USAID | BENIN
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUBJECT: Solicitation for a Personal Services Contractor (PSC) – Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist, USAID/Benin

Solicitation No.:	PSC 680-07-010
Issuance Date:	April 25, 2007
Closing Date:	May 22, 2007
Closing Time:	12:00 noon local time

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The United States Government, represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications (Optional Form 612 or Standard Form 171) from qualified U.S. Citizens, U.S. Resident Aliens, Third Country Nationals (TCNs), or Cooperating Country Nationals (CCNs) to provide personal services as a Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist under a personal services contract, as described in the attached solicitation.

Any questions as well as submission of applications in response to this solicitation should be directed to:

Rosalind Sika, Contracting Officer
USAID/Benin c/o American Embassy
Office of Procurement
Rue Caporal Anani Bernard
01 BP 2012
Cotonou, Republic of Benin

Email address: **rsika@usaid.gov**
Phone (229) 21-30-05-00, ext. 2115

USAID/Benin anticipates awarding one (1) personal services contract (PSC) as a result of this solicitation, subject to availability of funds. USAID reserves the right not to award any contract as a result of this solicitation. This solicitation does not represent a commitment on behalf of USAID. The US Government is not obligated to make an award or to pay any costs associated with the preparation and submission of a proposal in response to this solicitation.

Sincerely,

Rosalind Sika

Rosalind Sika
Contracting Officer

USAID/BENIN is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage all qualified candidates to apply. Persons with disabilities will be assisted and receive reasonable accommodation.

U.S. Agency for International Development
01 B.P. 2012
Cotonou, BENIN
Tel: 229 21-30-05-00
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SOLICITATION INFORMATION

1. SOLICITATION NUMBER:	680-07-010
2. ISSUANCE DATE:	April 25, 2007
3. CLOSING DATE/TIME:	May 22, 2007 12:00 noon Local Time.
4. POSITION TITLE:	Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist
5. MARKET VALUE:	GS-13 (US $66,951 to US $87,039). Final compensation will be negotiated within the listed market value based upon the candidate's past salary, work history and educational background.
6. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:	24 months with possibility of extension, starting o/a July 1, 2007
7. PLACE OF PERFORMANCE:	Cotonou, Republic of Benin.

8. STATEMENT OF WORK

A. BACKGROUND

USAID/Benin is a small bilateral mission with an Operating Year Budget (OYB) of approximately $12.8 million and Operating Expense (OE) budget of approximately $2.0 million. USAID/Benin has been selected as a Presidential Malaria Initiative (PMI) country and is scheduled to receive approximately $15.0 million in funding under this program in fiscal year 2008. USAID/Benin has also been selected to receive $6 million for a three-year period under the Women's Justice and Empowerment Initiative (WJEI).

In FY 2006, USAID/Benin began a reduction in force (RIF) to bring the Mission staffing levels in line with the staffing requirements of the Africa Bureau's Resource Harmonization Model. The exercise resulted in the reduction of 24 employees (16 local employees in FY 2006 and 8 local employees scheduled to depart in FY 2007). The Mission will be staffed with only two U.S. Direct Hire employees (USDHs) by the end of fiscal year 2007 (the Mission Director and the Program Officer). The Executive Officer (EXO) position was eliminated in FY 2004, the Controller position is being eliminated this fiscal year, and the Contracting Officer is scheduled to depart post this fiscal year. Many of the executive office services (such as motor pool, maintenance and warehouse are now being provided to the Mission by the Embassy under ICASS. With no warranted Executive Officer at post, the Mission's procurement office is responsible for all Mission operating expense-funded procurements and all program-funded acquisition and assistance actions. The Mission's financial management office receives Controller coverage from the Controller in USAID/West Africa (USAID/WA) in Accra. And upon the departure of the USDH Contracting Officer this fiscal year, USAID/WA will also provide Contracting Officer coverage for the Mission, if the incumbent is not eligible for a warrant.

B. BASIC FUNCTION:

The Senior Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) Specialist serves as USAID/Benin's senior officer for all acquisition and assistance matters. She/He is the head of the Office of Procurement which consists of three staff members in addition to the Senior A&A Specialist.

The Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist is responsible for providing the full range of acquisition and assistance services in support of USAID/Benin's foreign assistance objectives. She/He will be required to apply specialized acquisition and assistance knowledge, and skills to actions that range from simplified low-dollar,

short-term awards to complex multi-million dollar, multi-year awards. This includes supporting all aspects of contract management relating to and affecting USAID assistance programs, policy and project planning, design, implementation and evaluation.

