

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

RFA Title:	Multisectoral Nutrition Innovation Research Fund
RFA Number	102335-2020
RFA Issue Date:	July 1, 2020
Questions Due Date	July 9, 2020
Responses Posted Date:	July 13, 2020
From:	Strengthening Multisectoral Nutrition Programming through Implementation Science Activity (MSNP)

This document presents the responses to all questions submitted to FHI 360 in reference to the above RFA within the specified timeframe. We look forward to receiving applications by August 3, 2020 at 5:00pm Dhaka.

Question 1: Is the working area same as the previous phase of the project?

Response: Applicants may propose any geographic area(s) of Bangladesh. Applications are neither required nor expected to be linked in any way to the previous iteration of the activity. Please see the RFA for details regarding application requirements for innovative solutions to key nutrition challenges and key nutrition programming principles that must be addressed (p. 4-5 of the RFA).

Question 2: We have worked in 15 unions under 3 districts. Can we propose to work in new districts now as well as the old ones?

Response: Applicants may propose work in any geographic area of Bangladesh.

Question 3: Can we specify x number of unions we want to work in? For example, can we say we will work in 4 districts but in 15 unions?

Response: Applicants should propose the geographic scope required to complete the research envisioned and feasible within the activity time frame and budget. Applications should be sufficiently specific to support the proposed budget.

Question 4: Since we have already implemented HFP in the previous phase, can we continue with those same activities under the same implementation research question?

Response: Applications are neither required nor expected to be linked in any way to the previous iteration of the activity. Please see the RFA for details regarding application requirements for innovative solutions to key nutrition challenges and key nutrition programming principles that must be addressed (pages 4-5 of the RFA).

Question 5: Can we have multiple interventions in the same project?

Response: Applicants should propose research activities that sufficiently answer the research question put forth in the submitted application. Applicants should propose the research scope required to complete the research envisioned and feasible within the activity time frame.

Question 6: Do we need to work with the same beneficiaries? Or, can we add new ones? Or, can we work with part of the beneficiaries instead of all within a union?

Response: Applicants can propose to work with any nutritionally vulnerable target population in any geographic scope required to complete the proposed research activity envisioned and within the activity time frame. Applicants are encouraged to review the guiding Bangladesh nutrition documents mentioned in the RFA to understand vulnerable target populations.

Question 7: Will the project provide inputs to the beneficiaries? If so, can we include infrastructure support for the beneficiaries such as providing the materials for building poultry enclosure or pond preparation inputs?

Response: Applicants should consider their proposal as the complete activity, i.e., they should propose all activities required to complete the proposed research.

Question 8: We mainly targeted pregnant and lactating mothers (and their children of 2 years old). Our understanding is we can also include adolescent girls. Are we right?

Response: Applicants can propose to work with any nutritionally vulnerable target population required to complete the proposed research activity envisioned and within the activity time frame. Applicants are encouraged to review the guiding Bangladesh nutrition documents mentioned in the RFA to understand vulnerable target populations.

Question 9: [Section II C.] Key Principles of Nutrition Programming: "Potential for impact in Bangladesh" and "Replicability" - in the potential for impact, are we looking at establishing "proven" methods that worked in a controlled environment, across Bangladesh? If so, how broad is "Replicability" - as in, are we expecting similar implementation mechanics to work internationally?

Response: Applicants should propose research that has the potential to be replicated in Bangladesh beyond the geographic scope proposed in the research activity. Applicants are encouraged to review implementation research principles, which include implementation and study in a real-world context to inform replicability and scalability.

Question 10: [Section II C.] Questions to be answered in the Technical Approach Section: Sustainability & GoB ownership - do we have to argue/defend the feasibility of GoB championing the implementation strategy proposed or is simply including such an element in our proposal adequate?

Response: Applicants must include in the application technical approach how sustainability and GoB ownership are built into the proposed research.

Question 11: [Section III A.] Concept Note: We are asked to choose a "thematic area" (Section II B.) - but when "providing evidence for need of target population" we might cross over into another thematic area; in such case, should the supplementary area be explored in any specific detail or simply alluded to?

Response: Applicants are referred to GoB objectives to understand priorities. Applicants should provide sufficient, detailed rationale when proposing research with regards to the targeted population(s) and research activities.

Question 12: Page 4, Section B: "MSNP encourages applications from organizations that are working in any geographic area of Bangladesh". Is there any geographic preference e.g. urban vs. rural areas?

Response: Applicants can propose research to take place in or focus on any area of Bangladesh.

Question 13: Page 5, Section D: "Interested applicants can apply for a grant in one of the two categories". Would it be permissible for an applicant to apply for two grants: as a prime in one application and as a sub in another application?

Response: Applicants may apply for more than one grant. Yes, this is permissible.

Question 14: Do you have any geographical priority; i.e. Feed the Future (FtF) zone for intervention of the study?

Response: Applicants can propose research to take place in or focus on any area of Bangladesh.

Question 15: Can we use the evidences for the proposed activities to be implemented from the globe or it will be based on Bangladesh?

Response: The proposed implementation science research must focus on Bangladesh, evidence cited in the application can be taken from the global evidence base in a similar context and operating environment.

