	0.28

Table IV. Trainer Evaluation

Trainer Evaluation Criteria	% Poor	% Fair	% Good	% Excellent
1. Did your trainer have a thorough grasp of the subject?	0.00	0.03	0.51	0.46
2. Did your trainer actively invite questions?	0.00	0.05	0.28	0.67
3. Did your trainer answer the question posed?	0.00	0.03	0.45	0.53
4. Was individual help provided when needed?	0.00	0.08	0.29	0.63
5. Was your trainer prepared for class?	0.03	0.00	0.33	0.65
6. Did your trainer have a professional demeanor?	0.00	0.05	0.29	0.67
7. Did the trainer provide time for follow-ups?	0.00	0.03	0.53	0.45
8. How would you rate the overall skills of the trainer?	0.00	0.03	0.51	0.46

ANNEX E: POWERPOINT SLIDES

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**Proposal Development
Training**

Day One

Samantha Parsons
Nov. 24 & 25th 2014



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**Session I:
Introductions, Objectives, and Pre-test**

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Objectives

- Obtain a basic understanding of the USAID procurement process
- Learn how to read and analyze a Request for Proposal (RFP)
- Develop a responsive proposal outline
- Gain a basic understanding of the core parts of a technical proposal
- Designing a program for results
- How to draft a Project Monitoring Plan (PMP)
- Gain a understanding of basic cost principles and developing a budget
- Submitting a proposal



Activity: Pre-test

We will take a brief quiz that will test your proposal development knowledge prior to the training. This will serve as a baseline for the knowledge and skills you gain during the course.



Session 2: USAID Procurement Process and Getting Started



USAID Procurement Cycle

- Step 1: Project Design
- Step 2: Identify the Requirement
- Step 3: Market Research
- Step 4: Agency Business Forecast
- Step 5: Solicitation ←
- Questions
- Step 6: Evaluation
- Step 7: Negotiation
- Step 8: Award



What is Next?

- For KISAN 2, you are in the solicitation phase
- Period for asking questions has passed, November 17, 2014
- Solicitation is due on **December 19, 2014, 16:00 Nepal time**
- Less than ONE MONTH left to prepare your proposal
- You should be more than halfway done with your proposal!!!



Get organized

- Print several RFPs in an easy to read and mark format
- **Read the solicitation documents at least three times** to thoroughly understand the requirements (technical and otherwise)
- Create a comprehensive list of requirements
- Determine who will be working on the proposal and what they are responsible for
- Organize your electronic documents and consider version control



Sample Proposal Roles

- Proposal Leader – makes key decisions, reviews final sections
- Proposal Coordinator – keeps track of all proposal parts
- Technical Writer – responsible for the core technical section
- Personnel Writer – writes up the personnel and resumes
- Recruiter – recruits personnel
- Cost Preparer – prepares the budget sheets and cost notes

Build reviews into the process

- Have someone responsible for editing the document and ensuring that all supporting materials are prepared
- If there were several writers, make sure the proposal is all in one voice
- Ensure that the the response is tailored to the solicitation's instructions

Deadlines, Deadlines, Deadlines!!

- There is no such thing as a late USAID proposal. No proposals will be accepted late, no exceptions.
- Very important to **pace yourselves** and use the time you have wisely
- Make note of key USAID deadlines such as due date for questions, bidder's conference, proposal training, etc.
- **Create a timeline** to ensure you can submit a quality proposal on time (see calendar handout)
- **Establish** deadlines and stick to them!



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Zambia Nutrition- July/August 2013 (212310)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 July	27 July	28 July	29 July	30 July	31 July Tech Draft to select SOB Draft personnel to Sam	1 August
2	3 Incorporate Comments from SOB Send back to Tech Personnel to ESP, COB Security Plan to ESP	4 Spreadsheet Review Personnel Matrix to ESP Tech to Editors COB	5 Draft PMP and Workplan to ESP All final recruit documents to ESP	6 Corporate Cost Review Cover letter to ESP Quality Assurance Plan to ESP	7 Call to ESP Person Exec Summary to ESP Sign Out	8 SP out
9 SP out	10 SP out	11 Proposal goes to read-through by COB	12 Proposal Through Comments incorporated and back to ESP by COB	13	14 PRODUCTION	15
16	17 Hand Carry Issues COB Finalization	18	19	20 Proposal due to USAID by 4pm Lusaka time	21	22