The Senior A&A Specialist will receive on-sight supervision from the Mission Director. Policy guidance and technical oversight will be provided by the Regional Contracting Officer who will have overall responsibility for the procurement programs of the Mission.

The incumbent will be expected to accomplish the tasks outlined below. However, given the nature of the job, the incumbent will also be expected to respond to any changes in priorities that emerge to provide effective services to the Mission.

C. MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Senior A&A Specialist shall provide personal services as a Senior Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) Specialist, providing a wide range of acquisition and assistance support services to the Mission. She/He will be the supervisor of the procurement office staff. A comprehensive knowledge of the acquisition and assistance processes is required. The Senior A&A Specialist must provide technical assistance to Mission staff necessary to execute a full range of procurement actions, including but not limited to the following:

1. Cost-reimbursement and fixed price contracts, task orders, delivery orders, purchase orders, grants, cooperative agreements, grant to public international organizations, interagency agreements, personal services contracts, and other agreements;

2. Modifications to all of the above;

3. Other miscellaneous administrative requirements associated with acquisition and assistance awards; and

4. Provide training to Mission staff, as well as to procurement office staff.

The Senior A&A Specialist must be able to discuss and assess situations with expertise sufficient to provide the basis for recommendations to the Contracting Officer. A clear understanding of the differences between acquisition and assistance is essential. Both the underlying purposes, as defined in law, and the different relationships, as reflected in the different terms and conditions, must be understood at a level that permits the specialist to effectively represent U.S. Govt. policy to outside organizations and to programmatic and administrative officials within USAID/Benin up to the Mission Director level.

She/He must perform a full range of pre-award and post-award duties described below. Actions will be highly complex and represent critical Agency objectives with short lead times. She/He must be available to Mission staff for consultation on all aspects of procurement from the procurement planning stage to the administration stage. The Senior A&A Specialist must also provide expert advice on program objectives, budgetary issues, and procurement policy. Contractual decisions and recommendations will be considered authoritative for all actions within the designated portfolio and authority. She/He must be a technical expert able to independently interact with high level officials to obtain advance approvals for critical actions. This requires extensive knowledge of the USAID and Federal Acquisition Regulations (AIDAR and FAR), USAID assistance regulations (22CFR 226), OMB Circulars, the USAID Automated Directive System and USAID A&A Policy Directives (AAPDs) and Contract Information Bulletins (CIBs).

The Senior A&A Specialist will be responsible for on-the-job training of the Mission Office of Procurement staff in all aspects of acquisition and assistance policy and procedures. She/he must be fully versant in internet and other mandated US Government and Agency applications and software related to acquisition and assistance.

D. SPECIFIC TASKS

Pre-Award Duties and Responsibilities

The Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist shall:

Manage the procurement planning functions of the Mission, which may include reviewing strategic objective agreements and/or results frameworks, participating in program planning meetings and identifying components of the plans that should be accomplished through the participation of outside provider organizations. Lead Mission technical and support offices in developing annual procurement plans for the Mission acquisitions and assistance activities. Ensure that these plans are updated, at a minimum on a quarterly basis. Collaborate with technical office members in the preparation of procurement planning documents. Input shall include steps required by regulation or policy in the selected mechanism's process, realistic estimates of the time required to accomplish each step and a commitment to maintain the agreed-upon schedule. Keep the Regional Contracting Officer informed of workload demands.

Advise Mission management and technical office personnel concerning the selection of appropriate acquisition and assistance instruments to use in order to accomplish Mission programmatic objectives. Recommend instruments to the Mission and to the cognizant Contracting Officer.

Identify acquisition issues/potential problems that require guidance or concurrence from the Regional Legal Advisor (RLA) or USAID's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA) and obtain such guidance and/or concurrence.

Provide expert guidance to technical office members in the preparation of required descriptions of the proposed project including, as appropriate, a statement of work, specifications, program descriptions, program announcements, evaluation criteria, etc. This guidance may take the form of directing them to the appropriate Automated Directive System (ADS) and/or to any other agency guidance, reviewing drafts, providing periodic training on the preparation of such documents or on Federal and USAID regulations, policy and requirements. Normally the Senior A&A Specialist will not write a statement of work or program description as this is a responsibility of the requesting office. Emphasis should be placed on developing contractible, performance-based, results-oriented statements of work or program descriptions.

