



Responses to Multi-Year (MY) APS Round-02 Questions

- 1. Section B.3 Substantial Involvement, p. 17, states, “In addition to the substantial involvement information provided in Section B.4 of the Base APS, cooperative agreements awarded through this MY APS Round-2 are expected to require the following elements of substantial involvement: - refinement and approval of Recipient’s Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning plans, Theory of Change, LogFrame, and IPTT.” The referenced base MY APS, Section B.4, pp. 13-14, includes a list of “potential areas of substantial involvement” but does not specify specific levels of substantial involvement based on the programmatic requirements of the award. a. Would USAID please advise what level of substantial involvement applies to the anticipated awards, as the referenced substantial involvement information provided in Section B.4 of the base MY APS is noted as illustrative?**

Cooperative agreements awarded through this MY APS Round-2 are expected to require the following elements of substantial involvement:

- Refinement and approval of Recipient's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Learning Plans, LogFrame, Theory of Change, and IPTT.
- Approval of Recipient's annual implementation plans during performance
- Approval of specified Key Personnel.
- Refinement and approval of the Scopes of Work, design, evaluation and research team members for awardee-managed evaluations, research, studies and assessments prior to the recruitment of staff or firm(s) and start of data collection; and approval of awardee managed evaluations, research, studies and assessment reports prior to publication.
- Specific kinds of direction or redirection of the work because of interrelationships with other projects or activities.

The Agreement Officer will determine the appropriate level of substantial involvement based on the programmatic requirements of the award and will include only those elements of substantial involvement as needed, which may include elements beyond those listed above.

The APS round amendment has been updated on page 17 to reflect this language.

- 2. In the program description, BHA references five components of the graduation approach (page 6), but under the requirements for submission, there are six components mentioned (additionally identification of potential livelihoods, page 27). Can USAID clarify if identification of potential livelihoods is considered a distinct component of the graduation approach?**

Identification of potential livelihoods is a key part of the Technical Approach required to deliver a successful graduation program, but is not itself a core component delivered to each participating household. Applicants must describe the approach they will take to identifying viable livelihoods for the target population in their applications.

- 3. Section A.7, Purpose 3 Narrative, p. 13, states, “When shocks occur, applicants can support households through cash transfers.” a. Would USAID please confirm that food transfers can also be used to support households when shocks occur?**

Yes, applicants can use food and/or cash transfers to support households when shocks occur. On page 13 of the APS round amendment, this sentence now reads: "When shocks occur, applicants can support households through food and/or cash transfers."

4. **Section D.5.c.2 Participant Targeting, p. 22, states, "The length of the cohort should be discussed with the Social Protection Technical Committee..." a. Would USAID please confirm that this discussion is meant to take place in the post award award stage, when the successful applicant joins said committee?**

Applicants should propose the length of the cohort in their applications. The successful applicant should validate the length of the cohort with the Social Protection Technical Committee during the Contextualization Period. This sentence on page 23 of the APS round amendment now reads: "The length of the cohort should be based on existing learning from Madagascar and other contexts, and validated and discussed with the Social Protection Technical Committee during the Contextualization Period."

5. **Can BHA please clarify its position on opening some household coaching sessions to a wider audience within the community for topics that need broad social support and understanding, such as gender equality?**

Applicants should not expend additional resources to deliver any components of the approach to individuals outside of participating households, nor should they deliver additional interventions outside the scope of the graduation approach to either participating households or other community members. Household coaching should only be offered to participating households, as defined under the Participant Targeting section (Section D.5.c.2, page 23).

6. **Section D.5.c.3 Unconditional Consumption Support, p. 25 states, "Applicants should consult with the MPPSPF, the Social Protection Technical Committee, and the Cash Working Group on the basis and value of the transfer." However, some applicants are not current members of the SPTC or the CWG and therefore do not have standing to attend meetings. a. Would USAID please consider removing this recommendation? Or alternatively, b. Would USAID please confirm that this consultation should take place during the Contextualization Period?**

Applicants should consult with and review information from the MPPSPF, the Social Protection Technical Committee, and the Cash Working Group as part of their application to develop the basis and value of the transfer. This sentence on page 26 of the APS round amendment has been edited to reflect this change. Applicants will be requested to validate and confirm their basis and value of the transfer during the Contextualization Period, as outlined under the Contextualization Period section on page 30.

