USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program

CONSOLIDATED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Request for Applications – Democracy, Rights and Governance Grants
February 16, 2014

The purpose of this document is to provide a consolidated response to all questions raised during the two grant solicitation workshops USAID CIS held on Thursday, February 6, 2014 and requests for clarification submitted to kyaseen@fhi360.org by 12:00 PM on February 12, 2014.

General Questions

1. **Q: How can I apply for a grant?**
   A: The first step is to read the Request for Application (RFA) and the application materials for the Democracy, Rights and Governance Grants in detail to determine if the organization meets the eligibility requirements and would like to submit a grant application. Detailed application instructions are included in the RFA. Potential applicants must also read the USAID Civic Initiatives Support Program (USAID CIS) Grants Manual to ensure the organization has the capacity to manage an award.

2. **Q: In which language must the proposal be submitted?**
   A: All DRG proposals must be submitted in English.

3. **Q: Should we submit the proposal as a word document or PDF?**
   A: The proposal may be submitted as a Word document or a PDF file depending on the applicant's preference.

4. **Q: Can we propose a project that is less than two years?**
   A: Yes, the project duration is not to exceed 24 months.

5. **Q: Can an organization apply for more than one project/grant?**
   A: Yes, but USAID CIS is unlikely to award more than one grant per organization.

6. **Q: What is the maximum number of grants that will be awarded under this RFA?**
   A: USAID CIS anticipates awarding between four to eight grants under this RFA but may award fewer depending on the quality of proposals received.

7. **Q: Can we propose a project that is less than the amount of 350,000 JD? And how much is the minimum budget that we can propose? For example can I propose a project with the amount 100,000 JD for one year?**

A: Yes, the budget is not to exceed 350,000JD, applicants may propose any budget that does not exceed this amount depending on their proposed project.

8. **Q: Can we implement the project in more than one geographical location?**
   A: Yes, the project can be implemented at the local, regional or national levels. Applicants must decide which level to focus on based on the issue to be addressed and their capacity to carry out the project.

9. **Q: Are the activities specific to Jordan only?**
   A: All project activities must be focused on Jordan and be conducted in Jordan.

10. **Q: If the grantee produces reports under the project, will they have the intellectual rights to it?**
    A: The grantee may copyright any book, publication or other material developed under a USAID CIS funded grant provided that the grantee prominently acknowledges FHI 360 and USAID and with the understanding that FHI 360 and USAID have royalty-free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable rights to reproduce, publish or otherwise use and to authorize others to use the work. In addition, the material must be available to the public free of charge. All materials produced with grant funds must adhere to USAID CIS branding requirements and display the USAID and FHI 360 logos.

11. **Q: How do you measure impact?**
    A: Applicants must submit a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan (Attachment VII) to indicate how the project's outputs, outcomes and overall impacts will be determined, and to assist the Grantee to manage the collection of project performance data. Grantees will be required to finalize the M&E Plan within 30 days after the grant award has been executed. FHI 360 will provide guidance and assistance to Grantees to ensure that the M&E Plan contains all essential information.

12. **Q: Is sub-granting allowed?**
    A: The applicant may propose sub-granting to other organizations IF it has a proven track record of sub-granting under other US Government awards, and adequate systems and procedures in place to monitor sub-grantees' compliance with applicable USAID and FHI 360 regulations and procedures. Many of the regulations and mandatory provisions under the grant agreement must "flow-down" to any organization that a grantee supports through sub-grants. These regulatory flow-downs include those stated within the Mandatory Standard Provisions for Non-US Non-Governmental Recipients and Circular A-122 Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations (relocated to 2 CFR, Part 230). Sub-award parameters and requirements will be defined in individual grant agreements, as required.

13. **Q: Can newly established organizations apply for a grant?**
    A: Newly established organizations that are registered as legal entities in Jordan, with their headquarters based in Jordan, are eligible to apply. However, all applicants must demonstrate that they possess, or have the ability to obtain, the necessary management competence to comply with all conditions of the grant before it is awarded. After the grant evaluation committee short-lists applications, the FHI 360 Grants Team will conduct the due diligence process. Due diligence is part of the evaluation process and

the results must confirm that a potential Recipient can successfully comply with the financial, management and programmatic requirements of the grant. The short-listing of an application does not guarantee an award. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the USAID CIS Grants Manual, section 5.c. Due Diligence, in detail prior to applying for a grant.

