

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR REGIONAL ACQUISITION & ASSISTANCE SPECIALIST, RAAO/USAID/EAST AFRICA**

### **BASIC FUNCTION OF POSITION:**

The incumbent is a professional Acquisition & Assistance Specialist and has responsibility for managing the procurement portfolio of a large program of the East Africa Region. As the principal assistant to a lead contracting officer with responsibility for the entire East Africa Region programs, the incumbent shall be required to perform independently in a program requiring complicated and sensitive contracting operations. In this portfolio, most of the acquisition and assistance processes involve complex, multi-million dollar contracts, grants and cooperative agreements, many of which are structured with a prime contractor/grantee having two or more subcontractors/sub-grantees and requiring substantial contract administration. The Regional A&A Specialist will be required to apply a broad range of highly specialized acquisition and assistance functions. The Regional A&A Specialist plays a key role in negotiating, administering, and modifying various types of contracts for the acquisition of services, equipment, supplies, materials, and other needs for projects having a strong contracting orientation. While not a warranted Contracting Officer, the incumbent must have developed specialized procurement knowledge by completing at least FAC Level II certification.

### **MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Major duties and responsibilities (100% of the time) are comprised as follows:

- a. Pre- award duties and responsibilities (60%)
- b. Post-Award duties and responsibilities. (40%)

The Regional A&A Specialist is responsible for managing the procurement portfolio and performing acquisition and assistance functions for multiple missions in the East Africa Region. Transaction levels for both acquisition and assistance will typically range in size from \$50,000 to \$300,000,000 in estimated value per transaction. All acquisition and assistance methods are employed, including full and open competitive action done through negotiation or sealed bidding, task orders, delivery orders against established indefinite quantity contracts, interagency agreements, cooperative agreements, grants, and simplified acquisition. Supervision is provided by a Lead Contracting Officer in RAAO. As a fully empowered representative of Regional Contracting Office, the Regional A&A Specialist is a CORE team member on multiple Mission Strategic Objective (SO) teams covering different development sectors, and advises Mission and SO team management on the interpretation and application of acquisition policies and regulations to specific acquisition and assistance activities, both operational and project support. The incumbent advises on the need for source origin waivers and non-competitive waivers, and ensures that procurements under each of the SO teams comply with 50/50 shipping, insurance, source and origin and similar USAID regulations and conditions are observed.

Sealed bidding is not often used, but the Specialist is sufficiently familiar with the procedure to know it is appropriate and know how it differs from negotiated procurement, because it is

expected that more construction contracts will be executed in the region. The Specialist should also be familiar with Simplified Acquisition Procedures.

Both cost reimbursement and fixed price contracts are used routinely and the incumbent fully understands and applies the legal and procedural differences between them.

The incumbent is familiar with the procedures applicable to the acquisition of goods. The Regional A&A Specialist duties involve the procurement of personal and non-personal services. The work load involves the award of delivery orders against indefinite quantity contracts (and the award of those basic indefinite quantity contracts themselves), proportionately much more consists of unique, one time purchase of technical assistance, studies, workshops, training, logistical support arrangements, and direct provision of services in a broad range of program areas.

The incumbent will work collaboratively with SO team members/activity managers to define contractible, performance-based statements of work or program descriptions incorporating results orientation. Moreover, the incumbent shall prepare all required supporting documentation and manage the entire effort through to completion and closeout of the award. The incumbent must be able to provide authoritative technical guidance to Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives (COTRs) in the performance of their procurement-related responsibilities.

A comprehensive knowledge of the Acquisition and Assistance process is required since the incumbent is responsible for training Mission staff and partners. The Specialist must possess a clear understanding of the differences between acquisition and assistance so that he/she can effectively and accurately represent U.S. Government (USG) policy not only to outside organizations but also to programmatic and administrative officials within USAID/East Africa. The Regional A&A Specialist performs Temporary Duty (TDY) assignments to missions within the East Africa Region. Moreover, the Specialist must be able to discuss and assess procurement issues with a degree of expertise sufficient to form the basis of well-founded recommendations to the Cognizant Contracting Officer.

As a Regional A&A Specialist, the incumbent shall also be responsible for on-the-job training of entry-level Foreign Service National (FSN) acquisition specialists in acquisition and assistance procedures. He/she will also assist these specialists in completing Performance Management Certification Program (PMCP) forms and advising the Contracting Officer of the tasks that still need to be completed in order to satisfy PMCP requirements. The incumbent is also expected to guide, motivate, train, and supervise for actions delegated to procurement administrative assistants in handling and completing non-complex procurement actions such as no-cost extensions, incremental funding, etc.

