

Request for Concept Notes

Multi-year emergency program impact evaluation in South Sudan

Questions Received:

1. Can USAID confirm when South Sudan MYE awards are expected to start and that evaluation teams will be able to consult with implementers while designing the baseline? **USAID intends to issue the awards by September 2020 and is hoping to have the evaluation team in place about the same time. Implementers are expected to coordinate with USAID and the evaluation team in co-creating the baseline design.**
2. The scope of the impact evaluation seems to be broad and comprehensive, while the funds allocated for the evaluation seem to be small when considering the desire for counterfactuals across baseline and final evaluations. Can USAID clarify what aspects of an impact evaluation design or which research questions should be prioritized? **The scope of the evaluation, including the priority evaluation questions will be co-designed by USAID, Implementing Partner, and the selected evaluation team, during the co-creation stage once the MYE activities are awarded.**
3. Can USAID please indicate how they expect ethical issues surrounding having a control group (implicit with impact evaluations) in a humanitarian context to be addressed in the intervention, if the desirable research design aims to be experimental or quasi-experimental? **Given the high level of need in South Sudan, the resources available unfortunately are not sufficient to be able to serve all individuals in need of assistance. Activities inherently have to select who will be able to participate in activities and who will not be reached. USAID expects that there will be more individuals in/around the implementation area that meet the targeting criteria than can be reached by the activity and that the evaluation can be designed in accordance with humanitarian principles. It is also important to note that this activity will be providing supplementary services on top of traditional food assistance transfers. That means that there will not be a pure control group. Rather it is expected the control group will be receiving some other form of assistance (i.e., food transfers), and the treatment group will receive food transfers + additional services provided by the MYE activity.**
4. Given that USAID is not requiring evaluation data to be collected at the project's mid-term, can USAID confirm that it would agree to have the "value-added of a multi-year emergency activity" question be answered with qualitative data? **The evaluation design, including methods, will be co-designed with USAID, the IP and evaluation team. USAID expects this question can be answered through a mix of data sources to include qualitative or quantitative data and secondary or primary sources, but will necessarily mostly rely on qualitative data. Applicants are encouraged to propose an approach that fits best within their overall illustrative design.**
5. Given the broad scope of the evaluation topics as listed in page 2, and the limited available budget for the evaluation activity, can USAID confirm that evaluation teams will be able to access data from other 12-month emergency responses, non-emergency and resilience activities for comparison purposes? **Yes, the evaluation team will be able to access other relevant USAID activity data, as available. The evaluation topics were illustrative and will be finalized by the research team in consultation with USAID and the implementing partner.**

6. In the list of required materials to be submitted, Capacity statement (section 1b), USAID is requesting that applicant teams indicate “...any familiarity with Do No Harm approaches, Coordination with the UN Cluster approach through the IASC, and Sphere Standards, and Gender considerations.” Can USAID confirm that “familiarity” can be indicated via experience within a CV, or if more formal certifications are required for each of these areas? **Familiarity can be indicated via experience within a C.V. No further certifications are required.**