

**RFA 674-08-0015**

**Skills Development Activity**  
**USAID/Southern Africa Office of Economic Growth**

**SECTION A – APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

**A.1. GENERAL CONDITIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS**

**(a) Definitions:** As used herein:

"Discussions" are negotiations that occur after establishment of the shortlist that may, at the Agreement Officer's discretion, result in the applicant being allowed to revise its application.

"In writing" or "written" means any worded or numbered expression which can be read, reproduced, and later communicated, and includes electronically transmitted and stored information.

"Application modification" is a change made to an application before the RFA's closing date and time, or made in response to an RFA amendment, or made to correct a mistake at any time before award.

"Revised application/addendum" is a change to an application made after the RFA's closing date, at the request of or as allowed by the Agreement Officer as the result of negotiations.

"Time," if stated as a number of days, is calculated using calendar days, unless otherwise specified, and will include Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays. However, if the last day falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, then the period shall include the next working day. This schedule also includes South African National Holidays.

**(b) Amendments to RFA:** If this RFA is amended, all terms and conditions that are not amended remain unchanged. Applicants shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to this RFA by the date and time specified in the amendment(s).

**(c) Submission, Modification, Revision, and Withdrawal of Applications**

1. Applications, modifications to applications, and revised applications/addenda shall be submitted in paper media in sealed envelopes or packages (a) addressed to the office specified in the cover letter of this RFA, and (b) showing the time and date specified for receipt, the RFA number, and the

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name and address of the applicant. Applicants using commercial carriers should ensure that the application is marked on the outermost wrapper with the information described herein.

2. The first page of the application must show: (a) the RFA number; (b) the name, address, and telephone and facsimile numbers of the applicant; and (c) names, titles, and telephone and facsimile numbers (and e-mail addresses if available) of persons authorized to negotiate on the applicant's behalf. If a corporation, a notarized authorization signed by the secretary or an officer of the corporation for an individual to negotiate on behalf of the corporation is required.

**(d) Late Applications and Revised Applications/Addenda**

1. Any application received at the office designated in the cover letter of this RFA after the exact time specified for receipt of applications shall not be considered unless it is received before award is made and (a) there is acceptable evidence to establish that it was received at the USAID Mission and was under USAID's control prior to the time set for receipt of applications, and the Agreement Officer determines that accepting the late application would not cause an undue delay; or (b) it is the only application received.
2. Any application modification or revised application/addendum or response to request for information is subject to the same conditions as described in the preceding paragraph.
3. Acceptable evidence to establish the time of receipt at the USAID Mission includes the time/date stamp of the USAID Mission on the application wrapper, other documentary evidence of receipt maintained by the USAID Mission, or oral testimony or statements of USAID personnel.
4. Notwithstanding the above, a late application modification of an otherwise successful application or revised application/addendum that makes its terms more favorable to USAID will be considered at any time it is received and may be accepted.
5. Applications may be withdrawn by written notice received by the Agreement Officer at any time before award. Applications may be withdrawn in person by an applicant or an authorized representative, if the representative's identity is made known and the representative signs a receipt for the application before award. If a corporation, a notarized authorization signed by the secretary or an officer of the corporation for an individual to act on behalf of the corporation is required. Withdrawals are effective upon receipt of notice

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- by the Agreement Officer.
6. If an emergency or unanticipated event interrupts normal USAID processes so that applications cannot be received at the office designated in the cover letter of this RFA for receipt of applications by the exact time specified in the cover letter of this RFA, and urgent USAID requirements preclude amendment of this RFA or other notice of an extension of the closing date, the time specified for receipt of applications will be deemed to be extended to the same time of day specified in the cover letter of this RFA on the first work-day on which normal USAID processes resume.
  7. Applications submitted in response to this RFA shall be written in English and in U.S. dollars.
  8. Applicants may submit modifications to their applications at any time before the RFA closing date and time, and may submit modifications in response to an RFA amendment, or to correct a mistake, at any time before award.
  9. Applicants may submit revised applications/addenda only if requested or allowed by the Agreement Officer.

**(e) Receipt of Applications and Application Expiration Date:** Applications must be received by 16:00 (4:00 pm) local (Pretoria, South Africa) time, on the closing date set forth in the cover letter of this RFA at the place indicated in the cover letter of this RFA. Applications submitted in response to this RFA must be valid for at least ninety (90) days from the closing date. Neither telegraphic nor facsimile applications, nor applications submitted solely by an electronic commerce method, will be accepted (see Section A1(i) Numbers of Copies of Application below for more details).

**(f) Restriction on Disclosure and Use of Data:**

1. Applicants that include in their applications data that they do not want disclosed outside of the evaluation committee, or data whose use by USAID they would like restrict, except for evaluation purposes shall:
  - a. Mark the title page with the following legend: "This application includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the evaluation committee and shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed -- in whole or in part -- for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, a cooperative agreement is awarded to this applicant as a result of -- or in connection with -- the submission of this data, USAID shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting cooperative agreement. This restriction does not limit USAID's right to use information contained in this data if it is

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obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets [*insert numbers or other identification of sheets*]; and”

- b. Mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following legend: “Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application.”

2. Applicants are advised that the successful technical application and/or revised application/addendum will become the Program Description of the cooperative agreement.

**(g) Cooperative Agreement Award:**

1. USAID intends to award a cooperative agreement resulting from this RFA to the responsible applicant whose application represents the best value in accordance with the selection criteria set forth in Section B of this RFA.
2. USAID may reject any or all applications if such action is in USAID's interest.
3. USAID may waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.
4. USAID may evaluate applications and award a cooperative agreement without discussions with applicants (except clarifications, *i.e.*, limited exchanges between USAID and applicants, *e.g.*, the relevance of an applicant's past performance information and adverse past performance information to which the applicant has not previously had a chance to respond). Therefore, the applicant's initial application should contain the applicant's best terms. USAID reserves the right to conduct discussions if the Agreement Officer later determines them to be necessary.
5. Exchanges with applicants after receipt of an application do not constitute a rejection or counteroffer by USAID.
6. The Agreement Officer may disclose the following information in post-award debriefings to other applicants:
  - a. The overall rating of the successful applicant;
  - b. The overall ranking of the applicant; and
  - c. A summary of the rationale for award.