Carefully review incoming requisition documents to ensure they adequately reflect and protect U.S. Government interests in the accomplishment of the programmatic objective and comply with pertinent statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements and to ensure compliance with Agency and Mission requirements and appropriateness for the proposed action. Ensure proper recording of requisitions in Agency management information systems. Analyze requisition and other documents and obtain necessary clarifications from the requesting technical office. Recommend corrections to requesting documents when they are inadequate, inappropriate or significant documentation is missing.

Prepare required pre-solicitation and solicitation documents, including determinations and findings, synopses, justifications, IFBs, RFPs or RFAs which reflect Federal and USAID regulations, policies and procedures governing acquisition and assistance instruments. Determine adequacy and choice of evaluation criteria, type of contract, the extent and mechanisms of advertising, the appropriateness of the time permitted for bid, proposal or application preparation, the need for a pre-solicitation or pre-proposal conference, and any special terms and

conditions that may be required, particularly if their use would require a deviation from governing regulations. Issue amendments, when necessary, to clarify questions or correct errors.

Control the flow of information from the Mission to the offering community during the proposal/application preparation stage, ensuring that all requirements of full and open competition are met and that the integrity of the procurement process is upheld.

Prepare Selection Panel Memoranda and provide instructions to the evaluation committee regarding rules and procedures in conducting a competitive source selection. Analyze proposals/applications, ensuring compliance with all published evaluation criteria and factors and Federal and USAID regulations, policies and procedures. Coordinate and provide expert guidance in the technical and cost evaluations.

Obtain pricing information and perform cost evaluations. Document the results of these reviews in writing for use in source selection. Determine the need for further discussions. Prepare requests for confirmation of the results of the negotiation, including requests for proposal revisions, revised financial or program plans, as applicable Make competitive range determination recommendations to the cognizant Contracting Officer for competitively negotiated acquisitions.

Take all reasonable steps necessary to determine the financial responsibility of any party to whom an award is expected to be made. This may include performing or requesting pre-award financial and program management reviews, as circumstances dictate or permit.

Prepare award documents, modifications and administrative procurement documents that reflect the results of all discussions, any special needs of the project, and all required terms and conditions and applicable provisions and clauses.

Within approved warrant authority, sign all awards and modifications. The types of awards can range from fixed price purchase orders, to various fixed price definite or indefinite quantity contracts for supplies or services, to many different types of cost reimbursement contracts for supplies or services, to a number of different types of grants and cooperative agreements with various classes of recipient organizations. Each variation in type of instrument (or recipient organization) carries with it substantial differences in the applicable terms and conditions.

Distribute award documents, ensure proper recording of the obligations by the financial management office. Provide all required notifications to unsuccessful offerors. Provide notifications to U.S. Government award publication points (such as the Congressional Liaison Office and the Federal Business Opportunities). Provide debriefings when requested. Ensure proper data entry into USAID's A&A reporting system.

Post-Award Duties and Responsibilities:

The Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist shall:

Research issues contained in, and draft responses to, miscellaneous items of correspondence on a wide variety of acquisition and assistance awards. Examples include, but are not limited to: subcontract consent requests, salary approvals, equipment approvals, etc.

Perform procurement administration functions such drafting of correspondence on administrative award approvals, and clarifying award terms and provisions to awardees and Cognizant Technical Officers (CTOs).

Monitor performance, as required by the terms and conditions of the award and by Agency policy, through report reviews, site visits, correspondence, and other mechanisms. Provide expert contractual guidance to

Agency technical monitoring personnel to assist them in the performance of their programmatic duties and the avoidance of legal/contractual improprieties.

Ensure that contractors submit required subcontracting plans, inventory reports, quarterly financial reports, responses to contractor performance reports, extension needs, funding needs, and ensure new requirements and/or clauses are incorporated in present contracts/grants.

Disseminate performance reporting procedures to Cognizant Technical Officers (CTOs). Ensure that performance reports are completed by CTOs with input from the cognizant Contracting Officer..

Take appropriate action and prepare documentation on any issues that may arise in the course of performance, including changes, disputes, work stoppages, problems with Government Furnished Property or Materials, changes in scope of work, replacement of key personnel, failure to make acceptable progress, default, payment problems, or unacceptable performance/deliveries.

Prepare responses to audit findings. Conduct desk audits of acquisitions and assistance instruments pursuant to Agency policy and procedures.

Ensure payment vouchers are processed in a timely manner and that outstanding invoice issues are resolved.

Review procurement files to ensure that documents (such as, memorandum of negotiation, class justifications and other relevant documentation) are included in procurement files and that the files are maintained in accordance with Agency policies and standards.

Close out completed contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements in a timely manner following Agency procedures and prepare all relevant close-out documentation.

