

Questions from OVC Information Session November 15, 2007

Q1: Is there flexibility on the start-up time frame? It may take more than 45 days to get relationships established to begin implementation.

A: The winner(s) are obligated to start implementation within 45 days of award. "Implementation" does not mean services are in place. It includes groundwork, e.g. continued work to formalize relationships and sign agreements with partners. On the other hand, the program must meet PEPFAR targets to be achieved by the end of September 2008. Thus it is important to start implementation swiftly. The process of developing an application for this program should include laying the groundwork for establishing the relationships necessary to implement the project, rather than waiting until the award to start that process.

Q2: Regarding the requirements to serve 100 OVC by Sept 08, and PEPFAR's primary/supplemental support requirements, is it enough to serve children in one area of support in the first year?

A: It is expected that awardees will address the multiple needs of children as clarified in PEPFAR OVC guidance (<http://www.pepfar.gov/documents/organization/83298.pdf>). The guidance also requires frequent assessments and monitoring of OVC needs in the six core service areas. The targets for year one do not specify primary vs. supplemental support because they come from a PEPFAR Vietnam Country Operational Plan developed prior to the introduction of this target structure. This does not mean programming for the two periods should differ. It is expected that programs serving OVC under PEPFAR will monitor OVC periodically in the six OVC care areas, and provide/refer for services based on needs identified.

Q3: Can street children be a target group if they are living in Hanoi but may have come from elsewhere or not be in Hanoi permanently?

A: Yes, if they live in Hanoi, and meet the criteria for being defined as HIV OVC as specified in the RFA, they can be beneficiaries of the project.

Q4: Can street children be included in plan on the basis of being vulnerable to HIV infection?

A: Beneficiaries must have at least one of the characteristics stated in the RFA: Living with HIV, in household with PLWH, lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS, abandoned for reasons related to HIV/AIDS, otherwise disadvantaged for reasons related to HIV/AIDS. Simply being vulnerable to HIV infection is not an adequate criterion to be selected as a target beneficiary group under this program.

Q5: Can you clarify what it means that INGO applicants must work with Vietnamese partners?

A: If the prime applicant is an INGO, there must be a Vietnamese organization also receiving funds under the project. Those institutions could be Vietnamese NGOs, CBOs, government agencies, or mass organizations.

Q6: The summary budget does not have a category for program activities.

A: Any expenses other than the categories listed should be budgeted under "Other Direct Charges," including other costs associated with the program's core activities.

Q7: In our detailed budget, can we arrange items in an order that is convenient for us, or do we need to follow Pact's budget template?

A: Applicants do not need to use the Pact budget template for their detailed budget, although it is available upon request. Organizations may use their own system to format detailed budgets, as long as the items in the detailed budget can be placed in the required summary budget format, and the detailed budget format provides sufficient detail on the cost basis of particular activities (e.g., illustrating how trainings are costed, not simply providing a flat amount for trainings).

Q8: Regarding donor references, do you want three, or prefer more than 3?

A: The RFA requests 3 donor references. These should be 3 references that can be reliably contacted by Pact. If you think any of your donor references may be difficult to contact, you may include more than three.

Q9: If a reference is from USAID, does it need to be from a particular person or department?

A: References from USAID should include a specific contact person's name, the name of a specific project/award they oversaw, and other details as outlined in the RFA. That is, the contact should be able to provide a reference related to the applicant's performance on a particular project/award, not just for the institution as a whole. USAID Vietnam references are preferred to USAID references related to your organization's performance in other countries, but are not required.

Q10: Is there a cost share requirement?

A: No, there is no cost share requirement under this RFA.

Q11: In selecting beneficiaries, how do we deal with the fact that we can't know for sure if the parents of orphans had HIV/AIDS or not?

A: Applicants are expected to perform due diligence, but not expected go to extreme lengths to verify that beneficiaries who are *believed* to be HIV affected meet the requirements of being in at least one of the listed categories. Regarding work with institutions, applicants can target institutions whose function is to house orphans and abandoned children living with HIV or exposed to HIV. Alternatively, if there are general institutions in which a group of HIV OVC resides, you may choose to work with those institutions and the children believed to be HIV affected within them. Again, extreme lengths need not be taken to "prove" the child's vulnerability relates to HIV/AIDS as long as reasonable due diligence has been performed.

Q12: How should we handle it if we want to serve children with parents in 06 centers, who are likely to have HIV+ parents, but we cannot verify HIV status, and do not want to further stigmatize children by probing too much? In some African settings, all vulnerable children are considered HIV affected given high prevalence.

A: You must make a compelling case for any planned programming strategy or beneficiary group you propose to serve. As noted in the previous answer (Q11), due diligence must be demonstrated, but extreme lengths are not expected. Note that Pact expects applicants to ensure no harm is done, and at the same time to be innovative in finding ways to deal with difficult issues, including serving HIV OVC in a low prevalence, highly stigmatized environment.

Q13: Are there any criteria for assessing logical frameworks used in the application?

A: Applicants can use whatever framework or tool that helps present their program in a logical and *clear* way.

Q14: Is the External Review Committee the same as the International Partnership Group for Children and HIV/AIDS?

A: No. The external Review Committee for this RFA is not set yet. Review committees for Pact Vietnam RFAs under PEPFAR usually include one member from Pact, one from the Vietnamese Government, one from USAID, and one or two other experts in the field.

Q15: How will applicant organizations without permits to operate in Vietnam cope with the delays this could introduce?

A: Ideally, prime applicants without a registered presence in Vietnam should begin laying the groundwork of relationships needed to move registration forward during the application process.