Q & As from BALADI CAP Bidders' Conference

PADOVA HOTEL, Sin EL-Fil

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Q1. Are universities considered a CSO or not?

A1. While the RFA was not designed with university alone taking lead on the CEDG, as USAID does consider a university to be a CSO, then universities are allowed to apply, provided three conditions:

- They provide evidence of their registration at Ministry of Education and Higher Education
- They provide evidence of being a non-profit organization (through bylaws or other equivalent supporting documents).T
- Complete Section G – Responsibility Questionnaire and Source & Nationality Certification

Q2. Under one of the activities, it is stated that ISO will be training 35 municipalities and other additional municipalities. Who will determine latter batch of municipalities?

A2. The municipalities that will be provided with heavy capacity building are those under BALADI Program. If they were not eligible, either due to inherent weak capacity or lack of political will, the door is left open to selecting municipalities that have applied to BALADI, but need additional assistance. The ISO will visit municipalities to gauge their level of interest and inherent capacity to engage with CEDG. In addition to those BALADI municipalities, other non-BALADI municipalities will receive training.

Q3. Training will not be centralized in Beirut. Will it be left open until municipalities are selected?

A3. If municipalities are clustered into regions, then regional training centers could be designated. Topics targeting large municipalities can be conducted in Beirut. For other municipalities, trainings may become regional. This will be discussed during planning meetings, and decisions will be based on cost effectiveness and convenience to municipalities.

Q4. Will the standardized training workshops tackle totally different topics?

A4. When we say eight training workshops (per training category or theme), it could be the same training topic for more than one workshop.

Q5 Do we have to provide trainers' CVs at this stage?

A5. The application will have to provide the kind of expertise needed, and where such expertise can be found and tapped into. The ISO would be recruiting some 10-30 trainers in different fields. It is not expected that the ISO know all these trainers at this moment in time. It is expected however that the ISO determine its needs of trainers and indicate where and how to find such trainers/training organizations when needed. The process of sourcing this type of expertise is an advantage in evaluating the application.

Q6. You mentioned that there are no fee and no profit. Are we assuming it is a cost plus kind of contract?

A6. This solicitation will result in a cost reimbursable cooperative agreement. This agreement does not allow for payment of fee or profit; however, it does allow for the reimbursement of overhead, fringe administrative, and other costs associated with completion of the project. Such costs must be

substantiated with detailed descriptions and any other information reasonably required to explain the rationale behind costing.

Q7. Is there a ceiling on overheads?

A7. There are no ceilings for overhead costs. Offerors are required to provide all overhead, fringe, administrative, and other charges associated with completion of this activity as direct charges. Such charges must be substantiated with detailed descriptions and any other information reasonably required to explain the rationale behind costing.

Technical consideration of cost reasonableness is part of evaluation of application. It is a factor in the decision making process on the technical evaluation. In page 6, there is a table that specifies how the proposal/application will be evaluated. "Cost Realism" includes an evaluation of the overheads as compared to program expenses. "Cost Realism" would determine whether budget line items are reflective of actual needs of the project. The offeror will have to examine whether they have included all items that are needed to implement technical interventions, and whether line items are allowable. There is no formal ceiling on overhead costs, but the balance between overhead/administrative costs and programmatic costs is a factor in evaluating proposals.

Q8. Copyrights: We use "Creative Commons" which is open source, which is basically using other people's material. How much you want to copy right things under MSI?

A8. Neither MSI nor its client intends to require copyrights for materials used in this activity. MSI and its client require an irrevocable, fully paid-up, non-exclusive, royalty free, unlimited, unrestricted (except for sale) license to use and distribute material free of charge that is granted to MSI, USAID, and the Government of Lebanon.

Anything developed specifically under CEDG and created specifically for the project is USAID's property. As indicated in RFA Section E.1, USAID has a standing policy of allowing the products to be used quite broadly. This factor should be taken into consideration.

MSI encourages usage of "creative commons" provided it does not infringe on rights of other partners. It is the responsibility of the ISO to determine whether or not specific common-use materials are available for use. MSI and the awardee could draw up guidance that will govern materials for this grant, on issues related to copy rights.

Q9. What items to include or exclude under logistics, within the budget, specifically pertaining to training logistics?

A9. The reference to logistics in the RFA comes under "training coordinator". All the remaining expenses are under ISO (venues, logistics, etc.). The training coordinator will be placed at BALADI CAP office and will handle coordination of training for year 1. Other logistical expenses will be handled by ISO solely.

Q10. Can you provide examples of policies and procedures at the level of municipality?

A10. Based on municipal benchmark assessments, if the municipality needed policies and procedures, then they would have to be produced. Material for such policies and procedures will have to be collected from different laws and decrees. According to BALADI CAP model, policies and procedures are important for institutionalizing change. The ISO will need to set a realistic objective of what policies and procedures will need to be developed and how. An example on that would be "Policy and Procedures on Public Expenditure".

Q11. There are no clear TORs for the three key personnel to be recruited by the ISO.

A11. The organization development specialist and the financial management specialist will handle key trainings, OJTs, mentoring and coaching and policies and procedures pertaining to organization structure, flow of administrative work, municipal rules and regulations and financial processes. This is a mid-level to senior level position. These specialists should have at least seven years of experience in municipal administration and finance. These are in-house trainers, and they will take lead on training. The Program Coordinator will act as Team Leader at the ISO tasked with oversight on CEDG implementation and liaising with BALADI CAP as well as with targeted municipalities. The Program Coordinator would assume leadership of the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of CEDG on behalf of the ISO.

Q12. Many trainees do not continue with planned trainings, and the level of attendance of training workshops could be minimal.

A12. Technical application should suggest ways to avoid such occurrences. One potential way to deal with this is to divide municipalities into different categories, depending on size and number of staff. Then, training load could be tailored to the size of municipalities to avoid training fatigue.

Q13. It is fair to have now a list of 35 municipalities to help categorize and design our technical and financial proposal accordingly.

A13. The list is not available yet and the availability date is beyond the control of BALADI CAP. Further, this list, may not be available until after the RFA is awarded.

Q14. Some municipalities might not be willing to participate under CEDG. What to do in this case?

A14. It is up to the ISO to receive buy-in from the municipalities, which is determined in the Action Plan. The Action Plan should be very sensitive to each municipality's capacity. Offerors are requested to provide how they intend to request and receive buy-in from the municipalities as a part of the application.

Q15. Will the BALADI CSOs be distributed across Lebanese territories?

A15. It is the intent of MSI's donor, USAID, to ensure the CSOs are distributed across Lebanese territories.

Q16. Will we be able to buy a project car or rent a car?

A16. You can rent a car with a driver. For the purpose of this agreement, you cannot buy a car. Part of the evaluation of the proposal is how wisely you use your budget. You can be reimbursed for using your own car at the standard U.S. Government fixed transportation rates.