**(h) Responsiveness to RFA and False Statements:** The applicant shall follow the

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instructions contained herein and supply all information as required. Failure to furnish all information requested, or to submit an application directly responsive to the terms, conditions, specifications, and provisions of this RFA may disqualify an application. Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this RFA. The penalty for making false statements to the Government is prescribed in 18 U.S.C. 1001.

**(i) Preparation of Applications**

1. **Requirement to Propose on Entire Program:** The applicant is requested to submit an application directly responsive to the terms, conditions, specifications, and provisions of this RFA. Applications not conforming to this RFA may be categorized as unacceptable, thereby eliminating them from further consideration. The applicant must propose for the entire program; applications for only part of the program will not be accepted.
2. **Number of Copies of Applications:** Pursuant to ADS-E303.5.4b o), USAID may not require more than the original and two copies of an application. However, in order that there will be sufficient copies of the technical application for the evaluation committee and the Agreement Officer, USAID requires seven (7) copies, written in English, of the technical application, three (3) copies, written in English, of the management application, and , three (3) copies, written in English, of the cost application. Applicants are requested, but are not required, to submit said number of copies of the technical application. Failure to do so will not disqualify an applicant, nor will it be viewed negatively by USAID. However, if an applicant decides to submit only the required three copies of the technical application, at least one copy shall be submitted unbound so that USAID may photocopy additional copies. The technical, cost and management applications must be submitted in separate volumes. Applicants are requested, though not required, to submit a CD-ROM that holds an electronic copy of the full application package using the software Microsoft Office 2003, (e.g. MS Word 2003, MS Excel 2003, etc.) or lower versions of this software.
3. **Marking of Applications:** Applicants shall submit the application in sealed envelopes clearly marked on the outside with the applicant's name, address, and contact information, and the following:

Technical Application – *or* – Cost Application – *or* – Management Application

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**(j) Pre-Award Audits/Surveys and Discussions/Negotiations:** USAID reserves the right to conduct a pre-award audit/survey which may include, but is not limited to: (a) interviews with individuals to establish their ability to perform cooperative agreement duties under project conditions; (b) a review of the applicant's financial condition, business and personnel policies and procedures, etc.; and (c) site visits to the applicant's institution. However, it must be understood that USAID undertakes no obligation to perform any of the foregoing activities. Moreover, pursuant to Section A.1 (g) above, USAID may award the cooperative agreement without formal discussions based on initial applications. Accordingly, applicants are urged to submit their best and most complete application initially.

**(k) Interviews/Discussions/Oral Presentations in Pretoria, South Africa:** USAID reserves the right to request the applicant and the applicant's key personnel to travel to Pretoria for interviews, discussions, and/or oral presentations. USAID will not pay any travel costs or any other costs associated with preparation, submittal, or presentation of this RFA.

**(l) Explanation to Prospective Applicants:** Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation or interpretation of this RFA must request it in writing soon enough to allow a reply to reach all prospective applicants before the submission of their applications. Oral explanations or instructions given before award of the cooperative agreement will not be binding. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this RFA will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment to this RFA, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicants. All questions must be directed to, and received by, **Francinah Hlatshwayo, Acquisition Specialist via e-mail [FHLATSHWAYO@usaid.gov](mailto:FHLATSHWAYO@usaid.gov) or by fax number +27-(0)12-460-3177 (tel. +27-(0)12-452-2175) not later than 16:00 (4:00 PM) local (Pretoria, South Africa) time on the closing date set for in the cover letter of this RFA.** Applicants may not hold discussions with USAID/Southern Africa regarding any aspect of this RFA without prior consultation and coordination with, and authorization of, the Agreement Officer. Failure to comply with this requirement may serve to disqualify an applicant.

**(m) Unnecessarily Elaborate Applications:** Unnecessarily elaborate brochures or other presentations beyond those sufficient to present a complete and effective response to this RFA are not desired and may be construed as an indication of the applicant's lack of cost consciousness. Elaborate artwork, expensive paper and bindings, and expensive visual and other presentation aids are neither necessary nor desired.

**(n) Freedom of Information Act of 1981**

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1. Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), the public is entitled to request information from Agency contract files. As a general rule, information will be disclosed except:
  - a. Information submitted in response to this RFA, prior to award of the cooperative agreement, or modifications or revisions thereto.
  - b. Information properly classified or administratively controlled by USAID.
  - c. Information specifically exempted from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.
2. Upon award of the cooperative agreement resulting from this RFA, USAID will disclose, use, or duplicate any information submitted in response to this RFA to the extent provided in the cooperative agreement and as required by the Freedom of Information Act.

**(o) Inconsistencies between this RFA and 22 CFR 226/ADS-300:** In case of any disagreements or discrepancies between the terms and conditions of this RFA and 22 CFR 226 or ADS-300, the former shall prevail.

**(p) Failure to Conform:** The technical evaluation committee may consider any failure to conform to these instructions and rules, and any attempt to evade these specifications and rules on the basis of technicalities, indicative of a lack of understanding of the program and consequential potential performance/implementation problems. The committee will take this into account when making its evaluation. If an applicant does not understand these instructions, it should write to **Francinah Hlatshwayo, Acquisition Specialist via e-mail [FHLATSHWAYO@usaid.gov](mailto:FHLATSHWAYO@usaid.gov) or by fax number +27-(0)12-460-3177 (tel. +27-(0)12-452-2175)** for clarification sufficiently in advance of the deadline for the receipt of applications to receive an answer in time to meet that deadline set forth in Section A.1.(l) above). Note that all questions must be received prior to the time and date indicated in Section A.1.(l) above.

**(q) USAID Obligation:** USAID is not obligated to make an award or pay for any costs incurred by the applicant in the preparation and submission of an application in response to this RFA.