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Tea Break – 15 minutes



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Session 3: How to Read and Analyze a RFP

Review the minimum requirements

- Before putting in more effort, review the minimum requirements to ensure that your organization can participate in the solicitation
- Minimum requirements may include:
 - Nationality of ownership
 - Business registration
 - Size and type of organization
- Activity: Open the KISAN 2 RFP and review the requirements. Where will you find some of the requirements and instructions?

Starting with Section M – Evaluation Criteria

- Section M is the evaluation criteria section
- All proposals will be evaluated using this criteria by the technical evaluation committee
- Review M first
- Section M serves as a clear structure for grading and ranking proposals
- This section will tell offerors the most important elements of the proposal
 - Example: if there are 0 points for Gender, but 20 points for Personnel, you should allocate more space, time, and effort towards Personnel

Reviewing Section M

- Note each evaluation criteria requirement
 - Is the proposal best value?
 - How many points is each section worth?
 - Which one is more important than another?
 - How does it compare to L and C? Are there any discrepancies?
 - This will form the backbone of your proposal outline



Activity

- Review the Ghana Ag, Section M
- How much is the total proposal worth?
- What section is the most important?

- Now, review KISAN 2, Section M (p. 128)
- How much is the total proposal worth?
- What section is the most important?



Section L – Instructions to Offerors

- Section L contains detailed instructions to offerors on proposal sections and instructions for format
- You **MUST** follow these instructions in order to be deemed compliant with the RFP
- If you do not follow the instructions, your proposal could be deemed unresponsive or non-compliant and it could be eliminated



Key Elements of L

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Eligibility of offerors▪ Submission instructions (time, format)▪ DUNS number (p. 116)▪ Type of contract▪ Format and layout instructions▪ Names and titles of sections | <p>Requirements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Technical approach▪ Key personnel▪ Past Performance▪ Geographic focus▪ Monitoring and Evaluation Plan▪ Cost instructions |
|--|--|



Activity: Walk through Section L, KISAN 2

Please review Section L of KISAN 2 for 5 minutes. Highlight or mark all of the instructions for offerors that will be applicable to your proposal. We will walk through the sections and share your observations.



Section C

- Section C is the Statement of Work for the project
- It describes all of the desired outcomes of the project and in some case illustrative activities that they would like the contractor to perform
- It may also include proposed interventions, performance indicators
- Look for contractor "will", contractor "must", "should" and take note
- You will respond to Section C in the technical approach of your proposal



Homework

Carefully review Section C of KISAN 2 before tomorrow's training. We will look at how to draft a technical response incorporating everything we have learned today.



Other important sections

- Always carefully read the whole RFP cover to cover, multiple times
- **SECTION F - DELIVERIES OR PERFORMANCE**
- Cost preparer and contracts expert should review other details in Section H, Section K, and Annexes



Lunch – Bon Appetit!

Samantha will be in the conference room during lunch if you would like to ask further questions.

Thanks!



Session 4: Proposal Outlining

Outlining your Proposal

- Critical to outline your proposal as soon as possible once the RFP is released
- Draft a general outline and a detailed outline
- Do your outline early so that you identify any questions that you would want to ask USAID
- Getting the outline right is the critical foundation to the proposal
- Ensure that the entire team has it and agrees with it

Be responsive

- Being responsive means responding to what USAID has put in the RFP
- Mirroring language
- Including sections
- Ensuring that you have addressed everything they have asked for
- Start by being responsive in your outline and then ensure that you continue through every section of the proposal
- Continue to check the RFP continuously as you develop your proposal

General Outline

- This outline includes all sections and elements of the proposal driven by Sections M, L, and C
- Should include every single requirement from the RFP
- Allocates page limits by section to ensure everyone sticks to their page limits
- Page limits should be allocated based on their importance in Section M
- Include titles that mirror the language in the RFP



Activity:

- Review the sample outline
- In small groups, create the general outline for KISAN 2
 - What sections of the RFP should you look at?
 - What language should you use?