14. **Q: Our organization is newly registered and doesn't have experience, however its founding members do. Will the individual's experience be considered instead of the organization's experience?**
    A: The applicant must explain how the organization, or the proposed key personnel in the event the organization is newly registered, has the required experience to implement the proposed project activities and manage the administrative and financial aspects of the grant. If the organization is newly registered and has not yet acquired the necessary experience, the experience of the key personal proposed to implement the project will be evaluated in lieu of the organization.

15. **Q: Do we need approval for any foreign funding the organization receives?**
    A: The majority of non-profit organizations and companies registered in Jordan are legally required to obtain approval for foreign funding. The DRG grants are considered foreign funding. It is the legal responsibility of the organization to obtain the approval, although such approval is not required by USAID CIS. Shortlisted organizations are encouraged to apply for approval upon notification to gain time and avoid impacting the project timeline.

Technical Questions

16. **Q: Is submitting a proposal to conduct an action research project enough by itself? What is meant by Action Research?**
    A: A standalone action research project would be considered under the Democracy Rights and Governance Grants (DRG Grants) Program if the justification for it is clear and will lead (under this project or beyond) to informed action. Action research means using scientific approaches to research of contemporary issues and phenomenon that are related to democracy, rights and governance and that support participatory approaches and promote discussion, debate, action and advocacy. In other words, it is a research that is based on facts, open communication and oriented toward social action to defend human rights, not only raise awareness. It aims to support taking informed action based on the understanding of the issue and its context.

17. **Q: Is support to prisoners ineligible?**
    A: According to US Government regulations, grant funds <u>may not</u> be used to provide training, advice, or any financial support for prisoners, prisons or police (including prison guards, border control, tax police). In accordance with OMB Circular A-122.10 *Defense and prosecution of criminal and civil proceedings, claims, appeals and patent infringement,* if legal support is provided to a person that is found guilty in court, then all the costs (legal representation and court costs) are unallowable. Therefore, approval for projects that include legal support and counseling must be considered and obtain approval on a case by case basis.

18. **Q**: **What does Innovative Platforms mean?**
    A: Innovative Platforms refer to institutes and initiatives that call for creativity and engage youth, women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations.

19. **Q: Is it a must to engage persons with disabilities in the program activities?**
    A: Yes, to ensure inclusion of a variety of relevant stakeholders and achieve better outcomes persons with disabilities should be engaged in program activities. As stated on page 6 of the RFA "Proposals should address gender equality and inclusion through assessing the implications for males and females, persons with disability, youth and marginalized groups of any planned action, including legislation policies and programs in all areas and at all levels."

20. **Q: You have specified that the project design has to be inclusive; can we focus on a certain age group?**
    A: That would depend on the particular issue proposed by the applicant. If a certain age group is the focus of the project, the project design should be inclusive and engage women, marginalized individuals and persons with disability within the targeted age group.

21. **Q: Are the preparatory phase and the action phase implemented in parallel or do we have to finish the preparatory phase before we start the action phase?**
    A: The action phase will depend on the preparatory phase unless specific elements of the research are clear and action can start immediately. Applicants should provide a justification to explain why the preparatory phase is unnecessary to their project, i.e. the preparation has already taken place, and the resources it will draw upon during the action phase.

22. **Q: Can we use the media to build the capacity of the organizations?**
    A: Yes, if the applicant clearly explains how the media will build the organization's capacity.

23. **Q: Can we use IT in an innovative way to implement the project?**
    A: Yes, innovation is encouraged to address the proposed issue and to ensure inclusiveness.

Coalition Questions

24. **Q: Is a partnership with the Jordanian government allowed?**
    A: Yes, organizations may partner with the Jordanian government, but no goods or payments of any kind (including incentives for government employees) can be provided to the government through grant funds.

