



Call for Proposals: Sustainable Landscape Program Indonesia

Questions and Answers (as of 20.07.2022)

Question 1: Can the same private company be part of several proposals submitted to SECO? Or asked differently: Can one organisation participate in multiple proposals?

Answer 1: Yes, that is possible. However, a company and/or organization can only be the lead implementing agency for one proposal or project. So, it is for instance possible to act as lead implementing agency in one proposal and still be part of another proposal if in this case the organization / company is not in the lead.

Question 2: In the guidelines, the terms "consortium member", "sub-contractor" and "partner" are used. Kindly provide a definition for each term, for the purpose of this proposal.

Answer 2: We refrain from providing sharp definitions and are open for different forms / arrangements of collaboration. We do not prioritize one arrangement modality over another. The form of collaboration has to be convincing and serve the purpose of the project. It is important for SECO to have one clear contact partner (organization / company), with which SECO will enter a contractual relation.

Question 3: Regarding SC3, the guidelines ask for "written evidence". Do you have any specific kind of documentation in mind for this, or is it sufficient to state human resource details etc. in the narrative section of the proposal?

Answer 3: We do not have any specific kind of documentation we require. Yes, it is sufficient to provide the information in the narrative section (or in form of an Annex) of the proposal.

Question 4: Can SC8 and SC9 be combined in one document?

Answer 4: Yes, absolutely. It is possible to combine SC8 and SC9 in one document. We do not expect comprehensive written documentation for SC8 and SC9, neither for SC11 and SC12. A simple confirmation of compliance with these SC is sufficient. This could for example be done in one document (max. on 1 page) jointly providing a declaration of confirmation for SC8, SC9, SC11 and SC12. In case of non-confirmation of one SC present your explanation.

Question 5: SC11 and SC12 are evidenced by "aforementioned written confirmations". Does this mean that SC11 and SC12 are fulfilled by providing SC1 to SC10, or that similar written documentation to SC1 to SC10 needs to be submitted for SC11 and SC12?

Answer 5: The word "aforementioned" is confusing. Apologizes for that. You may ignore it. SC11 and SC12 are independent of SC1 to SC10. For SC11 and SC12 we do not expect any comprehensive written documentation. A simple confirmation of compliance with these SC is sufficient.

Question 6: For SC11 and SC12, do you have a specific Indonesian or Swiss legal instrument in mind that we should reference?

Answer 6: No. We do not have any specific legal instrument in mind. A simple confirmation of compliance with these SC is sufficient. This could for example be done in one document (max. on 1 page) jointly providing a declaration of confirmation for SC8, SC9, SC11 and SC12. In case of non-confirmation of one SC present your explanation.

Question 7: Can one landscape include multiple adjacent districts or does one landscape mean one district?

Answer 7: A landscape can include multiple adjacent districts.

Question 8: Jurisdictional approach: Does the program refer to the provincial or the district level?

Answer 8: It is expected that the landscape projects (as further described in Chapter 2.2.1) are implemented at the district level. A landscape can include multiple adjacent districts. Besides active engagement from the district(s) government, if possible the provincial government(s) are ideally also included / associated to the landscape work.

Question 9: Co-Funding 50%: Does the applicants' program require secured funding commitments from other sources at the time of proposal – or can the co-funding be secured and tapped-in during the program roll-out? [e.g. within the first 18 months of the program]

Answer 9: The more secure (and the higher the degree of certainty) of the funding commitments from other sources are, the more points can be given for Award Criteria 5 (Financial Proposal). It is, however, also possible that co-funding will be secured only during the program roll-out. The sooner such funding can be secured the better.

Question 10: Is it compulsory to have palm oil included?

Answer 10: Yes. As defined in SC5, a landscape eligible under this Program must include palm oil.

Question 11: Are seascapes also eligible as landscapes?

Answer 11: Seascapes are also eligible, as long as palm oil is produced and sourced in a seascape.

Question 12: Is there a maximum ICR allowed by SECO? (Project overhead cost)

Answer 12: No, there is no maximum for an ICR (Interest Coverage Ratio) defined.

