



Issuance Date: October 31, 2012
Deadline for Questions submission: November 13, 2012
Closing Date: December 3, 2012

Subject: Request for Concept Papers to Expand Participation of People with Disabilities

Dear Applicants:

I would like to bring to your attention an exciting funding opportunity by the United States Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), to increase the participation of people with disabilities in USAID activities and strengthen the capacities/services of local disabled people's organizations (DPOs).

This opportunity is available worldwide and will be very competitive. The USAID/Ecuador Mission will therefore prioritize concept papers submitted by organizations run by and for people with disabilities or that have significantly involved DPOs in the design, implementation and evaluation of the activities. Interested applicants can find more detailed information of this Request in Attachment 1, Mission Specific Information.

Subject to the availability of funds, the total estimated level of funding available for awards under this request is approximately \$4,000,000, which is expected to fund individual programs in several countries in the following two categories:

- (1) Small programs ranging from \$20,000 to \$300,000 and up to 24 months (not to exceed \$2.8 million funded under this specific category);
- (2) Approximately one to three larger programs ranging from \$300,000 - \$600,000 up to 36 months (not to exceed \$1.2 million funded under this specific category).

Of the total amount available, \$1,000,000 will be available to develop, support, and strengthen sports programs for persons with disabilities.

In order to promote consistency and for ease of review, all applicants must use the standard application form which is included as Attachment 2. Submissions made using other formats may not be considered. Concept papers should be no longer than eight pages in Spanish or English. In addition, we have included a standardized reporting format in Attachment 3 that will be required for any funded activities.

The concept papers and any questions must be submitted electronically to mmatute@usaid.gov by these deadlines:

Deadline for Questions submission: November 12, 2012
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The selection process will be conducted in two phases. USAID/Ecuador will review and pre-select the concept papers received by the deadline based on the criteria outlined in Attachment 1. Selected concept papers will then be forwarded to USAID/Washington for selection for funding. Should the concept paper be accepted by USAID/Washington for funding, USAID/Ecuador will then inform the applicant on the procedures to submit a full application. Due to the possible high number of applications, USAID will make every attempt to try, but may not be able to inform offerors should their proposal not be selected.

In compliance with its Disability Policy, USAID continues to work toward fuller inclusion of people with disabilities in its foreign and development efforts. USAID's Disability Policy can be found at: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDABQ631.pdf

Please note that the issuance of this Request for Concept Papers does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor does it commit the U.S. Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application, which should be at the applicant's expense. The concept papers are submitted at the risk of the applicant.

I hope you will take advantage of the opportunities this request provides to strengthen the capacities of disabled people's organizations and to reduce barriers and provide full participation of PWDs in Ecuador.

I strongly encourage you to invest the time and energy in developing your project idea and submit your concept paper.

Sincerely,



G. Michael Junge
Regional Agreement Officer

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Mission Specific Information
- Attachment 2: Application Form
- Attachment 3: Reporting Form

ATTACHMENT 1

USAID/ECUADOR

MISSION SPECIFIC INFORMATION

**REQUEST FOR CONCEPT PAPERS FOR PROJECTS TO
EXPAND PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

I. PURPOSE STATEMENT

USAID/Washington is seeking applications to increase the participation of people with disabilities in USAID activities and strengthen the capacities/services of local disabled people's organizations (DPOs), organizations run by and for people with disabilities.

Funds may be used to support projects and programs that will increase the participation of people with disabilities within the programs of USAID/Ecuador.

Program areas might include, but are not limited to: agriculture and food security; democracy, human rights & governance; economic growth and trade; education; environment and global climate change; gender equality and women's empowerment and science, technology and innovation, among others. Capacity building programs for DPOs may include organizational capacity, advocacy efforts, cross-disability coalition-building and coordination, and leadership and training.

All successful grants or cooperative agreements as a result of this request for concept papers will be administered through, and managed by USAID/Ecuador.