**(r) Authority to Commit USAID:** The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit USAID to the expenditure of public funds. No costs allocable to the proposed cooperative agreement will be reimbursed by USAID before receipt of either a fully executed cooperative agreement, or a specific written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

## **A.2. INSTRUCTIONS FOR TECHNICAL APPLICATIONS**

The technical application will be evaluated by a Technical Evaluation Committee in

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accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth in Section B of this RFA. The technical application will be the major consideration in the award of the cooperative agreement. Therefore, it should be specific, complete, presented concisely, and responsive to the instructions contained herein. Applicants are advised that lack of completeness or superficiality of the application may constitute grounds for excluding it from consideration. The technical application should set forth in detail the applicant's approach and schedule; technical resources; technical experience and background; strategy, methodology, procedures, and techniques for the management, implementation, and monitoring of the program; past performance information; unique or specialized skills; and physical facilities. The application must define the technical resources, capabilities, and expertise of the applicant's organization and other institution(s) involved, and of the professional personnel proposed. The information presenting the capabilities of the applicant's and implementing partners' organizations and of the individuals to be assigned should spell-out clearly the pertinent work experience and accomplishments in developing and conducting activities of the type required under this RFA, as well as the specialized skills, professional competence, academic training, and relevant achievements of the personnel. It is important that the technical application furnish verifiable, objective supporting evidence of successful program management, implementation, and monitoring. Please note that the program to be supported by the cooperative agreement is described in broad terms; however, the Program Description for the cooperative agreement will be the successful application and/or any revised application/addenda. The technical application should, therefore, be written in results-oriented terms, and answer the questions: who, what, where, when, why, how, and so what? Applicants are encouraged to review "Results-Oriented Assistance: A USAID Sourcebook" which may be found on the worldwide web at: <http://www.usaid.gov/pubssourcebook/usgov>.

Technical applications must be written in English and typed on standard 8-1/2" x 11" or A4 paper, single-spaced, with each page numbered consecutively in the lower right corner of the page. Only 12 cpi type may be used. **Applications shall be limited to thirty (30) pages, excluding any attachments and annexes** which contain, e.g., the proposed performance monitoring plan (PMP), letters of commitment from proposed sub-recipients and (sub) contractors, résumés/CVs and letters of commitment from proposed personnel, past performance information, etc. This limitation is not intended to prohibit or discourage applicants from submitting technical data in addition to what is required to respond to the technical evaluation criteria set forth in Section B of this RFA; however, information which exceeds the page limitations will not be furnished to the technical evaluation committee. A page in the technical application which contains a table, chart, graph, etc., is counted as a page within the page limitation.

The technical application in response to this solicitation shall be divided into sections corresponding to, and following the order of, the primary evaluation criteria and sub-criteria set forth in Section B of this RFA (excluding the criterion for cost). Each section

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of the technical application should be clearly identified, using the title of the appropriate primary technical evaluation criterion. This requirement is not intended to prohibit or discourage applicants from submitting technical data in addition to the technical evaluation criteria. The relative order of importance of the evaluation criteria is indicated by approximate weighting in Section B of this RFA, so that applicants will know which areas require emphasis in the preparation of applications.

At a minimum, the technical application shall include the following information:

**(a) Technical Implementation**

- 1. Understanding of the Problem and USAID/Southern Africa’s Operational Plan (OP) and Bilateral Economic Growth Functional Objective, Private Sector Competitiveness Program Area and Workforce Development Program Element (EG/PSC/WD):** The application must demonstrate the Applicant’s understanding of the current and projected socio-economic and political environment of South Africa, as well as the applicant’s understanding of the rationale for, and goals and objectives of, USAID/Southern Africa’s OP (as outlined in Section C of this RFA) and its EG/PSC/WD.
- 2. Proposed Strategy, Approach, and Implementation Plan:** The application must describe, in detail and in active voice, the applicant’s strategy, technical approach, and implementation plan for achieving USAID/Southern Africa’s Economic Growth (EG) and Investing in People Functional Objectives.
  - a)** The EG Objective targets the Program Area of **Private Sector Competitiveness**, the purpose of which is: *to improve policies, laws, regulations, and administrative practices affecting the private sector’s ability to compete nationally and internationally.* Under this Program Area, the Skills Development Activity is being created to support the Program Element of **Workforce Development (WD)** the specific purpose of which is defined as: *assist youth and adults in acquiring knowledge and developing skills, attitudes, and behaviors to find legitimate jobs, establish viable self-employment ventures, and stay employed and productive in a changing economy. Create policies, programs, and systems that respond to labor market demands in the formal and informal sectors.*
  - b)** The Investing in People Objective targets the Program Area of **Education**. The corresponding standard indicator falls under the Education Program Area, Program Element 2.1 Basic Education and tracks “Number of learners enrolled in U.S. Government-supported secondary schools or equivalent non-school-based settings”. The indicator is defined as,

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***“Number of individuals formally enrolled in USG-supported schools or equivalent non-school-based settings for the purpose of acquiring academic basic education skills or knowledge”.***

3. Based on the stated Program Objectives and priorities, the Applicant shall propose a **Life of Project (LOP) Action Plan** focused on addressing the four Program Objectives listed in Section C.3.1 of the RFA which will be presented to South African stakeholders upon arrival in-country. The LOP Action Plan should provide as much detail as possible to demonstrate the soundness of the proposed approach and its ability to achieve the stated Program Objectives, but should be understood to be a proposal which will be discussed with South African stakeholders upon commencement of work in-country. The Life of Project Action Plan will include detail on the Applicant’s estimated level of effort, and thus budgets, for both long- and short-term personnel and other resources necessary to implement and achieve the objectives and related activities and targets.
4. In its LOP Action Plan, the **applicant shall indicate how many colleges it proposes to work with**. The Applicant may also choose to name specific FET colleges as sites for work under this activity, but the final approval of the colleges themselves will be made later, in consultation with local stakeholders, as one of the first decisions to be taken upon commencement of work in South Africa.
5. The applicant shall indicate **whether the activity will have a specific sectoral or industry focus**, which involves the selection of a strategic subset of priority industries to be considered for support. The Applicant shall make clear whether it proposes to work in priority sub-sectors or take a broader approach, and give a rationale for the proposed approach.
6. The application shall describe the applicant’s strategy and implementation plan for **integrating and achieving President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) HIV and AIDS targets as part of the overall approach**, as described in Section C of this RFA and guidance related to use of PEPFAR funds.
7. The application shall describe **integration of gender into the activity**; assessing whether males and females are involved or affected differently by the context or work to be undertaken, and, if so, whether the difference is potentially significant for managing toward sustainable program impact. The application shall assess the gender impacts of various proposed activities and ensure that planned interventions do not result in adverse impacts based on gender, with females targeted when necessary to achieve gender-integration and -balance. Applicants are invited to review the Gender Assessment prepared as part of