7. **On RFA pages 25 and 26, BHA states that, when including households that are also receiving consumption support from existing food assistance, MPCA, or social protection programs, "For areas in IPC 3, applicants should meet at least 50 percent of the minimum food expenditure basket and areas in IPC 4+, they should meet at least 80 percent of the minimum food expenditure basket. If the amount is sufficient for households to meet their food security needs, provide a rationale to support this conclusion, including evidence that this external consumption support will be reliably delivered to participating households throughout the duration of the RFA, and explain how the other elements of the graduation approach will layer on top of this external consumption support." Question: Regarding the percentage of the**

minimum food expenditure basket in areas of IPC 3 or IPC 4+, can BHA clarify: are applicants expected to provide the stated portion of the minimum food expenditure basket, or are applicants expected to ensure that participants receive that stated portion overall (inclusive of consumption support being received from external programs)? For example, if an applicant is working with a household in an area of IPC 3 food insecurity who is receiving 60% of their food needs from another consumption program, will the applicant be required to provide an additional 50% of the food expenditure basket (such that the household will get a combined total of 110% of the minimum food expenditure basket)? Or will the existing 60% basket from another program satisfy the requirement to meet at least 50% of the expenditure basket?

Applicants are required to ensure that participants receive the stated portion overall (in areas IPC 3+ at least 50 percent of the minimum food expenditure basket and areas in IPC 4+ at least 80 percent of the minimum food expenditure basket, as per current Cash Working Group guidelines), inclusive of consumption support being received from external programs. If a household is reliably receiving support from an external source that meets the stated portion, applicants do not have to provide additional consumption support to that household. In addition, when relying on consumption support provided by other actors, applicants must provide evidence that this support will be provided reliably for the duration of the consumption support component of the proposed graduation approach. However, if the household is receiving less support than the stated portion, applicants should explain how the program will supplement the existing consumption support.

On page 27 of the APS round amendment, the following sentence has been added:
"When layering with other programs, applicants should ensure that participants are able to receive these portions from the external consumption support."

8. Can BHA clarify if staff time expenditures for community engagement and visioning are considered desirable foundational actions before initiating the graduation approach?

BHA interprets desirable foundational actions as actions to take place during the Contextualization Period to ensure the graduation approach is contextually appropriate. If understood correctly, then applicants should budget the staff time required for community engagement and visioning in order to ensure the graduation approach is contextually appropriate.

9. Can BHA please clarify if consortium local partners can facilitate interactions and linkages with community groups and leaders for the benefit of graduation approach participants?

Consortium local partners can facilitate interactions and linkages with community groups and leaders for the benefit of graduation approach participants. During the Contextualization Period and throughout implementation, community participation to validate or refine the graduation approach design is critical.

10. Section D.5.d.1 Management, p. 39 states, "Applicants should propose a management plan..." The same Section, p. 40, states, "Applicants must demonstrate how they will manage consortium members. The management structure and approach must outline how partnerships will support the required post-award Contextualization Period..." Section, D.5.d.2 Staffing, pp. 39-40 also instructs applicants to "...detail a management structure..." and states, "If sub-awardees or a consortium management model are proposed, applicants must describe how the partnerships will be structured, organized, and managed to use

complementary capabilities.” a. Would USAID please clarify under which section the management structure should be described: D.5.d.1 Management, or D.5.d.2 Staffing?

The Management and Staffing Plan should be submitted as one cohesive section.

Applicants are welcome to organize the plan in a way that addresses all aspects under Management and Staffing Plan within the page limit. The section title has been updated to "Management and Staffing Plan" on page 41 of the APS round amendment.

- 11. D.5.d.1 Management, p. 40, states, “Applicants should propose a management plan that considers the unique challenges and complex social relationships...” and Section D.5.d.1 Staffing, p. 41, states “The application must detail a management structure that ensures the efficient use of resources...” The referenced base MY APS, Section D.5.d, Activity Specific Staffing Plan, p. 28, states, “Applicants must provide a comprehensive staffing plan that demonstrates their ability to recruit highly qualified staff...” a. Would USAID please clarify if the Activity Specific Staffing Plan described in the BHA APS should be incorporated into the management plan/management structure requested in the MY APS Round-2? Or, b. Is the Activity Specific Staffing Plan a separate requirement that should be annexed to the proposal?**

Applicants are required to include all elements of the Base and Round in their applications, unless otherwise noted. Applicants should include the elements of the Activity Specific Staffing Plan outlined in the Base APS Section D.5.d within the 12 page limit of the Management and Staffing Plan. References to the Base APS Section D.5.d have been added in the APS round amendment on page 42 and page 45.