See example outline in your packet



Detailed Outline

- M is the most important as that is the evaluation criteria
- L is also very important and everything must be incorporated to be responsive
- Ask questions and clarify early on if they contradict each other
- The majority of Section C will be in your technical approach, management, and personnel
- Should have detailed outlines for all sections



Detailed Technical Outline

- Organize the detailed approach to follow the major elements in section C of the RFP.
- Use what USAID uses, whether components, tasks, activities, or results.
- Avoid changing names, numbering, or order.
- Follow a consistent internal substructure,



Activity:

- We will review in detail the detailed outline sample together
- Take 15 min to work on your detailed outline for KISAN 2
- What was difficult about detailed outlining?



Proposal Development Training: Day 2



Pop Quiz

- True or False: Section C includes the evaluation criteria
- The best way to ensure your proposal goes in on time is to create a _____
- Sections ____ and ____ should guide your general outline
- To build the foundation of a good proposal, you should develop a _____

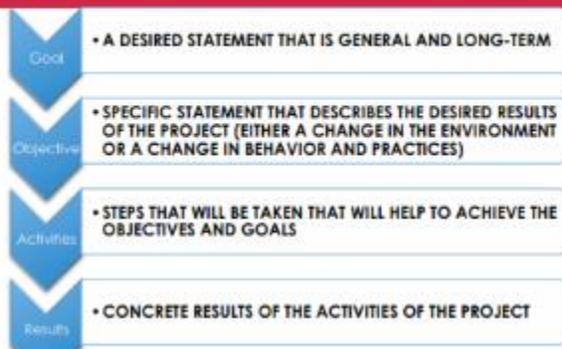
Strategy

- Hold a strategy session with the entire team
- Involve partners or others who may be able to contribute to your strategy, but don't invite others who may be bidding
- Ensure that you have read the RFP thoroughly before holding a strategy session
- If you know about the solicitation in advance, you may have an internal strategy session in advance

Strategy

- What are your organizations competitive strengths?
- What are you best at?
- Where are you weakest?
- How do you compare to other competitors?
- What are the activities that you have performed well that are most in line with the described scope of work?

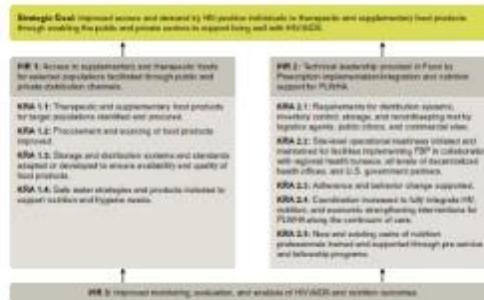
Project Design



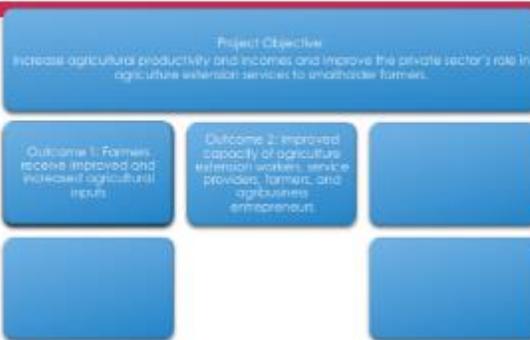
Designing for Results

- USAID programs are managed for results and impact
- This starts with the RFP and proposal
- Identify the various objectives and desired results
- Use a results framework to define and link the project to the mission level objectives
 - The results framework structure shows the anticipated causal relationships from activities to intermediate results; from intermediate results to the strategic objectives; and ultimately from the strategic objectives to the achievement of a broad program goal.

