Session Title: Working with USAID 101

Date: 12/1/2015

Time & Location: 11:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m. EST at the Ronald Reagan Building

Presenters:
- Jean Horton, M/OAA PDT Division Chief
- Carol Smith, COO, Winrock International
- Jennifer Simancas, Director of Contracts, Dexis Consulting Group

Purpose of the Session

Introduction to doing business with USAID

Discussion Topics

- Ratio of Assistance to Acquisitions mechanisms: has anybody broken down by sector or by bureau what the ratio is? Why do different parts of the Agency use one or the other?
    - Not exactly sure how much detail you would be looking for, but the Financial Report on USAID.gov will provide information on sub-organization program costs/program costs by program area.
    - ADS internal policy – The Federal Grants and Cooperative Agreements Act (FGCAA) defines when acquisition (procurement contract) or assistance should be used. Pursuant to the FGCAA USAID Automated Directives Chapter 304 directs staff on instrument selection: based on purpose of activity and role of USAID
- What is the difference between a Contract and a Purchase Order?
    - For the purposes of Government procurement a FAR defines a PO as a document by which the Government offers to buy supplies or services, including construction and research and development, upon specified terms and conditions, for purchases within $150K the samplified acquisition (SAP) threshold and SAP procedures. Contracts are used to procure goods and services valued above the SAP threshold.
- What are the success factors for growing as a sub?
    - Have a niche area, do what you do very well. Build relationships. Hire good people. Put systems in place to meet requirements of the regulations. Use a relationship as a prime for mentorship.
- Implications of more protests of awards? Advice for new partners going into USAID contracting?
    - Anyone who was a party to the acquisition can protest, it takes only a stamp and a letter. Protest does not necessarily mean USAID did something wrong. Implications of a protest are the delay of implementation through a stay on making the award. Advice to new partners is to read the solicitation thoroughly and respond to it. USAID hardly ever gets a sustained protest.
    - Sometimes protests are a method of intelligence gathering through
    - There has also been an increase of FOIA requests for proposals: look very carefully (if you're a sub) on where protests are originating because it can tie up key personnel
- Who receives USAID money?
    - USAI Spending.gov is the publicly accessible, searchable website mandated by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 to give the American public access to information on how their tax dollars are spent. You can research where and to whom the funding goes back to 2008.
- How did you get on prime contracts?

- o As a small subcontractor we utilized new small business day events at large primes such as Chemonics.
- Are there other events open to small business?
  - o Reach out to liaison at large businesses to share past performances and see how you can partner. Participate at USAID events, SID annual meeting
  - o There are USID small business events: David Canada is the PoC. for "Speed Dating" for large business and small business.
- How did you work with OSDBU to identify small business contracts?
  - o Talk to Mauricio Vera, get list of who the prime contractors are.
  - o You can also use USA Spending and information on the USAID website to find who is receiving money from USAID
- Is there a place on the USAID website to find policies and regulations? What about a place for CAD (Computer Aided Design) standards for drafting (design projects)?
  - o Yes, the Automatic Directive System (ADS) is public (ADS 300 series is acquisition and assistance policy) but it is internal USAID policy guidance for Staff. You can find standard provisions for assistance on ADS as well.
  - o The website also provides links to other external policy as well. Please use the information in the handouts it is a consolidation of most of the information that would be helpful to you that is housed on the website.
  - o The specific solicitation will give information on standards requirement for an acquisition for use in your response to the solicitation. The standards for architecture and engineering are context-specific, dependent on the country.