25. **Q: In order to apply with a partner, do you want one application package?**
    A: Yes, one application should be submitted. One lead organization must act as the grant applicant, and if selected for a grant, sign the grant agreement and assume responsibility for grant management and reporting requirements.

26. Q: Can NGOs apply as coalitions?
A: Yes. One of the partner organizations must act as the lead and submit the proposal on behalf of the partners. If awarded a grant, the lead organization will be required to sign the grant agreement and assume overall responsibility for management and reporting requirements described in the grant agreement.

27. Q: Can we partner with an international organization instead of a local one?
A: Yes, organizations may partner with international organizations, but no payments of any kind can be provided to them through grant funds. The international organization will need to cost share their time and resources. Applicants are encouraged to partner with other Jordanian-based organizations.

28. Q: Can we include an international consultant(s) in the project? Would their travel costs be covered by the grant?
A: Yes, international consultants may be proposed provided the applicant can demonstrate the necessity for such a cost. International travel requires prior approval and will be considered on a case by case basis.

29. Q: If we applied as a coalition, can we rent a meeting room from one of our partners?
A: Yes, this can be considered as cost share or can be stated as a cost in the budget.

30. Q: Is it eligible for an international organization to apply as part of a consortium? (For example: a consortium of Jordanian organizations with the British Council providing support).
A: An international organization can apply as part of a consortium as long as it is led by a Jordanian organization and as long as no payment of any kind is provided to them through this grants fund.

Cost Share Questions

31. Q: What is cost share?
A: Cost share (also known as matching funds) requires the grant recipient to provide a contribution of a specified amount or percentage to match USAID funds. Cost share can be funds or resources from other donors or the private sector to pay for program related activities, or payments from the grant recipient's own funds or the fair value of contributions in-kind, such as space, equipment, the value of volunteers or staff time, etc. Recipients are encouraged to actively seek ways to engage the private sector in the achievement of the objectives and goals of their grant projects and to obtain cost share from private sector sources. Cost share may not be provided with US Government funds from another grant or contract. Grant recipients are contractually obligated to contribute cost share from sources stated in the Proposal and Budget and described in the Grant Agreement.

32. Q: What is the minimum cost share required?
A: A minimum of 10% cost share is required. For example: if the budget requested from USAID CIS is 70,000 JOD, a minimum cost share of 7,000 JOD is required; therefore the budget total would be 77,000 JOD.

33. **Q: Cost share resources? Will a cost share from the World Bank for example be accepted?**
   A: Yes, a cost share from the World Bank is acceptable as long as it is not being used to meet cost share requirements for another US Government funded grant or contract being implemented by the Applicant. Please refer to answer 31 for additional information.

34. **Q: Can the organization distribute the cost share unequally between different parts of the project budget lines?**
   A: Yes. Applicants must explain the source of funds that will constitute their cost share contribution (membership fees, other products and services, in-kind contributions from volunteers, etc.) and identify other potential and/or committed sources of support for the proposed project.

35. **Q: Can the organization allocate the entire cost share in one or two budget lines only?**
   A: Yes.

36. **Q: If the organization is paying for a governmental staff from its own resources would it be allowable to consider it as cost share? Is it allowable to pay for a government staff if they are taking vacation time from their governmental job?**
   A: Payments of any kind to government staff are unallowable under USAID CIS grant programs. Organizations that make payments to government staff with other funding resources <u>may not</u> include those costs as cost share.

Budget Questions

37. **Q: Can we allocate part of the budget to provide access to information for persons with disability?**
   A: Yes, a justification should be provided to explain how providing such access will result in the expected impact. All applicants are requested to integrate disability rights into the project design, and ensure throughout the project phases accessibility and the provision of reasonable accommodation for persons with disability, i.e. Braille, sign language interpretation, etc. are provided to facilitate full participation.

38. **Q: Can you elaborate more on the Institutional Capacity Building models which are required in the RFA? Is it up to 10% capacity building for the project or the organization itself?**
   A: The funds allocated for capacity building can be used to build the capacity of the organization to implement the proposed project, or to strengthen the organization as a whole. This is considered as a resource for the organization to build its capacity either way. Applicants are requested to submit a capacity building plan as part of the technical proposal.

