Questions and Answers for RFP #72011518R00001
Tajikistan Agribusiness Competitiveness Activity (TACA)

QUESTION 1: Is it permissible to use a smaller font size for graphics, tables, and text boxes (e.g. Arial, 9 pt) as long as the text is still legible?

RESPONSE 1: In general, this would be permissible. However, such use should be infrequent and not substantial. If USAID determines that the tables, text boxes, etc. are being used for the purpose of avoiding the font size requirement, it may reject the proposal as not being in accordance with the RFP.

QUESTION 2: Section H.4 – the authorized geographic code is indicated to be 937 and 110, while Section H.5 only indicates geographic code 937 as the authorized source for procurement. Could USAID please clarify the discrepancy?

RESPONSE 2: H.5 states that the geographic code is 937 unless “otherwise specified in the schedule of this contract.” H.4 is part of the schedule of the contract and takes precedence over H.5. As such, the geographic codes are 937 and 110.

QUESTION 3: Section H.21 Grants Under Contract states that grants cannot be issued until the Head of Contracting Activity at the USAID/CA Mission approves grants under contract per ADS 302.3.4.13. Does USAID plan to include authorization to issue GUCs in the signed contract?

RESPONSE 3: H.21 states that “[g]rants may be included in the Performance Work Statement and considered under this contract.” If the Performance Work Statement (PWS) from the selected Offeror includes Grants Under Contracts (GUCs), USAID will need to work through an internal review and approval process for GUCs. Once USAID has internal approval for GUCs, USAID will incorporate the GUC authorization into the contract, either in the initial award or as a modification.

QUESTION 4: Section L.5.b.(4) Delivery Instructions (page 84): Should the Offeror submit the Past Performance annex as a separate document?

RESPONSE 4: Past performance information must be submitted as Annex 5 of the technical proposal using the format provided in attachment J.9 (“Past Performance”), included as part of Amendment 2 to this solicitation.

QUESTION 5: Section L.5 b. (5) on page 84 of the RFP states that the acceptable file format for the Cost Proposal is Microsoft Excel. Would USAID confirm that Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat (PDF) are acceptable formats for the cost narrative and other supporting information?
RESPONSE 5: Offerors may submit the cost narrative and supporting documentation in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) formats.

QUESTION 6: Section L.6 (a) pages 84-85 of the RFP states that: “Offeror’s technical solution for each stated result must propose the Performance Standards in accordance with the Statement of Objectives in clear specific and objective terms with quantitative measures.” The Statement of Objectives includes illustrative indicators. Should we assume that the performance standards are the same as performance indicators?

RESPONSE 6: Yes. For the purposes of the RFP, performance indicators can serve as performance standards.

QUESTION 7: Section L.6(a) Can you please clarify how the PWS should be structured? According to the stated page limits, the PWS should be a total of 12 pages, with 1 page for the introduction/background, 10 pages for the implementation approach to meet objectives, and ½ page for the summary conclusion under the monitoring section, which appears to leave ½ page to cover the remaining sections (narrative of task/activities, quantitative results expected from the activities, and monitoring). Are the tasks/activities, quantitative results expected from the activities, and the monitoring section all expected to be stand-alone sections or should some sections be included within the 10-page implementation approach?

RESPONSE 7: The format of the PWS has been clarified in the amendment to the solicitation.

It now reads as follows:

“The PWS should use the following outline and is limited to 12 pages:

- Background/introduction (~1 page). This should include the Offeror’s Theory of Change (please see https://usaidlearninglab.org/lab-notes/what-thing-called-theory-change for a description of USAID’s Theory of Change).
- Implementation Approach to meet Objectives (~10.5 pages)
  - Narrative of task/activities
  - Quantitative results expected from the activities
  - Efforts to ensure monitoring and high-quality of activities
- Summary/conclusion (~1/2 page)
- Discussion of the guiding principles from the SOO (including sustainability, collaboration and coordination, and gender), should be woven throughout the text of the PWS.”