Applications should be from qualified U.S. or non-U.S. entities, such as private, non-profit organizations (or for-profit companies willing to forego profits), including private voluntary organizations, universities, research organizations, professional associations, and relevant special interest associations. Local DPOs are encouraged to apply. Preference will be given to qualified local DPOs and/or any of the above organization types that directly collaborate with and/or award sub-grants to DPOs while meeting the requirements for funding. Awards to U.S. organizations will be administered in accordance with (1) 22 C.F.R. 226, (2) OMB Circulars and (3) the USAID Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients. Awards to non-U.S. organizations will be administered in accordance with USAID Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Recipients.

Additional information on funding and the concept paper process can be found at the end of this solicitation.

II. BACKGROUND

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 15% of any population has some form of disability with a higher incidence of disability in countries that are post conflict or disaster-stricken areas. Of the estimated 1 billion people throughout the world who have a disability, 80% live in less resourced nations.

People with disabilities have been marginalized from traditional development activities due to discrimination and environmental barriers, which have limited their access to health care services, education, employment, and civil society integration.

Previously, emphasis has been put on developing separate programs for people with disabilities rather than trying to integrate them into existing development activities. Although it may be necessary at times to develop separate programs to target specific needs of some individuals, the needs of people with disabilities are much like everyone else's and must be considered from the start in mainstream programs.

In 1997, USAID adopted a disability policy that advanced a clear vision and framework for the Agency's efforts in the area of disability inclusion. The policy states that USAID will not discriminate against people with disabilities and will work to ensure the inclusion and active participation of people with disabilities in USAID-funded programs and activities. The policy also calls on USAID missions to reach out to partners, host country counterparts and other donors to lead a collaborative effort to end discrimination against, and promote equal opportunity for, people with disabilities.

In July 2009, the US signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ensuring its commitment to the human rights of people with disabilities around the world. To date, several of the countries in which USAID operates have also signed/ratified the Convention signaling a global movement towards the full realization of the rights of people with disabilities and their role in the international development community.

For more information about USAID and Disability Inclusive Development, visit: <http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/democracy-human-rights-and-governance/protecting-human-rights/disability>

PLEASE NOTE: In order to streamline flow of information, please utilize the attached application (Attachment 2) and reporting format (Attachment 3).

III. AREAS OF INTEREST

The two main objectives of the disability funding are to increase the participation of people with disabilities in USAID activities and to strengthen the capacity and services of DPOs.

Ideally, activities should be guided by the values and provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The lists provided under each heading are only illustrative - other innovative ideas are welcome.

a. Increase participation of people with disabilities in existing or new USAID programs.

Examples:

1. Promote participation of people with disabilities in democratic processes and elections.
2. Foster inclusion of children and youth with disabilities in mainstream education programs through teacher-training programs, adaptive technology, community outreach, etc.
3. Increase employment and economic opportunities for people with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities.
4. Build capacity of humanitarian relief workers and first responders to better incorporate the needs of people with disabilities in all disaster relief planning.
5. Improve national laws and policies to better reflect the inclusion of people with disabilities within countries.
6. Develop, support and strengthen sports programs for people with disabilities
7. Enhance involvement of people with disabilities in sustainable management of natural resources, conservation of biodiversity, and climate change adaptation and mitigation.
8. Increase participation of persons with disabilities in tourism and recreation, improving the conditions of accessible tourism.

b. Strengthen the capacity and services of DPOs.

Examples:

1. Improve the organizational capacity, financial management, human/material resources, strategic planning, fundraising, leadership and coordination of DPOs.
2. Support the development and/or strengthening of national and regional cross-disability networks and coalitions.
3. Support the establishment and/or strengthening of consumer-controlled disability resource centers (often referred to as “Independent Living Centers” in the U.S.) that promote the full independence and participation of people with disabilities in society.
4. Build advocacy skills of DPOs to increase the inclusion of people with disabilities in programs funded by USAID, host governments and other donors.

5. Provide training on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

IV. AVAILABLE FUNDS

Subject to the availability of funds, the total estimated level of funding available for awards under this request is approximately \$4,000,000, which is expected to fund individual programs in several countries in the following two categories:

- (1) Small programs ranging from \$20,000 to \$300,000 and up to 24 months (not to exceed \$2.8 million funded under this specific category);
- (2) Approximately one to three larger programs ranging from \$300,000 - \$600,000 up to 36 months (not to exceed \$1.2 million funded under this specific category).