**a. Pre-Award Duties and Responsibilities (60%)**

Participates in procurement planning functions that may include reviewing strategic objective agreements/results frameworks, participating in program planning meetings, and identifying components of the plans that are accomplished through the participation of outside provider organizations.

Advise SO team members/activity managers of the selection of appropriate acquisition and assistance mechanisms for accomplishing Agency programmatic objectives; identify acquisition issues/potential problems requiring guidance from the Regional Legal Advisor; make choice of instrument recommendations to the Cognizant Contracting Officer.

Collaborate with SO team members/activity managers in the preparation of advance procurement planning documents for each proposed action which reflect the steps required by regulation or policy in the selected mechanism's process, realistic estimates of the time required to accomplish each step and a commitment to maintain the agreed-upon schedule. Keep the Contracting Officer informed of anticipated workload demands.

Assist SO team members/activity managers in the preparation of required descriptions of the proposed activity including, as appropriate, statements of work, specifications, program descriptions, program announcements, evaluation criteria, etc. Such assistance may take the form of participation in the original drafting process, review of drafts, training in the preparation of such documents or on USAID regulations as contained in AIDAR, ADS, and AAPDs, and in the Federal Regulations under FAR, CFR, OMB circulars, Executive Directives, and the statutes. Such documents must adequately reflect and protect USG interests in the accomplishment of the programmatic objectives and comply with pertinent statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements.

Review incoming requisition documents to ensure compliance with all Agency and Mission requirements and appropriateness for the proposed action. Ensure proper recording and processing of requisitions in the Agency's GLObal Acquisition and Assistance System (GLAAS).

Prepares all required pre-solicitation documents, including determinations and findings, synopses, justifications, IFBs, RFPs, and/or RFAs. When necessary, he/she conducts pre-award conferences with potential offerors. Advise the Contracting Officer concerning such matters as the adequacy and choice of evaluation criteria, type of contract, the extent and mechanisms of advertising, the appropriateness of the time permitted for bid or pre-proposal preparation, the need for a pre-solicitation or pre-proposal conference, and any special terms and conditions that may be required, particularly if their use would require a deviation from governing regulations. Most importantly, the incumbent shall ensure that procurement integrity is upheld and maintained for all actions and by all members who participate in the evaluation of those actions.

Prepare solicitation/application documents which reflect Federal Grant Law and USAID regulations governing assistance instruments or federal acquisition and USAID regulations, policies and procedures, as applicable. Issue necessary amendments to answer questions concerning such topics as specification changes, language ambiguities, clarification of contract clauses, etc.

Controls the flow of information from the Mission to the offering community during the proposal preparation stage, ensuring that all requirements of full and open competition are met and that the integrity of the procurement process is upheld.

Does evaluation and in-depth Cost Analysis of bids/offers. The incumbent evaluates bids and offers for responsiveness to the particular solicitation, and documents the relative strengths and deficiencies of each proposal. Guides the SO/project teams in best practices of 'best value' selection, and performance-based technical approaches. Obtains reports and references, ensuring that offerors' past performance has been relevant and of a high quality.

Ensures that offerors have adequate management, accounting, personnel, and procurement systems, corporate leadership, available resources, and quality control to satisfactorily carry out contracts. Requests audit reports or pre-award surveys from the Office of the Inspector General, Defense Contract Audit, Agency, and obtains clearance from the U.S. Department of Labor and/or the Small Business Administration on a variety of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and workplace issues.

Analyzes cost proposals and technical scores from the technical evaluation committee, and, based on this analysis, establishes the competitive range and presents documentation for signature to the Contracting Officer.

Performs extensive analysis on cost issues with consideration to economic conditions and factors of material, labor, and transportation costs. Closely examines cost and pricing data submitted by offerors to substantiate direct and indirect costs and profit. Determines reasonableness of costs submitted. Ensures that data provided is consistent with all USAID requirements on eligible geographic sources, and that salary structures are consistent with Agency policies. Identifies circumstances that will call for a waiver.

Coordinates issues of technical weakness and excessive costs with the project team prior to the commencement of negotiations. Clarifies, and, as necessary, instructs the members of the project team, host country counterparts, and other Mission staff on the USAID procurement process as implemented in the Agency.