The “Narrative of task/activities,” the “quantitative results expected from the activities,” and the “Efforts to ensure monitoring and high-quality of activities” are sub-bullets that should
make up the implementation approach. These are not required to be separate sections or subsections, but should be clearly discussed in the implementation approach section.

The summary/conclusion should be brief.

Discussion of the guiding principles should not be a separate section, but included throughout the PWS.

QUESTION 8: Section L.6(a) One of the bullet points is: “Efforts to ensure monitoring and high-quality of activities” and this has a sub-bullet: “Summary/conclusion (~1/2 page). Can USAID please clarify whether this means that the section of the PWS on monitoring should be summarized in approximately one-half page, or that there should be a longer section on monitoring that also includes a half-page summary?

RESPONSE 8: See revised language in Response 7.

QUESTION 9: Section L.6 (d)(iii)(2) of the RFP states that: “The draft Activity MEL Plan must include baseline data to the extent it is known.” Should we assume that some of the indicator data from the TAWA reports is expected to serve as a baseline for TACA? If so, can USAID make available the most recent indicator data for use in establishing baselines?

RESPONSE 9: Offerors should propose indicators that are specific to their proposed approach and not assume that the indicator data from the Feed the Future Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity (TAWA), or any specific USAID activity, are expected to be included in the MEL Plan. To the extent that an offeror may want to use data from USAID activities, it can be found by searching the Development Experience Clearinghouse (https://dec.usaid.gov).

QUESTION 10: Section L.6 d) (4) on page 86 of the RFP indicates that Annex 4 of the technical proposal should include “Resumes, biodata (SF-1420), and letters of commitment for key personnel,” but the instructions on page 85 of the RFP state that “the Technical Proposal must not contain any cost information.” Would USAID please confirm that the contractor should place the biodatas only in the cost proposal?

RESPONSE 10: Annex 4 will be amended in the RFP to remove all references to biodata (SF-1420) forms. Biodata should be submitted as part of the cost proposal and only for key personnel.

QUESTION 11: Section L.6.d Instructions for the Preparation of the Technical Proposal (page 86): This section states that biodata forms (SF-1420) should be included in Annex 4 of the technical proposal. Does USAID mean to include SF-1420s—which include cost information—
in an annex of the Technical Proposal? Or should the Offeror only include these forms in the Cost Proposal?

RESPONSE 11: See response 10 above.

QUESTION 12: Section L.6 d) (4) on page 86 of the RFP indicates that Annex 4 of the technical proposal should include “Resumes, biodata (SF-1420), and letters of commitment for key personnel,” but Section L.7, Instructions for the Preparation of the Cost Proposal, on page 92 states that “completed biographical data sheets, Form AID 1420-17 (forms may be obtained at: http://www.usaid.gov/forms/), must be provided for all proposed personnel.” Would USAID kindly confirm that biographical data sheets must be included only for key personnel?

RESPONSE 12: This language is revised as follows, “…completed biographical data sheets, Form AID 1420-17 (forms may be obtained at: http://www.usaid.gov/forms/), must be provided for proposed key personnel.”

QUESTION 13: Section L.6 (d)(iii)(2) of the RFP states that: “The Technical Proposal will include a draft Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan per the description in section F.5.2.” The description in Section F.5.2 Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan states that:

“The Activity MEL Plan must also include a logical framework and narrative detailing the following: how data collection and analysis will be managed; how and when internal data quality assessments will be undertaken; how and when routine assessments and internal evaluations will take place; how gender analysis will be incorporated into the Activity MEL Plan methodology; how performance data will be shared internally and used to inform management decisions; the planned staffing structure and resource allocation for M&E to complete these tasks; and an annual calendar of planned Activity MEL Plan activities, presented in a table or Gantt chart.”

Can USAID please clarify whether the proposal should include a logical framework, as well as the level of detail about DQAs and other assessments, or if these instructions pertain to the post-award MEL Plan preparation?