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USAID/Southern Africa's strategy development process in late 2004. This gender assessment is contained in Section C of the RFA. USAID Southern Africa. USAID Southern Africa will post the gender assessment and any additional documents it considers critical for applicants to this RFA on its website under the Sustainable Employment page <http://www.usaid.gov/sa/furtherinfo5.html> and/or the under the Business and Procurement page's open solicitations page found directly at <http://www.usaid.gov/sa/businesssa.html> .

8. The application shall assess the **environmental impact** of proposed activities, if any, and describe the applicant's plan for mitigating and monitoring adverse impacts. To better understand the context of this issue, applicants are encouraged to review USAID's ADS 204 Environmental Procedures and Guidance on mission requirements for environmental compliance examinations (IEEs) at <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/204.pdf> and <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/25052s1.pdf> respectively.
9. **Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)/Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan**  
The application shall include a PMP/M&E Plan which describes the applicant's proposed performance management system, including a detailed plan and methodology for establishing baselines necessary for monitoring future program impact, managing the collection and analysis of data in order to monitor performance and report thereon. The PMP/M&E Plan shall specify the source, method of collection, and schedule of collection for each datum required; and assign responsibility for collection to a specific partner, team, or individual. The PMP/M&E Plan shall also describe critical assumptions. All performance indicators, performance targets, and methodologies must be gender-sensitive, and the application must address how this will be accomplished. If gender-disaggregated data are not feasible, the applicant shall explain how the proposed performance indicators will assess gender impact indirectly (e.g. through the use of proxy measures). The PMP/M&E Plan will also include proposed guidelines to ensure that the environmental consequences of the program are identified and considered.

While the Skills Development Activity Grantee may and should chose a range of benchmarks and indicators to measure program progress, it must also track the Agency's standardized performance indicators relevant to its program. The two indicators in italics below were those selected for the FY 07 OP with "O" targets for FY 2007 and FY 2008, as the activity was still in design at the time:

**ECONOMIC GROWTH:** To generate rapid, sustained, and broad-based economic growth.

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### **Program Element 6.3: Workforce Development**

Definition: Assist youth and adults in acquiring knowledge and developing skills, attitudes, and behaviors to find legitimate jobs, establish viable self-employment ventures, and stay employed and productive in a changing economy. Create policies, programs, and systems that respond to labor market demands in the formal and informal sectors. Indicators:

1. *Number of persons participating in USG-funded workforce development programs, including technical and vocational education programs and workforce readiness programs.*
2. *Number of workforce development initiatives created through public-private partnerships.*

The Skills Development Activity will also support the Investing in People Objective, Education Program Area. The most applicable indicator for this activity has to do with support for acquisition of basic skills in secondary schools:

#### **Program Element 2.1: Basic Education**

**Indicator:** Number of Learners Enrolled in USG-supported Secondary Schools or Equivalent Non-School-Based Settings

**Definition:** Number of individuals formally enrolled in USG-supported schools or equivalent non-school-based settings for the purpose of acquiring academic basic education skills or knowledge. This may include individuals receiving USG-supported educational radio and/or TV programs. However, this indicator is intended to capture direct rather than indirect beneficiaries.

This activity must also follow PEPFAR Guidance and targets. USAID/Southern Africa has requested dedicated PEPFAR funding for FY08 to be integrated into this workforce program targeting Further Education and Training (FET) colleges. The FY08 COP entry described preliminary targets to be supported with PEPFAR funds: Support for college students will target youth aged 15 and up with Abstinence and Be Faithful (“AB”) and “Other Prevention” (OP) activities. FY08 funds for AB activities amount to \$220,000. Funding for OP activities is \$80,000.

Standardized performance indicators may change during the course of this agreement as these indicators are field tested. The CA partner should be prepared to adjust as necessary to collect this required information.

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There are two types of “responses” requested from applicants, the required responses of those noted above and proposal of new or additional indicators. In all cases, applicants should propose a methodology for collecting data and data analysis. USAID will review the applicant’s responses as part of the evaluation of technical applications and, therefore, applicants are encouraged to provide sufficient information in their applications that supports the applicant’s response.

Required Responses: Where indicated above, applicants should confirm commitment to achieve the targets of required indicators, or suggest alternate targets and include a justification for the adjustment.

Propose new or different indicators: Applicants are also free to provide a baseline and 2011 target for newly-proposed indicators which will assist in measurement of intermediate results. For new or different indicators proposed, the applicant should describe the rationale for such indicators. All indicators should be based on program resource allocation and types of proposed activities which impact indicator outcomes.

**10. Staffing Plan/Teaming Arrangement:** The application shall discuss the proposed teaming arrangement including, *inter alia*, assignment of specified roles and responsibilities to the various implementing partners. The application must also include a list of all long-term field-based positions (offshore- and local-hire, including support staff) and an illustrative list of specialized short-term expertise, by discipline/specialty, implementing partner, and level-of-effort. The application should indicate which positions are designated as key personnel. Except where U.S. market expertise and networking requirements are needed, emphasis will be placed on obtaining organizations and experts who are from South Africa and the Southern Africa region, and who demonstrate outstanding expertise and experience in appropriate technical and professional fields. They should also have prior experience as members of technical assistance teams and be committed to responding to technical requirements as needed. Long term experience in/with South Africa is a plus.