Formulates the negotiation strategy, identifies areas subject to negotiation, and consults with technical specialists concerning data submitted by offerors. Conducts extensive negotiations on cost and technical issues prior to contract award, presenting USAID issues of concern and persuades offerors to upgrade technical deficiencies and reduce costs where appropriate. Requests submission of Revised Final Proposal and prepares appropriate contract or grant instruments for award. Coordinates last stages of selection with the project and technical evaluation team(s). Similarly, he/she negotiates and awards grants and cooperative agreements with U.S.-based and indigenous PVOs and NGOs, colleges and universities and other non-profit organizations. Analyzes transactions to ensure compliance with Agency cost-sharing and registration policies, as well as local laws governing status. He/she coordinates contracting activities with other government agencies, frequently negotiating and drafting interagency agreements.

This is a complex process requiring a high degree of analysis among and between competing and often conflicting regulations and objectives, where the incumbent independently exercises judgment involving multi-million dollar issues with significant political and legal implications. Controls the flow of information from the Mission to the offering community during the proposal

preparation stage, ensuring that all requirements of full and open competition are met and that the integrity of the procurement process is upheld.

Represents the Contracting Officer in the evaluation of bids and proposals, ensuring compliance with all published evaluation criteria and factors, and Federal and USAID regulations, policies and procedures. Provide instructions to the technical evaluation committee regarding rules and procedures in the conduct of a competitive source selection. Obtains pricing assistance as necessary and available, and performs cost or price analysis as appropriate, and documents findings. Advises the Contracting Officer concerning the make up of the competitive range in competitively negotiated acquisitions.

Prepares pre-negotiation strategies which address price, profit/fee, and term's special conditions, as applicable; prepares requests for confirmation of the results of the negotiation, including requests for final revised proposals or revised program descriptions/financial plans, as applicable. Documents the results of the negotiations and makes responsibility determinations, which may require either performing or requesting pre-award, financial and program management reviews as circumstances dictate or permit.

Prepares award document that reflect the results of all discussions, any special needs of the project, and applicable terms and conditions.

Distributes award documents, ensures proper recording of the obligation by the Controller's Office, provides all required notifications to unsuccessful bidders, offerors, and USG award publication points, arranges debriefings and ensured proper data entry and processing into USAID acquisition and assistance management systems.

**b. Post-Award Duties and Responsibilities (40%)**

Responsible for contract administration sufficient to ensure that the terms and conditions of the award are met and that the contractor meets delivery schedules and/or performance milestones in a timely manner to achieve Mission objectives. Organizes and conducts post-award conferences to include orientation meeting with the selected contractor and all cognizant Mission support offices, beneficiaries, and relevant implementer employees to ensure that mobilization efforts will be conducted efficiently and that all terms and conditions of procurement instruments are clear and well-understood by all parties. Provides support debriefing to unsuccessful offerors. Contract administration includes, among other tasks, site visits, change orders, drafting correspondence, initiating contractor performance evaluations, monitoring of reporting requirements, advising COTRs and contractors on their administration responsibilities, etc.

Advises the Contracting Officer and prepares appropriate documentation on any issues that may arise in the course of performance, including changes, disputes, work stoppages, problems with Government Furnished Property or Materials, changes in scope or direction, replacement of key personnel, failure to make acceptable progress, default, payment problems, or unacceptable performance/deliveries. Recommends appropriate action on all required prior approvals for the Contracting Officer prior approval.

Manages the non-competing Continuation Application process for Assistance Instruments, including evaluating recipient performance, analyzing subsequent year work plans, and negotiating continuation funding.

### **Analysis & Resolution of Audits Reports and Findings**

The incumbent analyses and takes action to resolve findings contained in audit reports, such as cost items questioned or unresolved. The incumbent supports recommendations with detailed analysis of each cost, category or element as necessary. Prepares necessary documents to resolve all aspects of audits, questioned or ineligible costs, and accounting issues. Presents documentation to the Contracting Officer for signature. Reviews completed (after full performance) official contract files to determine that all contractual actions are satisfied and that there are no pending administrative actions to be resolved. Ensures that all file documents are signed, that there are no litigation actions pending, and that the contract is complete in every respect and ready to be closed. Ensures that contracts nearing annual anniversaries or final completion have a performance report filled out by the Technical Officer, and submits the report to the contractor for comment.