RESPONSE 13: Amendment #2 clarifies the requirements for the draft Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan submitted with the proposal. The MEL Plan does not need to include the Performance Indicator Reference Sheets. However, the draft MEL Plan submitted in the proposal should include the logical framework, proposed indicators to track both outputs and outcomes of the Activity including targets for years 1-5 in a Performance Indicator Tracking Table, and a short narrative that describes the strategy for monitoring and
evaluating progress during implementation of the Activity. A full detailed MEL Plan will be submitted within 45 days after contract award.

QUESTION 14: Section L.6 d) iii. (2), Draft Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan, on page 88 of the RFP requests that the technical proposal include a draft Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan in accordance with the description in Section F.5.2, Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan, on page 14 of the RFP. The description in Section F.5.2, however, states that for each indicator, the Activity MEL Plan must include a Performance Indicator Reference Sheet and a Performance Indicator Tracking Table. Would USAID please confirm that these two detailed MEL sections will be submitted only within 45 days after contract award, as indicated at the top of page 14?

RESPONSE 14: See response 13.

QUESTION 15: Section L.6 Instructions for the Preparation of the Technical Proposal (page 88): Would USAID consider allowing the First Year Workplan and/or the MEL Plan to be placed in an annex?

RESPONSE 15: The draft First year Workplan and draft MEL Plan must be part of the Management Approach section and counts against the 40 page limit. The draft First year workplan should give an overview of the first year activities, including mobilization after award and is expected to be approximately 5 pages. The draft MEL Plan should include the logical framework, proposed indicators to track both outputs and outcomes of the Activity including targets for year 1-5 in a Performance Indicator Tracking Table, and a short narrative that describes the strategy for monitoring and evaluating progress during implementation of the Activity and is expected to be approximately 3-5 pages.

QUESTION 16: Section L.6 d) iii. Annex 5 Past Performance Information A. on page 89 of the RFP states that a template for Past Performance Information is provided in Attachment 3, but it appears that no such attachment has been provided. Would USAID please provide a template for Past Performance Information, if required?

RESPONSE 16: The template is included as attachment J.9 as part of Amendment 2 to this solicitation.

QUESTION 17: Section L.6 d) iii. Annex 5, Past Performance Information, 3. (B) on page 91 of the RFP requests a list of contracts over the past three years for which we submitted subcontract reports to eSRS and a copy of up to 10 similarly recent subcontracting reports, if they were not submitted to eSRS. Would USAID confirm that we may submit only a list of 10 relevant eSRS reports and a copy of 10 SF-294 forms that are not duplicated on eSRS?
RESPONSE 17: USAID requires only a list of awards that are entered in eSRS. The full subcontracting reports should not be submitted for awards entered in eSRS.

In addition, Offers should submit a copy of up to 10 recent subcontracting reports if they were not submitted to eSRS.

COST:

QUESTION 18: Section L.6 (d) Annex 4 includes the requirement that a biodata (SF-1420) be submitted for individuals proposed as Key Personnel as part of the technical application. Section L.7 also includes this requirement as part of the cost application but states biodatas are to be provided for all proposed personnel. Please confirm that biodatas are to be submitted as part of the cost application only and please clarify if biodatas are to be submitted for all proposed personnel or only for proposed Key Personnel.

RESPONSE 18: See Response 10.

QUESTION 19: L.7 Instructions for the Preparation of the Cost Proposal (page 91): Does USAID have a preferred exchange rate Offerors should use when preparing the cost proposal?

RESPONSE 19: No, there is no preferred exchange rate.

QUESTION 20: If available, would USAID provide the most recent version of the Local Compensation Plan (LCP) Compensation Guidelines chart?

RESPONSE 20: The Tajkistan LCP is not publicly available at this time.

QUESTION 21: L.7.1 Instructions for the Preparation of the Cost Proposal (page 92): Can USAID provide the Offeror with an updated FSN scale for CCN project staff?