39. **Q: What is the ceiling above which we need to provide price quotations?**
   A: Applicants should budget costs based on their experience implementing projects in Jordan and based on market rates. All budgeted costs will be negotiated and agreed upon with short-listed applicants. Quotations should not be submitted as part of the application package.

40. **Q: Can we pay staff working for an entity that is funded by the government, if they aren't considered to be government staff (for example a university professor working as a consultant in his/her free time)?**
A: Institutions are considered to be governmental if the Government of Jordan owns at least 50% share of it, or if it receives at least 50% of their financial support from the Government of Jordan. Individuals employed by such institutions are considered to be government employees and may not receive payments with grant funds.

41. **Q: If the organization has a policy about severance or other staff benefits, would it be allowable cost? How should it be budgeted?**
A: The salary amount for each staff should be budgeted on a separate line. The benefits can either be included in the salary amount with the calculation explained in the budget narrative, i.e. base salary of 500 JOD/month and 12.75% employer social security contribution = 563.75/month salary; or benefits can be included on separate lines in the budget template. Allowable benefits include insurance, severance, allowances and other benefits paid by an employer on behalf of its employees or paid directly to its employees as stated in the organization's bylaws.

42. **Q: Should we include the expected staff that we will hire for the project in the budget?**
A: Yes, if the organization is considering hiring an employee to carry out grant project activities, then the salary should be based on the organization's salary scale for that particular type of position, or based on the average market rate for the position. The position title and 'TBD' can be used to describe the position in the budget template.

43. **Q: Where to add the lines related to the capacity building in the budget?**
A: The costs for capacity building activities should be budgeted under the five main budget line items and will depend on the types of proposed capacity building activities. For example, if a consultant will be hired to deliver M&E training and advisory services, that individuals time should be included under 'Salaries & Honorarium'; if an applicant proposes outfitting its training room, the costs for furniture should be budgeted under 'Equipment and Furniture'.

44. **Q: Are all celebration and events costs not allowable?**
A: Celebrations, dinners and iftars are unallowable. Events may be funded by the project if they are important and essential to the project and part of the proposed action plan. For example, the public launch of a series of short-films created with grant funds would be considered an allowable event expenses.

45. **Q: The 10% capacity building is it of the total project amount or the USAID CIS share?**
A: The 10% for capacity building should be based on the total amount of the budget to be provided by USAID CIS.

46. **Q: How often is the financial report submitted?**
A: Organization's issued standard grants have the option of receiving advance payments. If advance payments are requested, financial reports must be submitted on a monthly cycle. Grantees that are reimbursed for expenses and do not receive expenses may submit financial reports on a quarterly cycle. Grantees that are issued fixed-obligation

grants do cannot receive advances and are not required to submit financial reports. Please refer to the USAID CIS Grants Manual, section 6: Types of Grants and Applicable Conditions for more information.

47. **Q: Is Indirect Cost Ration (IRC) allowed?**
A: An IRC will be considered if the organization submits an independent auditor's certification, on the audit firm letterhead, attesting to the accuracy of the indirect cost rate, accuracy of how the rate was calculated and confirmation that the rate is consistently applied across all funding sources. In addition, three years of annual financial statements must be submitted. USAID CIS will accept an approved NICRA (Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement).

48. **Q: What about the range of salaries that USAID CIS takes into consideration for employees working on a full time basis on a project?**
A: Proposed staff must be budgeted based on the individual's salaried rate. If the organization is considering hiring an employee then the salary should be based on the salary scale at the organization for that particular type of position, and based on the market rate for the position. Short-listed organizations will be required to submit payroll records to support and verify the budgeted salaries.

REMINDER: Applications must be submitted by **16:00 on March 16, 2014** to kyaseen@fhi360.org. No further written request for clarifications will be answered after 12:00 PM on February 12, 2014. USAID CIS will not accept phone calls in regards to this RFA.

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