Meet regularly with Mission offices to remain current on pending actions and issues. Work closely with Mission offices in developing procurement plans and responses to contract/grant implementation and administrative issues.

Participate in special projects, as assigned and contribute regularly to the office's participatory management structure.

Additional Responsibilities:

The Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist shall serve as the head of the Mission Office of Procurement (OP) for internal administrative purposes and supervise the employees within OP. As the head of the unit, she/he is responsible for the day-to-day technical and administrative supervision of employees including assigning work, monitoring workload, evaluating performance, monitoring compliance with OAA training requirements for acquisition and assistance, and establishing training programs.

E. POSITION ELEMENTS

Supervision Received: She/He will receive and on-sight supervision from the USAID/Benin Mission Director and will receive policy guidance and technical oversight from the Regional Contracting Officer based in USAID/West Africa (Accra, Ghana).

Supervision Exercised: She/He will provide supervision and training of Mission procurement office staff.

Available Guidelines: She/He is required to remain up-to-date on Agency regulations, policies and procedures related to acquisition and assistance. Reference and guidance materials to be used by the incumbent in performing the duties shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR)
USAID Acquisition Regulations (AIDAR)
Code of Federal Regulations
OMB Circulars
A&A Policy Directives (AAPDs)/Contract Information Bulletins (CIBs)
USAID Automated Directive Systems (ADS)

Exercise of Judgment: She/He must exercise sound and independent judgment in interpreting and applying acquisition and assistance regulations in the course of carrying out the assigned duties.

Authority to Make Commitments: Subject to the final approval of the Regional Agreement Officer, the incumbent has considerable authority to negotiate and reach agreement on terms and conditions of any acquisition and assistance instrument. This includes selection of appropriate instrument type, acceptance of proposed indirect cost rates and proposed fee, recognition of pre-contract costs, agreement on final cost or prive, payment provisions, frequency of reporting requirements.

Nature, Level and Purpose of Contacts: She/he establishes and maintains solid working relationships with all levels of Mission personnel. She/He will have frequent high-level working contacts with Mission senior managers, U.S. Embassy/Benin officers, host government officials, implementing partners, and private sector entities to fulfill the major duties and responsibilities of this contract. Often these contacts will be of a sensitive nature, and discretion is required.

Interpersonal skills: The Contractor must exercise discretion and tact in a variety of confidential and time-sensitive situations and when dealing with personnel to resolve challenges that arise during the course of the work, for which there often is not a clear solution.

Time Required to perform Full Range of Duties: None. The incumbent is expected to be an expert in acquisition and assistance.

Period of Performance: The personal service contract will be for two (2) years. Extensions will be contingent on the need for continued services, satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

9. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE, TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND EVALUATION FACTORS:

Candidates will be evaluated and ranked based on the following selection criteria: Initial screening is Yes/No scoring. An applicant will not be considered if he/she does not meet the minimum requirements.

Education (10 points)
A bachelor's degree is **required**, preferably in accounting, marketing, business administration, or other related field. A graduate degree is preferred.

Prior Relevant and Overseas Work Experience (30 pts)

A minimum of ten years of progressively responsible experience in the field of acquisition and assistance execution, administration, termination, cost and price analysis, procurement planning, and analysis and evaluation of proposals is **required**.

A minimum of three or more years of overseas experience working on acquisition and assistance actions in an international organization overseas is **required.**

Demonstrated experience incorporating performance-based principles in acquisition and assistance instruments is highly desired.

Prior warranted Contracting Officer experience desired.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (30 pts)
Certification or substantial completion of the requirements for certification of the USAID Procurement Management Certification Program (PMCP) or its equivalent is **required**.

Knowledge of U.S. Government acquisition and assistance regulations, policies and practices, including the FAR, AIDAR, relevant sections of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and ADS is **required.**

Strong interpersonal skills, communication skills, and demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with Mission staff, cooperating government officials, business officials and industry officials at all levels are desired.

The ability to exercise tact and diplomacy and the ability to maintain strict confidentiality and high ethical standards relating to all areas of acquisition and assistance matters are desired.

The ability to independently organize, prioritize and follow through on all assignments is desired.

Language (15 pts)

Fluency in English: A minimum of full professional proficiency in English including an ability to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs is **required**. This means that s/he 1) can understand and participate in conversations within the range of his/her own personal or professional experience with a high degree of fluency and precision of vocabulary; 2) would rarely be taken for a native speaker, but can respond appropriately even in unfamiliar situations; 3) makes only quite rare errors of pronunciation and grammar; 4) can handle informal interpreting from and into the language; and 5) can write with sufficient skill for professional purposes to produce documents which do not require extensive editing and are generally free from errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure. English skills at the ability of native or bilingual proficiency are preferred.