**11. Qualifications and Capabilities of Key Implementing Partners:** The application shall describe the qualifications, experience, capabilities, and expertise of each implementing partner. The application must demonstrate the experience of the applicant and key implementing partners in effectively managing related programs in developing country situations. Factors that are important in this context are (a) demonstrated abilities to operate in a cooperative, diplomatic manner while working with multiple institutions and organizations; and (b) demonstrated sensitivities to socio-cultural factors that affect implementation (e.g. gender, cross-cultural and multi-cultural situations). Because of the broad technical span of interventions, it is expected that key

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implementing partners will have similar expertise. Priority will be given to awards that include, to a significant level, South African organizations and with organizations having South African and/or southern African experience, as well as relevant technical experience. Working with local organizations is seen as a means of strengthening such local capacity and helping to build a strong base of local expertise in workforce skills development.

**12. Qualifications and Capabilities of Proposed Key Personnel:** The application shall present the proposed key personnel positions and candidates (both field office(s) and, if applicable, head office), and a description of the location and on-the-job relationships between each. Included shall be the proposed level-of-effort for each position. The application shall describe the capabilities of the proposed key personnel to successfully implement the program by describing their experience in complex, international, multi-sectoral technical programs involving related technical assistance, training, commodities, services, etc. in developing country situations, preferably in South Africa (and/or southern Africa). The factors that are important in this context are (a) demonstrated abilities to operate in a cooperative, diplomatic manner while working with multiple institutions and organizations; and (b) demonstrated sensitivities to socio-cultural factors that affect implementation (e.g. gender, cross-cultural and multi-cultural situations). It is required that the Chief of Party be based in South Africa, though a senior program manager can be based in the U.S. for coordination purposes.

Applicants shall also include, in an annex to the application (which will not count against the page limit set forth above), résumés for all key personnel candidates. Résumés may not exceed five pages in length. Each résumé shall be accompanied by a letter of commitment from each candidate indicating his/her availability under the cooperative agreement, in terms of days after award and in terms of long-term commitment to the activity.

**13. Interim Work-Plan:** Applicants shall provide, in an annex that will not count against the page limit set forth above, a draft interim work-plan covering the first six (6) months of the cooperative agreement. The draft work-plan shall also contain a mobilization schedule, office(s) set-up, and time-phased schedule of implementation activities.

## **(b) Implementation Management**

**1. Management Structure:** Applicants shall describe the organizational and management structure they propose in order to achieve the results expected from the Skills Development program. The application shall describe how the management structure will implement the cooperative agreement activities that the applicant has proposed. In describing the structure, the applicant will

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describe lessons learned, if any, from relevant experiences, if any, with establishing and operating similar programs in other countries, and how those lessons can be applied in South Africa.

If the applicant intends to develop institutional partnerships/teaming arrangements for implementation of the cooperative agreement (sub-awardees, [sub] contractors, or alliances), the application must specify the nature of organizational linkages between the prime recipient and any sub-awardee/ (sub) contractor. This includes their relationships between each other, lines of authority and accountability, and patterns for utilizing and sharing resources. Of particular importance is the need to clarify the types of administrative and management adjustments which will be made to ensure that incompatible bureaucratic and scheduling requirements of participating institutions will not limit the recipient's (or any sub-awardees'/[sub]contractors') ability to respond on a timely basis.

The applicant shall describe how it will integrate its management structure with the Mission's Economic Growth team and fully participate in managing for results under the Economic Growth Functional Objective. The applicant will describe how it plans to contribute to coordination and to increase synergies with other complementary host country, donor or private corporate investments. USAID/Southern Africa is interested in suggestions by the applicant on how its coordination role could be enhanced and how any existing overlaps and duplication of efforts with others could be minimized.

Applicants shall discuss the role of the field office(s) and head office(s), and provide an organizational chart clearly delineating the roles. Applicants shall also discuss the support capabilities of the head office. Applicants shall demonstrate an understanding of the technical, managerial, administrative, and clerical support requirements, describe how these requirements will be fulfilled, and describe the roles and responsibilities of each team member. The application shall describe the nature of supervisory/reporting relationships between the members of the applicant's (prime recipient's) team and any sub-awardees'/(sub)contractors' teams, as well as the organizational linkages between the applicant (prime recipient) and any sub-awardees/(sub)contractors. If the applicant proposes the use of sub-awardee/ (sub) contractor personnel, the application shall explain how potential conflicts between on-the-job relationships and employer-employee relationships will be resolved. Applicants shall clearly describe how they will make maximum use of local professionals in staffing for the cooperative agreement.

- 2. Facilities, Equipment, and Administrative Support:** The application must demonstrate that the applicant has or can obtain adequate facilities and

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equipment to successfully comply with all requirements and expectations. In an annex which will not count against the page limit set forth above, the application shall also specify the types and quantities of equipment that will be purchased or leased under the cooperative agreement.

The application must demonstrate that the applicant has or can recruit adequate administrative/support personnel for successfully complying with all requirements and expectations and has or can develop adequate personnel, financial, sub-award/(sub)contract awarding and post-award administration, and property management systems and procedures to comply with all requirements and expectations.

**3. Ability to Provide and Retain Proposed Key Personnel/Key Implementing Partners with Relevant/Satisfactory Managerial and Technical Competence:**

In an annex which will not count against the page limit set forth above, the application shall include a chart listing the key long-term personnel proposed for all contracts/grants/cooperative agreements awarded to the applicant during the last three years. The chart must include the following: personnel proposed and expected duration of position; key personnel actually performing under the award and the duration of actual assignment; and replacement key personnel, if any, and the reason for the replacement.

In another annex which will not count against the page limit set forth above, the application shall include a chart listing the key implementing partners proposed for all contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements awarded to the applicant during the last three years. The chart must include the following: partner proposed and expected duration of partnership and the anticipated role of the partner; whether the partner was actually utilized to the extent envisioned and in the planned role; and the reason(s) why not, if applicable.