### **Supplemental Position Information**

RAAO is responsible for the contracting matters for USAID/East Africa. The current portfolio consists of 400 plus contracts, grants, and agreements with a current annual budget of \$1 billion plus. Up until Fiscal Year 2003, RAAO has been providing procurement support to 8 Missions of Kenya, Tanzania, Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Congo, Burundi, and Rwanda, and is taking up 2 additional Missions of Djibouti and Uganda. Due to the increased interest of USG in the East Africa region of combating terrorism and fostering and establishing peace in Sudan and Somalia, the annual budget is expected to increase significantly. RAAO's scope of work as of FY 2007 is 12 East Africa countries. Presently, the Mission has over a dozen acquisition specialists. This Regional A&A Specialist position is aimed at also training locally and regionally hired FSN acquisition specialists up to the required qualification and performance level.

### **REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:**

***Any application that does not meet the minimum requirements stated below will not be evaluated. Only short listed applicants will be contacted. If you have not been contacted within one month from the closing date of this advertisement, please consider your application unsuccessful.***

***Note: The three evaluation factors, i.e., prior work experience, knowledge, and skills and abilities are of approximately equal weight relative to each other.***

**a. Education:**

Entry level FSN 9

A two-year diploma in business administration, political science, international relations, procurement, supply chain management, social science, or a related field, is required. Specialized training in USG acquisition is desirable, but can occur after employment.

Entry level FSN 10

A bachelor's degree in business administration, political science, international relations, international procurement, supply chain management, social science, or a related field, is required. Specialized training in USG acquisition is desirable, but can occur after employment.

Entry level FSN 11

A master's degree in business administration, political science, international relations, international procurement, supply chain management, social science, or a related field, is required. Specialized training in USG acquisition is desirable, but can occur after employment.

**b. Prior Work Experience:** Minimum 4 years (FSN 9), 5 years (FSN 10), and 6 years (FSN 11) of progressively responsible, professional experience. At least 2, preferably 3, years of them must be in procurement in a professional capacity with USG or related/similar organization. In addition, at least 1, preferably 2, years of management experience are required, involving such tasks as setting long-term objectives, developing related long-term work plans, budgets, etc.

**c. Post Entry Training:** The incumbent must have developed specialized procurement knowledge by completing FAC-C Level II certification.

**d. Language Proficiency:** (Level IV) (fluent) in spoken & written English and fluent Kiswahili required.

**e. Knowledge:** A very good knowledge of Federal and Agency procurement regulations and procedures and highly specialized knowledge of:

(i) analyzing and organizing large amounts of detailed information, such as cost factors and contract types, as relates to requirements;

(ii) ability to deal effectively with intermediate to high level representatives of U.S., interregional, international and local business and industry, the 10 missions, and the host government;

(iii) results-based assistance instruments (grants and cooperative agreements) and how these documents can help fulfill mission objectives. Good knowledge of market conditions, the political context and social conditions impacting USG procurement actions. Knowledge of the organization's interested in, and capable of performing USG contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, etc. Knowledge of the concerns from public voluntary organizations (PVOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 8(a) firms, small businesses, and large businesses;

(iv) a highly specialized knowledge in all phases of the procurement processes leading to award, particularly soliciting, reviewing of applications or proposals and contract award and administration procedures, providing technical advice in complex contractual arrangements to USAID client missions and host country officials; knowledge of program, project, or other

commodity requirements. Knowledge of local market conditions and costs. Knowledge of U.S Federal and Agency acquisitions a plus. Ability to work independently.

**f. Skills and Abilities:** Excellent negotiation skills to negotiate multi-year, multi-million dollar contracts and other instruments. Excellent analytical skills and sound judgment to select appropriate acquisition or assistance instrument types, to evaluate bids or offers and determine the responsibility of contractors on the basis of competition, historical costs, reports, etc., and to conduct cost and price analysis. Excellent writing skills to draft various procurement-related documents and to develop sound solicitation and instrument documents. Excellent interpersonal skills to deal effectively with various officials, usually with highly divergent points of view, diplomatic and tactful in setting forth ideas, constraints, or courses of action.

