

Questions Regarding RFA-ACE-001

For each section of questions, the questions will be answered in English up until November 8, 2022.

October 11, 2022

Q1: Can applicants submit a pilot project initiation for this grant?

A1: Yes, MSP allows and encourages pilot projects from applicants so long as they meet the objectives of the activity listed on page 2 of the RFA. It should be noted that the RFA's selection criteria will remain the same for all activities.

October 18, 2022

Q1. On the RFP, I found in section III that eligible activities include novel ideas and innovative business models in input distribution, supply chain management, business services and other support services. However, in attachment 2: Partnership budget, I saw that ineligible costs and ineligible use of funds for Pharmaceutical, vehicles, pesticides, seeds, or fertilizers. Considering the above points, may I know to submit innovative business models in input distribution of Seed or Fertilizers or other agricultural inputs distribution?

A1. MSP cannot fund agricultural inputs distribution including seeds, pesticides, or fertilizers. If these products are essential to partnership activities, they may be considered as part of the partner's co-investment contribution but would be subject to environmental review during the co-development stage and environmental monitoring during implementation.

October 18, 2022

ACE Applicant's Conference

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

8:00 AM EDT (GMT-4)

Q1: Our main activity is becoming an e-payment system for the unbanked. Can we participate in this initiative?

A1: Any business concept that meets one of the ACE objectives stated on page 2 of the RFA is eligible.

Q2: Is this opportunity exclusively for the private sector or not for profit company can apply in consortium with the private sector entity?

A2: This is an opportunity for the private sector, but NGOs can apply with a private sector partner as a part of a consortium, as long as the primary applicant, or lead fiduciary agent is a private sector firm, not the for profit partner (modification for RFA regarding the Not-for-profit inclusion is issued and can be found on the mspgrants page). In addition, not for profit firms, for example, social enterprises, are eligible.

Q3: Can applicants propose a pilot project for this grant?

A3: Please see answer to Q1.

Q4: Are there ineligible and eligible activities, and can MSP explain more about this please?

A4: As stated on page 17 of the RFA. certain costs are ineligible and cannot be funded by MSP directly. Those costs cannot be used for co-investment except for the cost for Pharmaceuticals, pesticides, seeds, or fertilizers. The purchase of pharmaceuticals, pesticides, seed, or fertilizers may be proposed under the partner's contribution/co-investment and must not be included under MSP contribution or funding. The final acceptance of this co-investment is contingent upon whether it meets industry environmental, safety and efficacy standards. MSP will not reject a strong concept for a cost that might appear noncompliant. MSP will work with shortlisted applicants through co-development to try to find compliant and mutually beneficial solutions.

Q5: Can costs be in-kind contribution?

A5: MSP only considers new costs required for the proposed MSP activity. Page 5 of the RFA states "Please note that neither the investment from the applicant nor the investment requested from MSP can cover costs already incurred, in-kind contributions..." However, future costs that have not yet been incurred can be in-kind contributions and count towards the applicant's co-investment.

Q6: We want to create a new company instead of expanding the current healthcare service. Can we start with less than 200k amount?

A6: Unfortunately, at this time, MSP must be firm on the funding floor for this opportunity and cannot accept applications with less than \$200k in co-investment.

Q7: Are there any quantifiable targets that need to be achieved in terms of number of trainings, number of beneficiaries, etc. as the RFP talks about care economy?

A7: Targets should be set by the applicant. The Technical Application Form (Attachment 1 of the RFA) should help inform applicants on MSP's objectives that will inform targets. We encourage targets that align with the business concept, have development impact and are achievable while also reminding applicants that this is a competitive solicitation.

Q8: Can we add some sort of profit in the budget proposal?

A8: No, all costs included in the partnership budget must be future costs related to the activity proposal, not future profit. The MSP budget template (Attachment 2 of the RFA) only includes costs that are required to make the business activity functional. MSP seeks commercially viable business concepts and hopes that the business will see profits from the activity, but they cannot be included as a line in the partnership budget.

Q9: Just wanted to know if startups are also eligible to apply?