**4. Ability to Provide Qualified Short-Term Specialists in a Timely Manner:** The application must describe in detail how the applicant will ensure that appropriately qualified professionals, with emphasis on those from South Africa and the southern Africa region, will be mobilized. With reference to the staffing plan required under paragraph (a)(4) above, this must include an analysis of the expertise immediately available through the on-board staff of the applicant and any proposed or potential sub-awardees/(sub)contractors, individuals associated via retainers, as well as expertise on-call or accessible through a database/roster of individual professional networks and consultants. To the maximum practicable extent, the application must indicate which types of expertise will be made available through which source, and realistically assess the strengths and limitations of each source, including required lead times, obvious gaps, and alternative strategies. The applicant must outline what steps will be taken to

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close existing gaps, and to overcome factors which limit the availability of individuals, such as academic schedules and prior commitments. The application must demonstrate that the applicant can gain access to such individuals, and how the applicant plans to provide such services. The application should also demonstrate the applicant's experience and ability to perform these services.

- 5. Ability to Provide or Arrange for Training:** The application must explain in detail how the applicant and/or its implementing partners will provide or arrange for any training activities proposed and describe who will provide what types of training. In addition to more formal courses, training may include as needed national and international study tours and site visits. The application must also demonstrate the applicant's experience and ability to provide or arrange for these various types of services and costs of any proposed services should be broken down in the cost application.
- 6. Ability to Provide Sub-Award/(Sub)Contract Management Services:** The application must explain the applicant's and implementing partners' ability to provide sub-award/(sub)contract management services, including experience sub-grants, (sub)contracts for technical services, commodity procurement, training, and property management, and post-award administration.
- 7. Management Experience:** The applicant should describe its experience or capability in managing similar large, multi-year, bilateral projects/activities, with particular/primary emphasis on objectives, results, projects, and activities involving implementing workforce skills development activities in similar contexts, as well as technical activities relevant to this RFA. Specifically, the applicant should provide details on previous experience providing technical, managerial, administrative, clerical, sub-grants/(sub)contracts, and technical assistance/training services of the type required and working with teams within USAID's current management systems.

**(c) Past Performance, Including Implementing Partners**

- 1.** The application should describe the quality and success/results of the applicant's and implementing partners' past performance in implementing and managing complex programs of this type, preferably in South Africa and/or southern Africa and in technical activities relevant to this RFA. The application should also describe the success of the applicant and its implementing partners in accessing and collaborating with a broad range of governmental and non-governmental, and public and private sector entities. In addition, the application should describe the applicant's and implementing partners' success at achieving activity-level output/outcomes and/or achieving (or using its best efforts to achieve) results.

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2. The application should also describe the applicant's and implementing partners' past performance in the following factors:
  - a. Quality of services/record of conforming to award requirements and to standards of good workmanship.
  - b. Timeliness of performance/record of adherence to award and performance schedules, including management and administrative aspects of performance (e.g., reporting).
  - c. Cost-control and cost-effectiveness/record of forecasting and controlling costs.
  - d. Satisfaction of, and business relationships with, customer/history of reasonable and cooperative behavior and commitment to customer satisfaction.
  - e. Satisfaction of end-users/history of business-like concern for the interest of the end-user.
  
3. In an annex which will not count against the page limitation set forth above, applicants must submit a list of all their and their implementing partners' contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs over the past three years, to include the location(s), name and current telephone number and/or e-mail address of at least one person knowledgeable of the applicant's work on each such program, award numbers for each program (if available), and a brief description of the work performed.

### **A.3. INSTRUCTIONS FOR COST APPLICATIONS**

The cost application will be evaluated in accordance with Section B of this RFA. While the proposed life of project funding levels for the Skills Development Activity will be provided by USAID Southern Africa (as specified in the RFA cover letter), the budgeting of these projected Costs under the cost application will be evaluated for reasonableness, necessity, allocability, and allowability, under the applicable USG cost principles (*i.e.*, 41 CFR 31.2 for for-profit businesses, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organizations, and OMB Circular A-21 for universities). The cost application must provide, in detail, a line item budget (using the line items discussed below) which sets forth the basis for estimated costs which are proposed to be expended in furtherance of the work to be conducted under the cooperative agreement, including those to be funded by USAID, those to be funded by non-federal matching contributions (cash or in-kind) (if any) to be provided by the applicant and third parties, and those to be funded by any other federal contributions to be provided either by USAID (under arrangements other than the cooperative agreement) or by other U.S. Government agencies. The budget shall contain a separate column for each source of funds/contributions (USAID, non-federal, and other federal). It shall include whatever schedules and notes are necessary to adequately support and/or explain proposed costs. It is recognized that it

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may be difficult for the applicant to project actual needs and cost. Accordingly, estimates, based on assumptions, are acceptable. However, the applicant must indicate the basis of the estimate, and/or the assumptions on which the estimate is based, in order to permit the Agreement Officer to determine whether estimated costs are fair and reasonable, necessary, allowable, allocable, and realistic. Please note that 22 CFR 226.25 provides a great deal of flexibility to the Recipient to make budget adjustments during the cooperative agreement period without the need to obtain prior approval from the Agreement Officer.

The Cost application must contain the following information and must be organized in the following manner. The cost application shall contain a Table of Contents with page numbers indicated in the lower right corner. All pages must be sequentially numbered, and there must be a colored divider page between each part or a tab at the first page of each part. Failure to include all information, or to organize the application in the manner prescribed, may result in rejection of the application as being unacceptable. The cost application shall include the following:

- (a) **Part 1 – Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)** :The applicant shall submit a fully completed Standard Form 424 (SF-424), which is set forth in Section E of the RFA.
- (b) **Part 2 – Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)**: The applicant shall submit a fully completed Standard Form 424A (SF-424A), which is set forth in Section E of the RFA.
- (c) **Part 3 – Summary Budget**: The applicant should include a summary line item budget for the full three-year period of the cooperative agreement. The budget should be delineated between direct management/administration/clerical costs and indirect (overhead) costs, and direct program costs. The requested non-federal cost-sharing/matching contributions (cash or in-kind) as noted in the cover memo should also be indicated. This summary budget must be consistent with the detailed cost application.
- (d) **Part 4 – Detailed Budget Breakdown (Applicant)**: The applicant shall provide a detailed budget breakdown in sufficient detail to permit cost analysis, as described below. The detailed budget breakdown shall follow the budget format, including the major budget line items, set forth below, and shall be broken-down by year. The application shall include a subtotal for each budget line item. Each page shall indicate the applicable year and the applicant's name clearly marked at the top of the page.