Exhibit 1. Provisional Project Results Framework



Results Framework



Technical Approach

- The technical approach is where you will describe your organizations response to the scope of work (section C)
- You will organize according to Section M and L
- Your primary goal will be to describe the specific approaches you will use to achieve the desired results of the program
- Depending on the RFP, you may also need to further define activities to help meet the desired results
- Although you can get creative, make sure that you respond to all of the activities in the RFP

Technical Approach may include:

- Understanding of Project Context
- Status of Technical Area
- Institutional Environment
- USAID Support of the Sector/Technical Area
- Issues or Challenges
- General Approach
- Results Framework
- Project Organization
- Detailed Approach to Implementation

Detailed Approach

- Most RFPs are prescriptive in nature
- Use the "blow-by-blow" approach
 - Describes each anticipated activity or task
 - Explains how it will be done, when and by whom, and
 - Gives concrete outputs or deliverables
- Organize the detailed approach to follow the major elements in section C of the RFP



Activity:

- Chose an activity from the KISAN 2 RFP. Outline it briefly and then spend some time briefing describing the activities and approaches you will use to meet the results.

Remember to use the blow-by-blow and the 5 Ws!

Management/Staffing Structure

- The management section explains how we will deploy our resources to manage *this* project

Depending on the RFP, it may include:

- Graphic (staffing plan) and text describing organization of the entire project
- Graphic depicting relationships with USAID and project partners and descriptive text
- Mobilization plan and a description of initial activities
- Brief description of the work planning and PMP process
- Brief description of the home-office management structure
- Discussion of management issues critical to the project (e.g., multiple field offices, security concerns, cost containment, grants management)

Staffing Plan

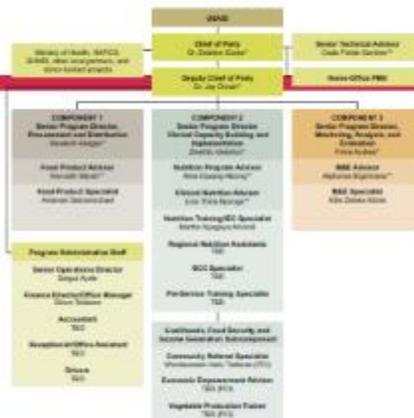
- Staffing Plans and its requirements can vary greatly from RFP to RFP
- Depending on the requirements of the RFP, it could include:
 - Organizational Chart
 - Qualifications and experience of your proposed personnel
 - Make sure to highlight experience as it relates to this scope of work and project
 - Do not simply cut and paste resumes

Activity: Evaluate a Candidate

Review the evaluation criteria and resume.

Does the proposed candidate meet the criteria?

Exhibit 7. Staffing Organization



Past Performance

- Shows the work that your organization completed work successfully, satisfied its customers, partners, sponsors under past agreements
- Select the work that is most closely related to the scope of work and where you
- Select work that was well regarded
- Be concise, compelling, connected
- Good to let contacts know that they have been listed as a reference



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Past Performance Report Form Template

FORM 100-1000 PAST PERFORMANCE REPORT - (08/01/2010)	
PART I. Contract Information (to be completed by Offeror)	
1. Name of Contracting Entity	2. Contract No.
3. Contract Title	4. Contract Value (\$)
Date:	
5. Description of Performance	
6. Duration of performance - Comment:	
7. AED Contact (Name, Telephone # and E-Mail Address):	
8. Contracting Officer:	
9. Description of Work:	
10. Information Provided to Customers in RFP:	
PART II. Performance Information to be completed by Agency:	
1. Quality of product or Service - Comment:	
2. Cost/Value - Comment:	
3. Timeliness of performance - Comment:	
4. Customer satisfaction -Rate - Comment:	
5. Customer satisfaction -and more - Comment:	
6. Effectiveness of key personnel - Comment:	
Information Provided To: Phone/Facsimile address: Date:	Name: Information Collected By: How/When: Signature: FORM 100-1000-1000

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

- Plan that details the project's plan for monitoring and evaluation/ performance monitoring
- Normally include a draft plan in the proposal
- Should flow from and reflect objectives, results, and activities
- Can include:
 - Indicators
 - Proxy indicators
 - Track social inclusion indicators
 - Data source
 - Data collection method



