



Follow-on Brief: Stakeholder Consultation on RFSA RFA Design and Process

January 2022

Background

In April 2021, IDEAL convened representatives from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and the implementing partner community for a stakeholder consultation focusing on the design and process of Requests for Applications (RFAs) for Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs). Participants made 24 recommendations for BHA to consider for improving future RFSA RFA design and processes. [This report](#) captures the stakeholder consultation process and the resulting recommendations. IDEAL followed up with BHA six months after the consultation to understand the progress made towards addressing the recommendations. The following is a synopsis of actions taken by BHA thus far.

USAID's Action Steps

Following the stakeholder consultation, BHA convened a cross-functional team that comprised of Office of Technical Program Quality (TPQ) and Office of Humanitarian Business and Management Operations (HBMO) staff to review the recommendations and develop an action plan. BHA intends to improve key areas in the RFA design process. For example, BHA is committed to integrating the following into future RFA processes:

- Notifying potential implementing partners and stakeholders of the next countries that will have RFSA solicitations as early as possible, via mechanisms that may include but are not limited to the USAID Business Forecast and Requests for Information. This will ensure potential applicants have sufficient time to prepare and will help reduce entry barriers for new/non-historic partners. Any notification will be subject to the availability of funds and BHA policy considerations.
- Reviewing the application requirements (e.g., Theory of Change and Key Personnel) and determining whether they can be reduced or shifted to post-award requirements.
- Continuing learning efforts to gather lessons learned and experiences related to RFSA design from the implementing partner community.

Furthermore, BHA intends to incorporate elements of the stakeholder feedback into internal activity design training and orientation. The stakeholder consultation [report](#) will be provided as a reference to BHA staff for their consideration during the development of future guidance and solicitations.

A positive outcome noted by BHA was that the feedback from the stakeholder consultation process provided an opportunity to learn and understand the implementing partner community's experience in responding to RFSA solicitations. For many BHA staff, the engagement and feedback gave them a much better understanding of the challenges associated with the RFSA application requirements, as well as some of the potential solutions that might improve the quality of the applications and efficiency of the activity design process, leading to more effective RFSAs that reduce food insecurity.

Next Steps

Moving forward, BHA will continue to review and do action planning around the proposed recommendations from the stakeholder consultation. USAID encourages implementing partners to actively participate and engage in future RFSA design processes. These processes may include but are not limited to participation in activity design consultations and learning events, feedback to draft solicitations and/or Requests for Information, and engagement in solicitation briefings and relevant co-creation events. In 2022, IDEAL will host two stakeholder consultations that will convene the implementing community and BHA to continue discussing improvements to the design and implementation of RSAs. The first consultation will focus on Theory of Change while the second will be implemented in partnership with the Program Cycle Support (PCS) Associate Award and focus on the Refine and Implement period.

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