- 12. Section D.5.d.2 Staffing, p. 41, states, “In addition, six (6) Key Personnel are required under this RFSA.” Under the description of the Commodities Manager (CM), it states, “The Commodities Manager and Resource Transfer Manager can be filled by the same candidate if the candidate possesses the requisite qualifications and experience to cover both responsibilities listed under each position.” a. If the applicant combines the CM and Resource Transfer Manager positions, would USAID please confirm that five (5) Key Personnel positions are acceptable? Or, b. Are applicants requested to propose a sixth Key Personnel of their choice?**

If the applicant combines the Commodities Manager and Resource Transfer Manager, 5 Key Personnel positions are acceptable. A footnote on page 42 of the APS round amendment has been added to clarify that five (5) Key Personnel are required if the Commodities Manager and Resource Transfer Manager are combined.

- 13. Section D.5.d.2, Staffing, p. 41, states, “All Key Personnel listed must be their own unique full-time position (40-hour workweek) throughout the life of the award(s).” a. Would USAID please consider allowing applicants to present an alternative employment term for the Commodity Manager, if justified by the Applicant’s technical approach?**

BHA will maintain the employment term for the Commodities Manager as is. The Commodities Manager must be their own unique full-time position (40-hour workweek) throughout the life of the award(s).

- 14. Section D.5.d.2, Staffing, p. 41, states, “Required attributes for all Key Personnel include... professional working proficiency in English and French (Malagasy preferred).” a. Would USAID please consider revising the Key Personnel language requirement to “professional working proficiency in French (English and Malagasy preferred)” to prioritize qualified local candidates?**

BHA will maintain the Key Personnel language requirement as is. All Key Personnel should have professional working proficiency in English and French (Malagasy preferred).

- 15. Section D.5.d.2, Staffing, p. 42, states, Key Personnel “...should spend at least 50 percent of their time in the RFSA implementation areas,” and more than 50 percent of their time in the case of the GASP Advisor. a. Given the programmatic costs and personal difficulty Key Personnel candidates may face spending 50 percent of their time away from their homes and families, would USAID please consider removing the requirement for Key Personnel positions to “spend at least 50 percent of their time in the RFSA implementation areas,” and leave it to the discretion of applicants to negotiate placements with candidates to ensure that their roles are adequately fulfilled?**

BHA strongly encourages Key Personnel to have routine visibility on programming and spend approximately 50 percent of their time monitoring activities in the RFSA implementation areas. Applicants should suggest a plan that places candidates in areas that would ensure the RFSA activities are adequately covered and monitored. The APS round amendment has been updated for each of the Key Personnel listed on pages 42-45 to reflect these changes.

- 16. Section D.6, Cost Application format. a. Would USAID please confirm that applicants can hide columns not utilized in the proposal budget template? For instance, the section related to 202(e) enhancements in the proposal budget template.**

Applicants can hide columns which will not be utilized.

- 17. Can BHA confirm the technical sectors of this activity that should be reflected in the budget?**

Applicants should select the appropriate technical sectors based on the BHA Emergency Application Guidelines and the Instructions tab of the [sample budget template](#).

- 18. Section D.6, Cost Application Format, Comprehensive Budget, Detailed Budget, and Budget Narrative, p. 44, states, “...applicants should provide detail on how various funding sources will be used” and “applicants should refer to the sample template on the RFSA Landing page.” However, the base MY APS Section 7.d Budget and Budget Narrative, p 38, states, “...summary budget, inclusive of all program costs (federal and non-federal) broken out by major budget category and by year for activities implemented. a. Would USAID please clarify if bidders are required to present the proposal budget broken down by BHA Sectors listed in the BHA Emergency Application Guidelines, Section 3.2, p. 9?**

Applicants are required to present the proposal budget breakdown by the BHA sectors listed in the BHA Emergency Application Guidelines and the Instructions tab of the [sample budget template](#).

- 19. Considering the request to structure the technical activity design according to the Graduation Approach (vs. the Theory of Change), we propose a budget template that is organized by sectors and source of funding (in columns, per the sample budget provided in the Round 2 APS), with graduation approach costs grouped and organized in rows under the Other Direct Costs category. Can BHA confirm if this is acceptable?**

Applicants should review the sample budget and sample budget narrative on how to best organize the graduation approach activities in their budget. Applicants should provide sufficient detail for each graduation approach component so that BHA can evaluate the cost effectiveness of each component individually.