**POSITION ELEMENTS:**

**a. Supervision Received:** Receives general guidance from a U.S. Direct Hire Contracting Officer, who gives assignments in terms of procurement actions to be performed. The incumbent plans and implements the procurement approach and interacts with cognizant SO and project teams, providing policy and strategic guidance on how to best fulfill the requirements. He/she initiates any necessary coordination with the accounting and legal offices staff of other agencies, and with contractors, to obtain supporting documentation and resolve any conflicts including disagreements over technical descriptions, elements of cost, legal matters, and performance problems. The incumbent keeps the supervisor updated via periodic status reports and verbal briefings. Completed work is reviewed from the overall standpoint of providing a viable procurement approach for meeting established objectives, or for results achieved in meeting delivery schedules and contractual conditions.

**b. Available Guidelines:** USAID ADS, Administrative Notices, Mission Orders, Federal and AID Acquisition Regulations (FAAR), CONet, AAPDS, PEBs and the ability to work with minimum or no supervision.

**c. Exercise of Judgment:** The employee must exercise independent judgment and initiative as the sole procurement representative on the SO team or the project team to: 1) identify those aspects of regulations which apply to the particular procurement; 2) develop justification for adopting a procurement posture; 3) tailors provisions to meet special requirements and develop criteria or justifications involving contractors claims; 4) to recommend the selection of winning contractors or grantees. He/she also determines and uses special clauses, clearances, and determinations applicable to certain procurements. The exceptional exercise of judgment and discretion is required given the sensitive nature of contracting procedures.

**d. Authority to Make Commitments:** The incumbent has considerable latitude in dealing with problems arising during the pre-awards or post-award phases of the procurement action, and to independently manage full and open competitive transactions from inception to completion. He/she makes decisions on the basis of analysis of alternatives, adaptation, or modification of procedures, or resolution of incomplete or conflicting technical or contractor data. The Contracting Officer relies heavily on the decision of a Regional A&A Specialist to make the appropriate decisions. Decisions that are unsound result in legal conflicts and put

the Agency at risk. The incumbent is authorized to distribute official documents including, solicitation documents, contract modifications, etc to authorized personnel and client missions. However, he/she has no authority to bind the USG to contract or order any goods or services.

**e. Nature, Level and Purpose of Contacts:** Contacts include large and small U.S. business firms, other local national and international business firms, bilateral government officials, U.N agencies, PVOs, inter-governmental bodies, public international organizations (PIOs), and the Bureau's Office in USAID/Washington. Typical contacts with contractors include officers and technical experts representing these firms. The incumbent works with technical staff, attorneys, auditors, and others from within the Agency or other agencies. The contacts occur in moderately unstructured settings, with the roles and authorities being developed during the negotiation or discussion. The purpose of contacts with external groups is to conduct conferences, share USAID policies on recent procurement innovations, techniques and reforms, to conduct fact finding, negotiate contracts, and modifications, and resolve numerous problems during contract administration. Contacts at host country counterpart institutions are to represent USAID overseeing briefing sessions by potential contractors, and ensure that the counterpart employees understand USAID procurement processes fully.

**f. Supervision Exercised:** The incumbent does not have supervisory responsibility, but provides guidance and delegates work to junior acquisition staff.

**g. Time Required to Perform Full Range of Duties after Entry into the Position:** One year

**NOTE:**

**Current USG employees must meet the "time-in-grade" requirement of 52 weeks in the previous lower grade to qualify for the position at the level in this vacancy announcement or be at the same grade for which the position is being recruited. Applicants who meet the job qualification requirements but not the "time-in-grade" requirement may be considered for the position but will have to abide by the in-grade requirement prior to being considered for the next higher grade. In addition the employee must have received a Personnel Evaluation Report (PER) during the most recent rating period which clearly indicated the employee is ready and capable of assuming a more responsible position.**

**HOW TO APPLY**

Current USG employees should submit a memo explaining their qualifications against our requirements, updated resume/curriculum vitae, copies of all relevant academic certificates, and the most recent Performance Evaluation Report (PER) to the Human Resources Office stating their interest.

External applicants must submit an application letter explaining their qualifications against our requirements, updated resume/curriculum vitae, and copies of all relevant academic certificates to the Human Resources Office. Please note that this position has been advertised in the *Daily Nation* and *Standard* newspapers.

All applications must reach the USAID Human Resources Office, Ground Floor, by COB as stated in Newspaper advertisement.

USAID Human Resources Office, Ground Floor, P.O. Box 629, Village Market 00621, Nairobi  
Re: Regional Acquisition & Assistance Specialist, RAAO/USAID/East Africa