Fluency in French: A minimum professional working proficiency in French is desired. This includes 1) ability to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social and professional topics; 2) ability to discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease; 3) complete comprehension for a normal rate of speech; 4) a general vocabulary which is broad enough that s/he rarely has to grope for a word; 5) an accent which may be obviously foreign but has a good control of grammar and errors virtually never interfere with understanding. This includes ability to read at a normal speed and with almost complete comprehension a variety of prose on unfamiliar subjects and ability to write simple documents

Computer Skills (15 pts)
Fully functional in Windows, MS Outlook, word processing, and spreadsheet software **is required**.

Fully functional in using the internet to solve problems and research information, such as regulatory guidance is **required**.

Fully versant in US Government and Agency mandated applications and software related to acquisition and assistance is preferred.

10. APPLYING

Applicants are encouraged to provide a cover letter or appendix addressing how they meet the requirements of each of the evaluation factors specified above, ensuring that this information is presented in the same sequence as indicated above.

Applicants must provide names and contact information for at least three references. The highest ranking applicants will be interviewed in person or by phone.

Authorized application forms to be used are either the Standard Form 171, which can be obtained from http://www.jobs.bpa.gov/How_To_Apply/forms/sf171.pdf or Optional Form 612, which can be obtained from website http://www.usaid.gov/forms/of-612.doc .

Applicants should retain for their record copies of all enclosures that accompany their proposals. Please reference the number of this solicitation when sending your application. Submissions made via e-mail MUST be in Word 2000 or PDF format. Electronic submission is authorized. However, emailed applications must be signed, i.e., electronic signature or scanned signed forms are required.

Mark submissions "PSC 680-07-010". Applicants are requested to provide their full mailing address and contact information (including fax, telephone and/or e-mail where available).

Applications must be received by the closing date and time at the address specified in the cover letter/

11. LIST OF REQUIRED FORMS FOR PSCs:

1. Standard Form 171 or Optional Form 612
2. Contractor Physical Examination For children 11 years and under (DS-1622)**
3. Contractor Physical Examination For children 12 years and over (DS-1843)**
4. Questionnaire for National Security Positions (SF-86)**,
5. Authority for Release of Information (AID 610-14)**
6. Foreign Residence Data (AID 6-85)**
7. Fair Credit Reporting Act of 1970, As Amended**
8. Notice Required by The Privacy Act of 1974 **
9. Fingerprint Cards (FD-258)**.

** The forms listed 2 through 9, required for US citizens, shall only be completed upon the advice of the Contracting Officer that an applicant is the successful candidate for the job.

12. CONTRACT INFORMATION BULLETINS (CIBs) OR ACQUISITION AND ASSISTANCE POLICY DIRECTIVES (AAPDs) PERTAINING TO PSCs.

AAPDs/CIBs contain changes to USAID policy and General Provisions in USAID regulations and contracts. Please refer to this website http://www.usaid.gov/business/business_opportunities/cib/subject.html#psc to determine which AAPDs/CIBs apply to this contract.

13. COMPENSATION/BENEFITS/ALLOWANCES:

The position has been classified at a GS-13 level. Final compensation will be negotiated within the listed market value based upon the candidate's past salary, work history and educational background.

AS A MATTER OF POLICY, AND AS APPROPRIATE, A PSC IS NORMALLY AUTHORIZED THE FOLLOWING:

Note: CCNs are only eligible for benefits numbers 2 through 7 and are not eligible for allowances.

Benefits:
1. Employee's FICA and Medicare contribution (requirement for US citizens)
2. Contribution toward Health and Life Insurance
3. Pay Comparability Adjustment
4. Annual Salary Increase
5. Annual and Sick Leave
6. Eligibility for Worker's Compensation
7. Contribution toward medical evacuation insurance

Allowances: (If applicable, as found in the Standardized Regulations Government Civilian Foreign Areas) Sections cited below)
1. Temporary Lodging Allowance (Section 120)
2. Living Quarters Allowance (Section 130)
3. Post Allowance (Section 220)
4. Supplemental Post Allowance (Section 230)
5. Separate Maintenance Allowance (Section 260)
6. Education Allowance (Section 270)
7. Post Differential (Chapter 500)
8. Payments during Evacuation/Authorized Departure (Section 600)
9. Danger Pay (Section 650)
10. Educational Travel