20. As some of the health and nutrition indicators are no longer applicable, can BHA clarify if applicants are still required to include all the BHA-required RFSA indicators in the LogFrame?

The BHA RFSA Indicator Handbook has been updated to change nutrition indicators to Required if Applicable. Please refer to the [Indicator Handbook Part 1: Indicators for Baseline and Endline Surveys](#) which was updated February 2024 to include updated information about indicators. For Required indicators that are not relevant and/or applicable to the intervention being proposed by the applicant, the applicant must write a justification to the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) to remove the indicator requirement.

21. In the past, BHA has not funded the creation of databases/management information systems for tracking RFSA. Can BHA confirm it will cover the cost of the creation of a new or the development of an existing database/management information system (MIS) so applicants can comply with the instructions on page 49 of the RFA?

BHA will cover the costs of the creation of a new or the development of an existing database/management information system. However, BHA requests that the applicant use cost-effective and existing open source or widely available platforms (such as Google or Microsoft) to develop such a database. Applicants may propose the use of an existing MIS that uses proprietary codes if the MIS can be tailored to the needs of the RFSA at a nominal cost.

22. Section 7. Annexes, Description of Annexes, Annex 2 Logframe and Monitoring & Evaluation Plan, p. 49, states, "BHA requests that the applicant use cost-effective and existing open source or widely available platforms (such as Google or Microsoft) to develop such a database. Applicants may propose the use of an existing MIS that uses proprietary codes if the MIS can be tailored to the needs of the RFSA at a nominal cost." Would USAID please clarify whether applicants may propose the use of subscription-based data collection applications?

Applicants may propose the use of subscription-based data collection applications but must ensure they are cost-effective. This sentence has also been added on page 51 of the APS round amendment.

23. Section D.7 Annex 12, Sustainability Plan, p. 54, states, "If there are opportunities for sustained service delivery, applicants should identify areas where that would be possible." a. Would USAID please clarify to what services the solicitation is referring?

Sustained service delivery refers to continued delivery of components of the graduation approach; for example linking to other actors. This sentence on page 56 of the APS round amendment was edited to clarify: "If there are opportunities for sustained service delivery (continued delivery of components of the graduation approach; for example, linking to other actors), applicants should identify areas where that would be possible."

24. Section D.7 Other Supporting Documents, Annex 15a, Host Country Agreement, p. 57, states, "The Host Country Agreement (HCA) must be submitted as part of the application." a. Given that it can take several months to finalize agreements with the Government of Madagascar, would USAID please consider modifying this requirement in alignment with Section D.6.a Host Country Agreement, p. 29 of the MY APS, which states, "The Host Country Agreement (HCA) will be required prior to finalization of a Title II-funded award?"

BHA has revised Annex 15, Host Country Agreement to be required prior to finalization of the award. On page 58 of the APS round amendment the following was changed: "The Host Country Agreement (HCA) should be in place prior to finalization of the award."

25. Could BHA please clarify the requirements—or provide a template—for the Host Country Agreement Annex?

BHA has revised the Host Country Agreement Annex to be required prior to finalization of the award. The Apparently Successful Applicant should determine the format for the Host Country Agreement. Applicants should refer to 22 CFR 211.3(b) for the requirements for the Host Country Agreement. The APS round amendment reflects this change on page 58.

26. Section D.7 Other Supporting Documents, Annex 15c Supply Chain Management, p. 57, refers applicants to Section D.6.c of the base MY APS. Page 30 of the base MY APS states, "Applicants proposing to manage commodities in any sector or technical area must submit a Supply Chain Requirements Annex detailing their supply chain management operations (see requirements in each round)," covering all commodity and services that "...directly benefit beneficiaries." It further states that for procurement, warehouse management, and fleet management, applicants must submit an organizational policy "...that applies in the country of operation and that was revised within five years of submitting the application." Given the effort required to adapt policies to country and Activity-specific requirements and contexts, would USAID please confirm that country-specific adaptations of existing policies are not required at the proposal stage and may be made during the Contextualization Period? Or, alternatively, b. Would USAID please consider making this a requirement at the apparently successful candidates stage, or during the award negotiation process?

The requirements under Annex 15, Supply Chain Management have been updated in the APS round amendment (pages 59-61) to remove the requirement for country-specific adaptations of policies (i.e. procurement, warehouse management and fleet management) at the application stage. Applicants are required to submit their global policies with their application, but country-specific policies can be submitted at the Application Review stage.