- 1. **Direct Salaries and Wages**: A detailed indication of level of effort, including the position titles, names of proposed individuals to fill each

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position (if known), number of units (days, months) for each position, proposed unit rate(s) for each position, and the total direct salaries and wages. Anticipated salary increases during the term of the cooperative agreement may be included, but the percentage of increase and the anticipated date(s) of increase must be specified. The level of effort and position titles must be consistent with the technical application.

2. **Cost share** is required to be **at least 15%** of the total estimated amount. If the applicant proposes a cost share of less than **15%**, it will be deemed as not responsive, and will be removed from further consideration. Cost-sharing may be cash or in-kind contributions but, by definition, may not include USG funds or USG-funded in-kind contributions. Cost-sharing must be used for the accomplishment of program objectives, and must consist of allowable costs under the applicable USG cost principles (see OMB Circular A-110 and 22CFR 226.23 for discussion of allowable in-kind contributions).

### 3. Fringe Benefits

- a) Fringe benefits, if not included in direct labor or indirect costs, shall be shown as a percentage of salaries, and shall indicate the individuals to whom the fringe benefit rate (s) apply, the salary of each individual, the total fringe benefit costs for each individual, and the total fringe benefits.
- b) Unless the negotiated indirect cost rate agreement [see Section A.3(c)] specifies the fringe benefit rate (s), the proposed rate (s) shall be supported by a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., unemployment insurance, retirement, workers' compensation, health and life insurance, FICA, etc...) and the costs of each, expressed in dollars and as a percentage of salaries.

### 4. Indirect Costs (Overhead)

- a) Estimated indirect costs shall be in accordance with the standard provisions set forth in Section C.4 of this RFA entitled "Negotiated Indirect Cost Rates – Predetermined," "Negotiated Indirect Cost Rates – Provisional (Nonprofits)," or "Negotiated Indirect Cost Rates – Provisional (For-Profits)," as applicable.
- b) The budget shall be structured in such a way as to permit easy identification and application of home office/on-campus and off-site/off campus rates, if applicable, the base to which the rate (s) is

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(are) applied, and the applicant's fiscal year (e.g. October 1 through September 30).

- c) To substantiate the rate (s) and the base (s) of application, the applicant must submit a copy of its current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA), signed by the cognizant U.S. Government audit agency. The applicant shall also provide the name and address of the cognizant U.S. Government Audit Agency, and the name and telephone number of the cognizant auditor, if other than USAID.
- d) If the applicant does not have a cognizant U.S. Government Audit Agency and/or NICRA, the applicant must submit sufficient information to allow USAID to determine the reasonableness of the rates without a full-scale pre-award audit, e.g., audited balance sheets and profit and loss statement for the last two complete years and the current year to date (or such lesser period of time if the applicant is a newly-formed organization). The profit and loss statements should include the total costs of goods and services sold, including a listing of the various indirect administrative costs, and be supplemented by information on the applicant's customary indirect cost allocation method, together with supporting computations of the basis for the indirect cost rates proposed (e.g. a breakdown of labor bases and overhead pools, the method of determining the rate, annual financial statements, etc...).
- e) If the applicant proposes to charge less than its full indirect cost rate to the cooperative agreement, or proposes not to charge indirect costs, the applicant will still incur indirect costs at the full rate. In such circumstances, the difference between the rate to be charged to the cooperative agreement and the applicant's full indirect cost rate must be reflected as a matching contribution.

**5. Consultants:** The budget must specify the position title (s), name (s) of proposed individual (s) to fill the position (s), if known, number of units (days, months) for each position, proposed unit rate (s) for each position, and the total consultant costs. The level of effort and position titles must be consistent with the annex to the technical application.

## **6. Travel, Transportation, and Per Diem**

- a) Estimated travel and transportation costs shall be in accordance with the standard provisions set forth in Section C.4 of this RFA entitled

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“International Air Travel and Transportation” and “Ocean Shipment of Goods.”

- b) The budget shall specify, for each traveler, the itinerary (in terms of locations, and, if possible, dates), the estimated airfares, pursuant to the applicable federal cost principles, USAID will only reimburse the costs of less-than-first-class air travel for not-for-profit organizations, and of lowest customary standard coach [or equivalent] air travel for for-profit firms and educational institutions), any transportation (e.g. excess baggage, unaccompanied baggage, household effects, privately-owned vehicle) costs (to include the weights, mode of transportation [air, vessel], and unit prices), and the subtotal of all travel and transportation costs.
- c) Estimated lodging and subsistence costs must be in accordance with the applicant’s established policies and practices which are consistently applied (for applicants which are non-profit organizations or educational institutions: however, the U.S. Government’s per diem rates shall be used as the test of reasonableness and, if the applicant does not have established policies and practices, the U.S. Government per diem rates shall be used) or, if the applicant is a for-profit commercial firm, may not exceed the U.S. Government per diem rates set forth in Section 920 of the Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign Areas), and should specify, for each traveler and for each trip, the location(s), the number of days in each location, the daily rate for each location, and the total lodging and subsistence costs. The lodging and subsistence costs must be consistent with the travel itinerary and the level of effort. U.S. Government per diem rates may be found on U.S. State Department’s website:  
<http://www.state.gov/m/a/als/prdm/> .
- d) For miscellaneous travel expenses such as ground transportation/taxis, airport taxes/transfers, or in-country travel, the basis for the estimate must be indicated, rather than a lump-sum amount. For example, ground transportation/taxis might be \$100, based on 2 round trips @ \$50; airport taxes/transfers might be \$40, based on 2 round-trips @\$20; and in-country travel might be \$500, based on 20 days @ \$25.
- e) The budget must distinguish between domestic (U.S.) and international travel.