Of the total amount available, \$1,000,000 will be available to develop, support, and strengthen sports programs for persons with disabilities.

Concept papers will be considered for “one time grants” with no expectations for follow-on funding.

V. CONCEPT PAPER PROCESS

1. USAID/Ecuador solicits, reviews, and pre-selects concept papers, based on the evaluation criteria listed below. Concept papers should be submitted to USAID/Ecuador in English or Spanish using the attached application form (Attachment 2).
2. USAID/Ecuador will only be able to submit up to two (2) small fund proposals (\$20,000 - \$300,000) and no more than one (1) concept paper for the larger funds (\$300,000 - \$600,000).

VI. OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES OF THIS REQUEST

1. Deadline for submission of concept papers

Concept papers must be submitted no later than Monday, December 3, 2012. USAID is not responsible for errors or delays in the transmission of concept papers.

2. Questions about the solicitation of concept papers

Any questions regarding this solicitation should be submitted in writing to mmatute@usaid.gov no later than Monday, November 12, 2012.

USAID will collect and organize the questions received and will provide a response after November 19, 2012. All questions and responses will be posted on the website http://spanish.ecuador.usembassy.gov/licitaciones_publicas.html

3. Address to send applications

The application form must be sent in MS Word or PDF to the email address mmatute@usaid.gov

Concept papers sent directly to USAID/Washington will not be considered.

4. Non-conforming concept papers

Due the volume of anticipated concept papers, the standard application form must be used. Please respect the page limits (maximum 8 pages)

5. Language of concept papers

Concept papers may be submitted in English or Spanish, using the established format.

6. Format for submission of concept papers

Applicants must use paper 8.5 x 11 inch or A4 single-spaced letter of a minimum size of 11 points.

7. Monitoring and Progress Reporting

The selected applicant which will receive the funds must use the attached form (Attachment 3) to report quarterly progress.

VII. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Concept papers will be evaluated based on the following criteria in descending order of importance: Criteria #1 "Project Description is more important than Criteria #2 "Information about the Applicant" and Criteria #3 "Integration of People with Disabilities" combined, with Criteria #2 and Criteria #3 being of equal importance.

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- The opening paragraph must be dynamic and clearly state the problem to be addressed, why it is important to Persons with Disabilities in Ecuador to address this problem, and how the funds will help to address this issue. The opening paragraph should not be long but should describe the situation and how the funds will help solve it. Because this will be an international competition, the opening paragraph must be very strong so as to catch the attention of the judges in Washington, DC. The remainder of the 8 pages should provide more details as to what was stated in the opening paragraph.
- Show a clear link between the described need and the proposed activities.
- If applicable, describe the impact of the proposed project on USAID programs, activities or strategies.
- Define who will benefit from the project (children, youth, adults; people with disabilities or not; government institutions, families, local community, schools, etc; disaggregated by sex).
- Provide a timeline that is well-defined and realistic. (refer to point #5 of the application format)

- Beneficiaries – these are examples – the concept paper should clearly state who will benefit:
 - Number of beneficiaries
 - Number of persons trained (for example if grant is for training)
 - Number of organizations strengthened
 - Ensure that women and girls with disabilities participate in and benefit from activities. Proposals with a strong gender component shall be rated more favorably, although all proposals must discuss how gender will be addressed.
 - Other indicators of success

2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICANT

- Extensive involvement in disability inclusion or be a Disabled People's Organization.
- Previous experience in project management or managing activities related to those proposed in the concept paper.
- A clear understanding of the disability landscape and situation of people with disabilities in the country/region of programming.
- A clear mission, set of objectives and orientation that is in line with proposed activities.

3. INTEGRATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- Show evidence of linkages with existing disability programs or organizations in the country where activities are being proposed.
- Illustrate how people with disabilities have been/will be involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the program.