With regards to the project overhead costs; in the Award Criteria 5 (Financial Proposal) we will assess amongst others the economic efficiency of the financial proposal and the realistic estimation of costs and whether the budget allocation to various lines of action is convincing and appropriate. There is no maximum for the overhead costs defined.

Question 13: It is mentioned in the Call for Proposal that the applicant must reveal additional financing as part of the financial reporting to SECO. Does the “additional financing (cash contribution and in-kind contribution)” part also have to comply with the underlying Grant Policy of SECO? Or is compliance with our organisations SOP's and compliance policy considered sufficient?

Answer 13: Only organizations and/or companies that receive grant funding from SECO have to comply with SECO rules and regulations.

Question 14: Page 17 AC 4.1. “Qualification and expertise of the proposed staff in charge of implementing the project”: What is intended by “Track record of the people in charge of the implementation” and what kind of supporting document should be provided?

The bullet point “track record of the people in charge of implementation” (page 17 AC 4.1.) is confusing. Apologizes for that. You may ignore it. Our assumption is that CVs, and for example letters of recommendation of the proposed staff will provide us information on their qualification and expertise. We are open for other supporting documentation that could provide this information.

Question 15: Would it be possible to receive the budget template in Excel format?

Answer 15: Yes. The budget template (Annex 3) in Excel format has been uploaded as a separate document.

Question 16: Page 19, 4.3. “Contents of the Proposal”: Is Chapter 5 “Financial Proposal” included in the 30-page limit of the proposal?

Answer 16: No. The Financial Proposal does not count.

Question 17: Has SECO a MoU for this project with the Indonesian government? If so, has it already been signed or when is it expected to be signed?

Answer 17: SECO is in the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indonesian Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs (CMEA), the program’s main national Government counterpart. We are working towards having the signature still this year.

Question 18: In terms of the budget, how much detail needs to be included? The budget template provided asks for a breakdown of costs by “foundational element” and operationalization activities. Can we provide a total cost for each element/activity or do you require a breakdown of all costs involved with each foundation element or operationalization activity (e.g. staff, travel etc.)?

Answer 18: We would appreciate if a breakdown of all costs involved can be provided. Knowing the different activities and their costs (e.g. staff, travel, consultants’ daily rates etc.) assists us in assessing the economic efficiency and the realistic estimation of the Financial Proposal (AC5).

Question 19: For overheads/management costs, do you have set rate that can be included in the budget?

Answer 19: We do not have a set rate for overheads / management costs, neither do we have a specific definition nor a maximum for the overhead costs defined. In the Award Criteria 5 (Financial Proposal) we will assess amongst others the economic efficiency of the financial proposal and the realistic estimation of costs and whether the budget allocation to various lines of action is convincing and appropriate.

Question 20: Can we include/build on a current project and use this funding as co-financing?

Answer 20: Yes, this is possible as long as the “other” project(s) work(s) towards the same objectives and are well aligned or can even be merged. It is, however, not possible to regard other sources of Swiss Government funding as co-financing. Moreover, funding that can be mobilized from the private sector or the Indonesian (local) Government will be valued higher than funding from other donors.

Question 21: Is there a limit on the number of co-financing partners?

Answer 21: No, there is no limit.

Question 22: What is the solution if we do have co-financing / additional financing already but cannot reveal great details due to legally binding confidentiality restrictions?

Answer 22: In order to assess the sources of the co-financing and the due-diligence process, we require transparency regarding the company and/or organization providing the co-financing. We will treat the information confidentially and can ensure a secure way of transmitting the file(s) if requested.

Question 23: Do all subcontractors and/or consortium members need to be named / identified in the bid?

Answer 23: Yes. SECO requires that all known subcontractors and/or consortium members are named in the bid. Given that SECO’s grant money qualifies as official development assistance (ODA) from the Swiss Government, full transparency is of importance.

Question 24: Please could you confirm that the submission process is 30-page proposal + all annexes via email only, and no supplier registration / portal registration etc is required?

Answer 24: Yes. This is correct. 30-pages for the proposal is the maximum. In addition to the proposal all annexes as deemed necessary. The proposal and annexes should all be sent in PDF format to info.wehu.cooperation@seco.admin.ch. If for any reasons this is not feasible for an applicant, the applicant should get in touch with SECO. We will then look for an alternative way how the proposal can best be submitted. There is no supplier registration or portal registration required.

