

Questions and Answers on the 2016 USDA FAS Food Aid Programs Solicitation

Week of October 2, 2015

1. Are applicants limited to describing only 3 programs in the organizational capacity section? If so, this would limit our ability to "demonstrate capabilities to develop, manage, implement, report on, and provide accountability for the proposed project..." Is it acceptable to mention more than 3 programs in the organizational capacity section?

Applicants may mention any number of relevant programs to demonstrate their capabilities in the section on organizational capacity; however, at least one of those mentions must be reflected in the past performances records. Applicants must keep in mind the limitation of only three past performance records allowable as part of the submission. Please note there is a typo on page 7 of the Food for Progress solicitation that mentions one of 5, after it states only 3 are allowed.

2. How do you define character limits? With or without spaces included?

Spaces are included in the character limits.

3. Pg 26, Under Results section, Performance indicators for Results and Activities is listed twice. In Appendix E on page 65 of the RFA there is a table for "Performance Indicators Illustrations". Are both these referring to the same document? In other words, must we submit information in the format on page 65 to meet the "Performance indicators for Results and Activities" listed on page 27?

Page 26 where performance indicators is listed twice is an inadvertent typo. They should not be listed twice. Applicants should submit one attachment showing Performance Indicators for Results and Activities, including all *relevant* Standard Indicators and all proposed Custom Indicators, with Appendix E as a guide.

4. Are we required to submit the SF424A and SF424A continued, or just the SF424 without supplemental pages?

Only the SF424 is necessary.

5. Is the organizational capacity to be reflected only in the "Introduction and Strategic Analysis" and "Past Performance Sections", or should it be reflected in a separate section?

Past Performance Records may be uploaded as an attachment. A more detailed discussion of Organizational Capacity should be a component of the Introduction and Strategic Analysis section, and is not required in any additional areas of the proposal.

6. The RFA states that USDA just wants a summary based on the format found on page 11 of the proposal guidance, and details within the budget narrative. Can USDA confirm this is correct?

The summary located on page 11 represents the level of detail that is expected of each applicant's budget. All major line items one level below the three main spending categories (Admin, ITSH, Activities) should be clearly represented in this table. The Budget Narrative is then expected to provide more detail as to what expenditures make up those line items.

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7. Will it be required that standard and custom performance indicators be *disaggregated*?

At proposal submission, applicants are *not required* to provide dis-aggregations. However, this information will be required of successful applicants during agreement negotiation.

8. Applicants have been directed to list sub awards under professional services. Can USDA confirm that sub awards may be broken out across activities instead of being entirely reflected under professional services? If so, sub awards would be placed under the administration budget.

If the subaward is administrative in nature, subawards can be professional services under Admin. If the subaward is for the purpose of conducting activities, than it should be under Activities and expensed as Professional Services. Please see the Budget Narrative guidance (Food for Progress, Appendix G, Budget Narrative Page 102-104/ McGovern-Dole, Appendix G, Budget Narrative Page 99-100).

9. In USDAs public meeting on September 21st, it was stated that any contribution that is mentioned within the “expected contribution” will be seen as cost share and therefore needs to be reflected in the budget and on the SF-424. Can USDA confirm that time and in-kind contributions (example – from local government) can be listed within the activity sections and not be considered cost share?

If you are itemizing your expected contributions, and are associating a dollar amount to your contribution/cost share, they should be in the SF424 and if awarded will become part of your budget, in which you will be held accountable for reporting on. If your expected contributions are not itemized and associated with a dollar contribution but are part of the methodology of implementing the activity, please address this in your activity description.

10. Can USDA confirm that information on sub-recipients and their role and responsibility should go in the Organizational Capacity and Staffing section only? (Please reference page 10 in the Activities section where the RFA includes the following, “Provide a brief description of the capacity of all sub-recipients and their role in project implementation”. The Organizational Capacity and Staffing section also states (p. 7) that “The applicant must identify and fully describe the role and responsibility of any anticipated sub-recipient(s)...”)

In the Organizational Capacity and Staffing section, please identify and fully describe the role and responsibility of the anticipated subrecipients and clearly demonstrate their capacity in performing the role and responsibility. In the Organizational Capacity portion, clearly demonstrate the subrecipient’s capacity as *it pertains to organizational capacity in performing the roles and responsibilities*. In the Activity section, please provide a brief description of the subrecipient’s capacity and role in *as it pertains to implementing the activity(ies)*.

11. Is it correct that performance indicators are no longer entered into the FAIS system? Rather, they will be submitted as an attachment in the format of Appendix E, in the FY 2016 proposal guidance.

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Yes—only the results and activities are produced in FAIS. The place to list the indicators would be in the Performance Indicators Attachment.

12. On page 8 of the FY 2016 Food Assistance and Request for Applications, the application calls for a “Sustainability and Lasting Impact” section which is worth 10 percent of the review criteria. There does not appear to be a tab in FAIS dedicated to this section, nor does there appear to be an attachment with this title. Can you please clarify the length parameters of this section and also where in the proposal it is to be located?

Include it in the Introduction and Strategic Analysis.

13. The Food For progress RFA states Estimated Award sizes of \$15–\$20 million for up to 3 year awards, and \$20–\$30 million for up to 5 year awards. Can USDA clarify whether or not this estimated award amount includes freight and commodities? We heard conflicting information at the public meeting on September 21st.

USDA terms “awards” as the amount it must obligate towards a project, which would include freight and commodity costs as well as CCC-cash resources. This amount differs from the program budget, which will be the resulting proceeds from the monetization of commodities plus all CCC-cash resources.

14. For Malawi, does USDA require that the implementing partner select all target crops, or can the implementing partner select a mix of crops best suited to market conditions and budget levels based on further analysis of the country context and the RFA?

The applicant is not required to address every value chain solicited; however, must justify their selection of target sector(s) through the Strategic Analysis section and design a response that addresses those needs.