

Template for

Acquisition and Assistance Review and Approval Document (AARAD)

for Pre-Solicitation

A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 300

Full Revision Date: 10/01/2016

Responsible Office: M/MPBP

File Name: 300man\_100116

The Agency implemented a review process for high value acquisition and assistance (A&A) awards to increase senior management involvement and accountability in A&A. The process engages senior leadership in the review of awards with a total estimated cost/total estimated amount of $50 million or more (based upon the independent Government cost estimate) prior to the issuance of solicitations. It provides oversight on the use of mechanisms and results to be achieved, and helps to ensure that the Agency is using innovative approaches to provide long-term sustainable outcomes. The review also contributes to more rigorous project design and establishes greater linkages between Washington and field activities.

Operating Units must use the [**Acquisition and Assistance Review and Approval Document (AARAD)**](http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/300man) **Template** to provide standard descriptive data (Part 1); the justification for the planned award (Part 2); and the approval to proceed with a solicitation (Part 3). The objectives of the AARAD are to:

1. Ensure that USAID senior leadership knows about the major upcoming Agency acquisition and assistance solicitations.
2. Ensure that leadership oversight is undertaken on topics such as: a) excessive use of sole-source contracts, or over-reliance on indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity contracts (IDIQs) and/or large umbrella awards; b) cost-effectiveness; c) use of local and/or small U.S. organizations; and d) sustainability.
3. Ensure drafters, reviewers, and recipients are all focusing on a variety of topics that are key to state-of-the-art development programming and/or other Administrator priorities.

The responsible Planner must initiate the AARAD for planned new solicitations at or above $50 million in total estimated cost/total estimated amount (see [**ADS 300.3.4**](http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/300)).

**PART 1 – STANDARD DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

(Answers should be no more than 3 sentences per question.)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Activity Name |  |
| Bureau/Office/Mission |  |
| Acquisition or Assistance |  |
| Total Estimated Cost/Amount |  |
| Describe any cost-sharing, leveraging or funding in parallel to the USAID-funded activity. If none, please explain why not. |  |
| Duration of the award(s) |  |
| What recipient countries are involved, if known? |  |
| What is the expected number of “prime” awards? |  |
| What problem is being addressed? |  |
| What are the desired outcomes and the projected results? |  |
| What provisions are being made, if any, for the involvement of local in-country organizations? |  |
| What provisions are being made, if any, for the involvement of U.S. small business and/or minority-serving institutions? |  |
| What provisions are being made for higher education, if applicable? |  |
| Are any of the types of organizations above expected to apply as prime contractors/recipients, or expected to be subcontractors/subrecipients? |  |

**PART 2 – JUSTIFICATION**

*(The justification must be no more than five pages. Documents that exceed the page limit will be returned for revision. Annexes will not be accepted.)*

Because the nature of each activity can be quite different, there is no fixed format for each question below. Furthermore, some questions are mandatory and others are as applicable. For the “as applicable” questions, Operating Units should exercise judgment in determining which questions to meaningfully address in this document while refraining from including boilerplate language that provides little value. Operating Units are also encouraged to include a discussion of any other items not mentioned below that they deem significant to the approver.

Mandatory:

1. How did the Operating Unit develop its approach to addressing the problem? Specifically, in a brief and succinct manner, please address: a) On what basis is this approach being taken as compared to other possible theories of change, methods of delivery, partner selection, technologies available?  b) On what basis do you believe this proposed technical approach delivers, in essence, the most outcome/sustainability per dollar provided as opposed to other approaches (whether they be pay-for-results; impact bonds; multi-lateral methods; via NGOs, the private sector, or host-government; etc.)? c) If the activity includes technical assistance (TA), why is TA needed and what tangible, measureable results will it provide? d) How and to what extent was this developed in conjunction with the host government?
2. What has been the use of evidence (e.g. evaluations) and assessments and/or analysis (e.g., political economy, cost-benefit, climate change) in designing the activity? Are any evaluations planned for this activity? If so, what type(s) of evaluation(s)? Will baselines and/or control groups be created? If not, why not given this is a very large activity?
3. How does the activity build off of past activities? If this is a follow-on award, and it has not been based on a thorough evaluation of the initial award, please explain why not. If this is a follow-on award, how will the new award demonstrate: (a) significant advances over the previous award, (b) an expanded level of results that builds on previous work, and/or (c) increased sustainability of development assistance and impact?
4. To the extent known at this stage, how is innovation being used or considered? Among myriad possibilities, this topic might include new technologies to be supported, or new interventions which will be tested via an RCT, or new program designs in which the awardees will be either working with USAID to achieve the desired outcomes or where learning and adaptation is deliberately integrated into the design, or new methods of working with the private sector or local actors, and/or new methods of integration, etc.
5. How is the activity designed to deliver results that can be achieved beyond the U.S. engagement? How, if at all, will this activity work to increase the capabilities of local partners (NGOs, businesses, and/or host governments) and/or the availability of local resources so as to one day enable the country and/or local actors to either undertake similar work or maintain the results achieved through this activity over time? Are there other elements of the activity design that are intended to deliver results that can be sustained beyond the life of this activity?
6. [For IDIQs/LWAs only] How was the size of the activity determined? What consideration was given to multiple smaller activities in which a set of smaller awards might provide more opportunity for small/local/different organizations to compete compared to one large activity? If a large activity, are there any provisions or incentives to enable small/local organizations to participate in the award? Is there any upper limit on the size of task orders or associate awards?

As Applicable:

1. Scale: What is the scale of this activity? If not country-wide, why is that inadvisable, or how would it be possible, if successful, to scale the outcomes to eventually affect the entire country or all affected areas of it? How can lessons and impact reach beyond the target country or countries?
2. Cross-Sectoral Synergies: Does this activity offer any unique synergies with work done in other sectors in the same country or location (whether by the United States, host government or other actors)? How, if at all, does the activity contribute to cross-cutting goals in a Mission CDCS or Operating Unit’s strategy or PAD -- such as democracy, rights and governance; climate change adaptation or mitigation; gender equality; peace- and state-building; human rights and/or resilience?
3. Risks and Unknowns: Are there any particular risks or unknowns (whether security risks, or risks to sustainability of development outcomes, or risks of scalability, or political economy risks or any other risks)? Submissions should only identify and discuss real risks that should be discussed by senior management as opposed to presenting “straw men” simply to respond to the topic.
4. [1-2 other topics which may be inserted by the Administrator or Assistant Administrator/Mission Director from time-to-time based on Agency, White House or Congressional priorities.]

Clear, relevant explanations will maximize the chances that the activity will be approved quickly and without additional review by the approver (Administrator/Assistant Administrator/Mission Director, depending on the size of the activity). Anticipating any questions that could be asked and covering such matters in this submission is helpful (e.g., if a follow-on, and selection of instrument type is changing from acquisition to assistance, or vice versa).

**PART 3 – APPROVAL**

**PRE-SOLICITATION APPROVAL (INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT COST ESTIMATE $50 MILLION UP TO $100 MILLION)**

**Approved:** **Disapproved:**

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Responsible AA Date Responsible AA Date

(MD if delegated by AA) (MD if delegated by AA)

Comments:

**PRE-SOLICITATION APPROVAL (INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT COST > $100 MILLION)**

**Cleared:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Responsible AA Date

Comments:

**Approved:** **Disapproved:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A/AID Date A/AID Date

Comments:

CLEARANCE PAGE FOR ACQUISITION AND ASSISTANCE REVIEW AND APPROVAL DOCUMENT FOR [Activity Name]

Clearances:

Internal B/IO Clearances (No more than four excluding AA or independent office director)

Regional Program Office (When activity will be implemented in one country or within one region)

Pillar Program Office (When the planned award includes technical activities/services)

Additional clearance for planned awards ≥ $100 million:

Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Management

Senior Procurement Executive

Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

Office of the General Counsel

Drafter: [Bureau] [Name] [Phone Extension]