

RFA-07-KEA - Women's Entrepreneurship Incubator Program

Responses to submitted questions

Q: If we are an international organization with a local presence, are we still required to partner with a local entity?

A: If the organization has local presence through registration and evidence of operations and delivering similar activities as per the RFA, then they are not required to partner with a local entity.

Q: Grant Size: U.S. organizations (both not-for-profits and for-profits) may not receive grant funding above \$250,000 under any grant type. Does this mean that U.S. organisation would be able to receive 250k max as a grant and the rest of the funding would be used for pass-through directly to the enterprises?

A: No, U.S. organizations (not-for-profits or for-profits) may not receive grant funding above the Simplified Acquisition Threshold i.e. \$250,000 under any grant type.

Q: What is the funding ceiling for programmatic expenses to run an initiative?

A: The ceiling \$225,000

Q: In the RFA Application form the second question has a dropdown menu to select the relevant Call. I am responding to RFA-07-USAID KEA Women's Entrepreneurship Incubation Program. However, this option does not seem to be in the dropdown menu.

A: All questions received prior to the question submission deadline have however been responded to.

Q: Please clarify on the Cohorts for RFA-07. Should the micro, small and medium enterprises be trained together in one class? Experience has shown that this often doesn't work well as the micro and medium enterprises tend to have different needs and priorities, making effective engagement a challenge for both categories.

A: The micro, small and medium enterprises have different capacity needs and the training needs to accommodate their needs. Trainings should separate but can run simultaneously.

Q: The RFA states a maximum grant amount of \$1,500,000 - does this include the \$1,275,000 to be disbursed in grant funding?

A: Yes, \$1.5 Million is the grant total for the assignment (grant funding + consultancy fees)

Q: Are all grants to be disbursed and administered based on grantee milestones? The focus of the RFA seems to be on competitions & awards, rather than on the follow up of the award to ensure it is being properly utilized and is delivering expected outcomes. Some additional guidance on what USAID expects on this portfolio management would be helpful. Otherwise, we can propose based on our expertise.

A: Applicants are advised to submit applications informed by their experience and expertise with proposed approach that effectively delivers on the program goals. USAID is keen on results-based monitoring as indicated in RFA, which will be achieved through post grant evaluation.

Q: If we charge fees for the cohort-based training (which we strongly advise, given how it supports the sustainability objective), is this revenue included in the budget to offset costs (driving down the total overall budget)? How is this typically handled for USAID?

A: Applicants are advised to present their methodology and approach that presents best value for money and effectively delivers on the overall goals of this assignment.

Additional Questions and Responses

Q: "Applicants are expected to propose the implementation methodology for the small grant award categories for a \$1,275,000 budget over the life of the incubation program." Does this mean that the \$1,275,000 is covered in the overall maximum grant amount of \$1.5 Million?

A: The total grant size is USD 1.5 million (\$1,275,000 - Co-investment grants plus \$225,000 for consultancy fees)

Q: To what extent is the potential of the women-led SME to create dignified work for women (job creation outcome) a priority of this grant – as compared to innovation scale up?

A: Dignified Job creation for women, youth and persons with disabilities is a priority for this grant. Similarly, this grant can be used to scale innovation through running the incubator program, however proof of concept should be clearly demonstrated in the proposal.

Q: Regarding the exclusion of "Public Relations and Advertising Costs", does this include any marketing and promotion of the services being offered?

A: Yes, these are not allowable from USAID funding but can be covered from matching contribution.

Q: Could you help clarify if there's a preferred structural length or approach to follow for the proposal? The Background provides an overview of the incubation program timeline. Could the cohort size be increased and the pitch competitions be reduced to 3 to enable efficient time for designing and running the program

A: The proposal should not exceed 10 pages. Applicants are encouraged to propose innovative approaches that not only enhance efficiency but also result in realization of the set objectives.

Q: Could you confirm if the awardee will administer the sub-grants to the WO-SGBs participants? Please confirm the budget for the program lifeline is \$1,500,000 and the business grants is \$1,275,000.

A: Yes, except for U.S. organizations (not-for-profits or for-profits), which may not receive grant funding above the Simplified Acquisition Threshold i.e. \$250,000. The total grant size is USD 1.5 million (\$1,275,000 - Co-investment grants plus \$225,000 for consultancy fees).

Q: Will M& E be managed by ATI and would there be separate funds for that? Are there any limitations or restrictions we should be aware of in developing the proposal?

A: Collaborating, learning & adapting is a shared function between ATI and the awardee. Applicants are required to demonstrate how they will ensure they effectively meet the deliverables under this activity.

Applicants should include M&E costs in their budget. Refer to the award and administration information section more details on limitations.

Q: In a cohort, is there a limit in the composition of WO-SGBs across the 4 sectors i.e., expected representation per sector? Are the 3 pitching competitions per category (9 per cohort) sector specific? Or will all WO-SGBs in a single category but across the various sectors pitch for the award at a single pitching event?

A: Applicants are encouraged to elaborate in their methodology how they will ensure good representation of WO-SGBs from the 4 sectors in the cohorts. The RFA indicates 15 pitch competitions (5 cohorts x 3 categories (micro, small, and medium) and applicants are encouraged to propose innovative ways of achieving this deliverable.

Q: Can one WO-SGB win an award more than once? Will the consultant be required to provide the judges for the pitching competitions? Can the participants of the reverse pitch competitions be the same for different competitions? What is the expected matching contribution for the selected 45 firms to be awarded activity's co-investment grant facility?

A: No, one award per WO-SGB. In the methodology, applicants should demonstrate how pitching competitions will be structured, including how awardees will be determined. ATI encourages applicants to provide fair opportunities for all WO-SGBs in the program to compete for the co-investment grants. Each of the 45 awardees will be required to co-invest at a ratio of 1:1.

Q: Will/can additional financing facilitated for the 45 account for co-investment/co-financing? Are the timelines for co-financing locked within the 30-month implementation period? What is the expected quantum value/target of financing that is expected to be facilitated for all other participants by close of program? Is this an expected core deliverable?

A: Under this program, the awardees will receive co-funding as specified for category (micro-\$10k, Small-\$25k and Medium -\$50k). Applicants are also welcomed to propose different enterprise award categories as long as they comply with the upper limit of \$50,000 and provide for different enterprise sizes. Applicants are encouraged to propose how they will ensure that the WO-SGBs in the program meet the eligibility criteria that requires them to contribute co-financing to the proposed activities. It is encouraged that from the onset of engaging the WO-SGBs, applicants should screen companies' commitments on co-financing capabilities. By close of program, WO-SGBs in the program should be financed to a tune of \$1,275,000. This is a core deliverable and applicants are also encouraged to demonstrate how they will ensure post grant support to the WO-SGBs.

Q: Please advise if this Grant applies for Tanzania region as part of East Africa as I have read, and it mainly mentions Kenya however the heading is Kenya / East Africa.

A: This grant targets firms located in Kenya. Firms based in Kenya with subsidiaries in EA are eligible.

Q: The standard grant is a maximum of \$1,500,000. Does this include the \$1,275,000 small grants budget, or are these separate and a total of \$2,775,000 would be issued to the successful applicant?

A: The total grant size is USD 1.5 million (\$1,275,000 - Co-investment grants plus \$225,000 for consultancy fees)

Q: Are consortiums allowed / encouraged?

A: Yes, consortiums are eligible to apply for the grant; in the proposal you will need to indicate the roles of each consortia partner and identify the lead applicant.