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f) The budget shall also include the total travel, transportation, and per diem costs.

- 7. Overseas Allowances:** Overseas allowances (excluding per diem and shipping/storage allowances, which shall be budgeted under “Travel, Transportation, and Per Diem,” above shall be in accordance with the applicant’s established policies and practices which are consistently applied. The Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign Areas) shall be used as a test of reasonableness for overseas allowances. The Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign Areas) may be found on the US Department of State’s website: <http://www.state.gov/m/a/als/c1843.htm>.
- 8. Non-expendable Equipment :** The detailed budget breakdown for purchases of nonexpendable equipment and long-term lease of motor vehicles shall include the types and quantities of nonexpendable personal property to be purchased, the unit prices, and the total costs. The types and quantities of nonexpendable personal property must be consistent with the information provided in the technical application.
- 9. Training:** Training costs shall be in accordance with ADS 253 and a complete budget breakdown shall be provided.
- 10. Other Direct Costs (ODCs) :** Other direct costs such as communications and postage, passports/visas, medical exams/inoculations (for international travel), insurance (extra insurance such as medical evacuation for international travel), expendable supplies and materials (as distinct from nonexpendable equipment), report preparation/reproduction, etc... The basis for each estimate should be indicated. For example, communications costs might be \$600, based on 12 months at \$50. Report reproduction might be \$40, based on 4 reports of 100 pages each @0.10 per page. Expendable supplies and materials must indicate the types of supplies, the quantity of each, the unit price for each, and total costs.
- 11. Sub-agreements/(Sub) Contracts:** The applicant’s budget shall include a lump sum for each sub-agreement/ (sub) contract, and identify the sub-recipient/(sub) contractor, if known. The lump-sum(s) must be consistent with the detailed sub-recipient/ (sub) contractor budgets described in Section A.3.(e) below. The cost application must indicate whether the instrument will be a (sub) contract or sub-agreement (See ADS – 304 for a discussion of the difference between acquisition ([sub] contracts) and assistance (sub-agreements). (Sub) Contracts are subject to 22 CFR 226.40 -49 and the standard provision set forth in Section C.4 of this RFA

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entitled "USAID eligibility Rules for Goods and Services." Sub-agreements are subject to the standard provision set forth in Section C.4 of this RFA entitled "Sub-agreements."

- (e) **Part 5 – Sub-recipient/(Sub) Contractor Budgets :** Following the applicant's detailed budget breakdown, detailed budget breakdowns for each sub-recipient/(sub) contractor shall be presented. Sub-recipient/(sub) contractor budgets shall not be intermingled. The first page shall be a summary budget, following the same budget format and line items as are set forth in Section A.3(d) above for the full term of the sub-agreement/(sub) contract. Following the summary budget, a detailed budget breakdown for each year shall be presented in accordance with the instructions provided in Section A.3(d) above for the applicant. Each page shall have the year and the sub-recipient's/(sub) contractor's name (if known) clearly marked, and be signed and dated by an authorized representative of the sub-recipient/(sub) contractor. A tab or colored divider page shall separate each sub-recipient's/(sub) contractor's detailed budget breakdown.
- (f) **Part 6 – Communications Products:** Pursuant to the standard provision set forth in Section C.4 of this RFA entitled "Communications Products," the application must, to the maximum practicable extent, include the estimated costs, with a complete cost breakdown, for each communications product for which USAID approval is required pursuant to said standard provision. For printed materials, note the definition containing in paragraph (a) of the standard provision which excludes non-color photocopy material from the requirement for USAID approval.

#### **A.4. INSTRUCTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT APPLICATIONS**

The management application must contain the following information and must be organized in the following manner. The management application shall contain a Table of Contents with page numbers indicated in lower right corner. All pages must be sequentially numbered, and there must be a colored divider page between each part or a tab at the first page of each part. Failure to include all information, or to organize the application in the manner prescribed, may result in rejection of the application as being unacceptable. The management application shall include the following:

- (a) **Part 1 - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement:** The application should include a copy of the applicant's and each sub-recipient's/[sub] contractor's most recent negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement from the cognizant U.S. Government audit agency, and the name, address, and telephone number of the auditor as discussed under Section A.3.(d)(3), if applicable.

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- (b) **Part 2 - Evidence of Responsibility:** Applicants must submit sufficient evidence of responsibility for the Agreement Officer to make an affirmative determination of responsibility. The information submitted should substantiate that the applicant:
1. Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the cooperative agreement;
  2. Has the ability to comply with the cooperative agreement conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the applicant, nongovernmental and governmental;
  3. Has a satisfactory record of performance;
  4. Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics;
  5. Has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills, or the ability to obtain them;
  6. Has the necessary equipment and facilities, or the ability to obtain them; and
  7. Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a cooperative agreement under applicable laws and regulations, and the terms and conditions of this RFA.
- (c) **Part 3 – Self –Certification (If Applicable):** If the applicant has self-certified its policies to USAID/Washington, Office of Acquisition & Assistance [M/OAA/CAS], the applicant should submit a copy of such self-certification in this part of the application.
- (d) **Part 4 - Practices and Policies:** Applicants are required to submit one copy of the applicant’s travel, procurement, financial management, and personnel policies and procedures, especially regarding salary, promotion, leave, differentials, etc... and indicate whether such policies and procedures have been reviewed and approved by any agency of the Federal Government. If so, the applicant should provide the name, address, and phone number of the cognizant reviewing official.
- (e) **Part 5 - Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of Applicant/Grantee :** This part of the application should include the “Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of Applicant/Grantee” which are set forth in Section D of this RFA.
- (f) **Part 6 - Assurances – Non-construction Programs (SF-424B) :** This part of the application should include standard Form 424B, which is set forth in Section E of this RFA.