Exhibit D-1. Provisional Performance Monitoring Plan

Indicator	Type	Dissemination	Data Source	Data Collection Method
Project Goal: Improved Access and Demand by MS-Positive Individuals to Therapeutic and Supplementary Food Products				
Indicator 1: Proportion of adult PLHIV with fully used 100g MSF tin (on 100g)	Impact, Project	Site, treatment status, nutritional status	Health facilities, clients	Health facilities records, observation with clients
Indicator 2: Proportion of PLHIV in the feeding category of the Home VMMC intervention	Impact, Project	Site, pregnancy status, nutritional status, treatment status, nutritional status	Health facilities, clients	Health facilities records, observation with and observation of clients
Indicator 3: Proportion of PLHIV who have reported to health care a decreased severity of symptoms when the last reporting of symptoms	Impact, Project	Site, pregnancy status, nutritional status, treatment status, nutritional status	Health facilities, clients	Health facilities records, observation with clients
Indicator 4: Proportion of PLHIV who have reported to health care a decreased severity of symptoms when the last reporting of symptoms	Impact, Project	Site, treatment status, nutritional status	Health facilities, clients	Health facilities records, observation with clients
Indicator 5: Proportion of PLHIV who have reported to health care a decreased severity of symptoms when the last reporting of symptoms	Impact, Project	Site, treatment status, nutritional status	Health facilities, clients	Health facilities records, observation with clients
Project Intermediate Result 1: Access to Supplementary and Therapeutic Food Products Improved				
Indicator 1: Proportion of PLHIV receiving food at least the recommended number of times per 4 weeks	Outcome, Project	Site, treatment status, nutritional status	Health facilities, clients	Health facilities records, observation with clients, questionnaires, and interviews
Indicator 2: Mean duration of food insecurity	Outcome, Project	Site, treatment status, nutritional status	Health facilities, clients	Health facilities records, observation with clients
Indicator 3: Mean duration of food insecurity	Outcome, Project	Site, treatment status, nutritional status	Health facilities, clients	Health facilities records, observation with clients
Indicator 4: Mean duration of food insecurity	Outcome, Project	Site, treatment status, nutritional status	Health facilities, clients	Health facilities records, observation with clients



Activity

- Look at two activities for KISAN 2 and draft your basic monitoring and evaluation elements.



Branding and Marking Plan

- All projects must comply with USAID branding and marking regulations
- Plan outlines how this specific project will brand and mark correctly
- Describes how the project will communicate its identity effectively
- Not normally included in the page limits, but does get incorporated into the contract

Gender and Social Inclusion Statement

- Should not be an after thought
- Define and include in the original strategy and then integrate throughout the proposal
- Create a systematic approach to inclusion
- Note all of the various sections where it is mentioned and required and make sure you include gender and social considerations when preparing those other sections
- Read the following link prior to preparing this section: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadq654.pdf

Session 6: Basics of the Cost Proposal

Preparing the Cost Proposal

- Cost proposal must be submitted in a SEPARATE volume from the technical proposal
- Allowable/Permissible under Donor Guidelines – not all costs can be included or need to be included in a certain way
 - You can not charge directly for proposal preparation expenses
- Use the templates provided and double check that you have included costs for all aspects of an activity
- Be as realistic as possible



Direct and InDirect Costs



Fzed Fee



Cost Notes

- In addition to your budget sheets, you must provide cost notes
- Write notes that correspond to and justify each line item in your budget to explain your rationale to the donor!
- Include a best value section that explains the various factors in your budget that you believe are the best value to the government
 - Office configuration
 - Staffing
 - Innovation



Biodatas

- US government form used to establish salary history and proposed salary for personnel
- You have to collect them and complete them thoroughly
- Also need to gather verification documentation to ensure they are not falsified
- Form will be in your resource packet



Activity

- Review KISAN 2 and identify one factor you must consider in your budgeting.
- Then, identify all of the required line items from the RFP
 - Clarify terms or items that you are not clear on during questions



Overview of Available Resources

- Your RFP!
- Dropbox with resources and examples from this training
- <http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/get-grant-or-contract/trainings-how-work-usaid>
- Devex.com – discusses various topics related to USAID project development