Question 16: In RFA page no-03 mentioned that, fund will provide grants to up to six organizations to conduct implementation research. Simultaneously, mentioned fund is to select up to ten organizations. In page no-05 also mentioned that FHI 360 anticipates awarding up to ten grants under this RFA. Our Query is that how many organizations will be awarded under this "Multisectoral Nutrition Innovation Research Fund"?

Response: Up to ten applications may be selected for award under this RFA.

Question 17: Our Query is that can any organization apply jointly with NGO/INGO for both and separately?

Response: Yes, applicants can submit more than one application under this RFA.

Question 18: The three areas are-

1. Complement existing research initiatives
2. Propose a new combined implementation and research initiative
3. Add a research element to ongoing nutrition implementation activities in Bangladesh.

In RFA page no-04 mentioned that any organization may apply for funding grant with three (3) areas. In page-05 mentioned that, applicants can apply for a grant in one of the two categories. In page-05 also mentioned, \$250,000 for applicants in Category 1 is suited for area 1 & 3. \$750,000 for applicants in Category 2 is suited for area 2.

In page no-06 mentioned, applicants may submit more than one concept note if have multiple applications.

Our Query is that, can one organization/applicant apply for 3 (three) grants categories?

Response: The three areas describe types of research that may be proposed while the two categories refer to grant categories. Yes, applicants may submit an application for more than one grant. Each application must be completed as a stand-alone application. The application(s) can focus on any one of the three areas of research, and fall within one of two grant categories, Category 1: up to \$250,000 award, Category 2: up to \$750,000 award.

Question 19: We wanted to know if it will be possible to submit the application as a consortium of three organizations?

Response: Applications from consortia are permissible under the RFA. Applications must be submitted by a clear prime applicant that maintains overall responsibility for the proposed research activity. Subawardees may be included as necessary to complete the scope of work proposed in the prime application, as feasible and within the anticipated time frame of the award (14 months). Prime applicants must be prepared to provide a clear justification and detailed budgets for any subawards proposed.

Question 20: Applications solicited for two categories and as per Sl. no. III. Application Requirements and Budget, page no. 6 of RFA document, "Applicants may submit more than one concept note if they have multiple applications that meet all criteria specified in the Technical Approach. Each concept note must follow all requirements outlined below....." If we understand the above correctly, can organizations submit multiple applications for both categories as mentioned in the RFP document. Please confirm. Also, confirm is there any restriction of number of concept note submitted against each category by one PI.

Response: Applicants may submit more than one application in response to this RFA. There is no restriction to the number of applications submitted; however, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit the best approaches that they would like to put forth for implementation science research that contributes to the evidence-base for policy-makers in Bangladesh. Each

application must be completed as a stand-alone application. For example, if an organization submits one concept for category 1, this is one full application. If an organization chooses to submit a second concept note for category 2, this is one additional stand-alone full application that must be submitted. As detailed in the RFA, each application will be individually scored in line with the evaluation criteria and must be technically sound and feasible to move forward to pre-award.

Question 21: What does it mean by 'implementation research activities' mentioned in the selection criteria point 3 in the page 10?

Response: As per page 5 of the RFA: *Implementation science and its defined component, implementation research, supports public health stakeholders to take proven interventions and implement them in the real world.* Implementation research activities in the selection criteria refer to those put forth by the applicant in the proposal. Applicants will be evaluated on their capability and past relevant experience to complete the proposed research activities in the application(s) put forth for this RFA.

Question 22: What types of evidence will be required as previous experience mentioned in the selection criteria point 3?

Response: The applicant should include facts on the points below (as detailed in the RFA) related to the organization's ability to implement a similar award, based on past experience. Evidence can include text narrative that describes the previous experience or research activities. Citations to published research or conference presentations may also be included to demonstrate previous experience. FHI 360 will conduct due diligence to gather additional documentation on organizational experience and capabilities as necessary in the pre-award stage. For application submission, the complete reference contact details are also required.

- *Evidence of applicant's previous experience with implementation research and nutritional programming in Bangladesh, and contributions to the evidence base.*
- *Evidence that the organization possesses a credible reputation and adequate experience managing similar awards of a similar scope and size (\$250,000 for applicants in Category 1 and \$750,000 for applicants in Category 2).*
- *Demonstrated ability to successfully complete the implementation research activities proposed within a similar timeframe.*
- *Reference results.*

Question 23: Do we need to submit pre-teaming agreement if we want to hire external consultant or firm or university faculty in implementing this project?

Response: If applicants are proposing consultants or partners/subawardees, documentation on pre-teaming is not required; however, FHI 360 encourages applicants to demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed timeline of the application, as noted in the RFA, and documentation (as an annex) that confirms the partners commitment to completing the activity within the specified timeframe will be considered if submitted. Per the RFA instructions (page 7), each

personnel member or consultant proposed to complete work under the award must have a signed Biodata form (Attachment C in the application materials) included as an annex to the application.

Question 24: I would like to clarify whether the University of Sydney is eligible to apply for this RFP? We work with implementing partners in Bangladesh but are uncertain as to whether we can apply as USYD is a government institution.

Response: Universities are eligible to submit applications for an award; however, applicants must be legally registered or otherwise authorized to conduct business in Bangladesh to be considered eligible to receive an award (page 8).