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## QUICK REFERENCE

# RESPONDING TO A FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

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### **READ THE OPPORTUNITY CAREFULLY**

The announcement will contain important information, such as the purpose and scope of activities, required documents and organizational data, and eligibility criteria. Be sure that you understand all the requirements before preparing your concept note.

### **REVIEW THE EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Study the review criteria that will be used to determine the quality of your concept note. How these criteria are explained and prioritized is important. In addition to the strength of the technical approach and plans for sustainability, review criteria often include the extent to which the program will serve intended communities and how the proposal addresses challenges in the sectoral area.

### **ASK QUESTIONS**

Solicitations will list a point (or points) of contact; only those individuals should be contacted about the opportunity. Submit all questions in writing to the email address provided, and remember to include the APS and Addendum numbers in the subject line of your email.

### **FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS**

Each solicitation includes specific requirements and instructions for preparing your response. Use the response template provided and answer all the questions. We recommend that organizations create a checklist of key items and mark them off as they are completed. If you do not follow the requirements exactly, your submission may be disqualified.

### **PAY ATTENTION TO DETAILS**

In addition to staying within the word count or page limitations, be sure to check submission dates and times, and be mindful of time zone differences. Applications submitted past the deadline will likely not be accepted.

### **BUILD ON LESSONS LEARNED**

Reference any evaluations or research your organization has conducted related to the problem your proposal addresses. Organizations may also consult the Agency's [Development Experience Clearinghouse](#) for additional resources that can provide sources of evidence to support preparation of a thoughtful response.

### **UNDERSTAND USAID**

Demonstrate that your organization has an understanding of USAID's priorities and legal and policy restrictions. Take time to understand USAID's compliance requirements and guidance on key issues such as gender, environment, and fraud prevention. Become familiar with the Agency's **Program Cycle**, and read the relevant **Country Development Cooperation Strategy** for your country or region.

### **DEMONSTRATE ABILITY TO PERFORM**

Past performance information is a key factor for predicting successful performance. Provide information about your relevant and recent achievements. If your organization is new to doing business with USAID or the U.S. Government, you can submit performance information from other work. Provide a clear plan for how you will monitor activities and track their effectiveness.

### **SHOW THAT YOUR PROPOSED COSTS ARE COMPETITIVE**

USAID aims to achieve the best value in its awards. Solicitations usually request that cost proposals include narrative that clearly describes how your budget was developed. Projected costs should align with the scope and scale of proposed activities.

### **DEMONSTRATE FINANCIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

USAID makes a responsibility determination based on financial and organizational standing. The **Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System** (FAPIIS) is one resource used to verify this information, or the Contracting Officer/Agreement Officer may conduct a formal pre-award survey of your organization.

Read one USAID Contracting Officer's perspective on what makes a **great concept note**.