Question 25: Is there any additional budget guidance / parameters for fees that applicants should be aware of (e.g., restrictions on profit, overhead, actual salaries vs cost rates etc)?

Answer 25: There is no specific additional budget guidance in terms of fixed fees, rates, ratios, overhead or salary costs that bidders have to comply with. In order to assess the Financial Proposal (AC 5), we expect to see a degree of granularity that allows us to well understand the costing of the proposed work.

Question 26: Would a reduction in full fees for a service provided as part of the programme be considered an in-kind contribution?

Answer 26: Yes, that would be considered as an-kind contribution.

Question 27: Is there a preferred form for the proposal or will you accept both a pdf of a word document or a pdf of a powerpoint document (within the 30pg + annex limit)

Answer 27: We would prefer to receive the proposal and annexes in form of a PDF. If deemed useful, we are open to receive some elements of the proposal and/or annexes in form of a powerpoint document.

Question 28: What is the grant reporting process for the SLPI if we get selected (e.g., reporting time periods/ frequency, type of information/operational/financial reporting deliverables that implementing organizations would need to provide SECO)? Do you have any standardized reporting templates?

Answer 28: For SECO co-financed projects we require an annual report and an annual financial report, covering the calendar year. Moreover, a work-plan for the following year will also have to be prepared. In addition, semi-annually we require project updates – either in form of a few powerpoint slides and/or a short report. With regards to the content, please note that SECO's reporting template has been uploaded as a separate word document. This template serves as a guidance, and it is also possible to use another template / structure for the progress report. Further details can be clarified and agreed upon in the contractual agreement.

Question 29: In your request for proposals, you mentioned that the project may be subject to audits by SECO or the Swiss Federal Audit Office. Building on this, we were wondering if applicants were also required to include an external audit (which frequency?) within the project design and budget it accordingly.

Answer 29: If an organization / company produces statutory annual reports (according to the ISA-norm and with an unmodified opinion), SECO does not require specific project audits. So, if your organization / company produces statutory annual reports already, no additional costs for auditing will have to be budgeted for. If, however, your organization or company does not produce statutory annual reports according to the ISA-norm, then it has to be budgeted for annual external project audits.

Moreover, it is possible for SECO or the Swiss Federal Audit Office to require an external project audit at any time. The expenses for such a special audit would be covered by the Swiss Government.

Question 30: We read that the financial proposal is structured in three main categories. Are there any requirements/limits on the amounts/percentages we should allocate for each category? Could you provide some insights regarding what should be included within the Foundational Elements (FE) budget line?

Answer 30: There are no requirement or limits for how much is allocated to the different categories. This depends on the bidder's approach and the specifics of a landscape. Chapter 2.2.1 provides a description of what we understand as "Foundational Elements". We refrain from providing further insights on what should be included, since we regard this to be task of the bidders. We are looking for convincing, innovative proposals on how the landscape project could look like. The approach and activities described in the proposal will assumingly be reflected (activity based budgeting) in the financial proposal.

Question 31: If the program was to be approved by SECO, company XY would seek to conduct a field assessment in the region of implementation to refine the project design and preliminary roadmap using participatory approaches with the local communities and supply chain stakeholders. Would this field assessment prior to project implementation be an eligible cost? If so, under which budget category should we include it?

Answer 31: Yes, such a field assessment (or "inception phase" as we often call it) would be an eligible cost. Such an "inception phase" could for instance be included as a separate budget line or as a separate activity under Management Costs.

Question 32: Company XY is a social enterprise, committed to social and environmental impact. However, as a for-profit organization with shareholders, we have to include overhead and margins in our pricing structure in order to ensure long term sustainability of the company and our ability to invest in the growth of future projects with impact. Does SECO have a specific policy related to overheads and margins in proposed budgets that we should be working within?

Answer 32: No, SECO does not have a specific policy related to overheads and margins. We appreciate full transparency in the budgeting. SECO has experience in engaging with the private sector and is aware of the specifics of private sector players.