A9: Please refer Answer to Q1

Q10: Our company in apparel manufacturing is planning to expand to the remote regions of our country providing job opportunities to women for 90%. Can we propose our expansion project?

A10: Any business concept that meets one of the ACE objectives stated on page 2 of the RFA is eligible.

Q11: Is call for proposal only for healthcare? Is it for other services or sectors as well?

A11: We are targeting multiple sectors for MSP funding, so all sectors are eligible as long as the business concept fulfils one or more of the ACE objectives.

Q12: Can we have partners as part of our contribution? We want to collaborate with another business organization who is interested in our idea.

A12: MSP allows for consortiums to apply, but there must be a lead fiduciary applicant that is a private sector entity. The matching contribution cannot be split amongst consortium partners.

Q13: Just to confirm from the RFA, the amount of \$400K would be spent over the course of 24 months maximum?

A: Yes, the total amount of the partnership would be spent within 24 months of the engagement.

Q13: Is MSP looking to fund a maximum of two proposals based on the ceiling amount?

A13: MSP is looking to fund a *minimum* of two proposals based on the ceiling amount. Depending on the quantity and quality of applications submitted, MSP may seek additional funding where possible to support more partners.

Q14: Is there a quota per priority country?

A14: No, there is no quota for any one country included in the geographic focus of this RFA and no country will take priority over any other. All are equally eligible.

Q15: While evaluating the business will you be looking at a particular rate of return?

A15: MSP does not have a target rate of return for this RFA. This data can be included in your response to the question, "*When is the break-even point at which you will begin seeing a positive return on investment (without donor support)?*" in the *Technical Application Form*. Applications will be evaluated given the criteria laid out on pages 4-5 of the RFA.

Q16: Who is the contact person if we have further questions?

A16: Questions can be addressed to grants_nof@ff-msp.org and will be answered weekly in writing on our MSPgrants.com up until November 1, 2022. The last date you may submit a question is October 25, 2022.

October 25, 2022

Q1: Our project is an old age care home, and we have a plan to expand our current service to serve more people. One of the major investment areas while expanding would be construction of a structure where we can reside the patients. To increase the number of beds, we need more space and hence construction. So, will this be included in the investment area or the co-investment criteria?

A1: The cost for construction can neither be funded by MSP funds nor used for co-investment within the partnership. If you're unsure if a cost is considered construction, please reach out to the MSP

grants team (grants_nof@ftf-msp.org). If there are any concerns in an application's budget, the Technical Evaluation Committee may consider approving an application that would require budget clarifications and revisions during co-development to assure that all costs are allowable and eligible.

Q2: In the budget template, should we put total projected expenses our company would need in the next 2 years and mention how much we are expecting from MSP to contribute? Or should we just put the expenses related to MSP and company contribution?

A2: Please include the total project cost under the "Detail Budget" tab under columns B - G. Include all the costs in the detailed budget whether the amount is requested from MSP, or the amount will be part of the partner contribution. In the following columns to the right (I - N), you can disaggregate and show which amounts are requested from MSP and which amounts are partner contribution. The combined total of column K and column N (K38 + N38) should equal the total project cost (H38).

November 01, 2022

Q1: Can we submit a proposal that targets to benefit women and adolescent girls following our company business model but may not have any direct impact on the care economy, though it has indirect impact therein. One example is involving women in the management of the supply chain for agricultural inputs in addition to domestic caregiving.

A1: Any business concept that meets one of the ACE objectives stated on page 2 of the RFA is eligible. MSP acknowledges that "care economy" is a new term and encourages applicants to submit any concept that meets at least one of the ACE objectives.

November 08, 2022

Q1: I have a question regarding the budget template for the personnel section. Do we really have to write the exact name for each position? What if we want to hire new people after we get this funding opportunity? Can we just write the position or role in the company? Thank you in advance.

A1: For the staff already employed by the partner who will be working on this new project, the partner should write their name and the position. For the staff yet to be hired, the partner may simply write the position and include "TBD" signifying "to be determined".

Q2: What's the percentage of matching or how much amount is earmarked for match from applicant?

A2: MSP requires at least 1:1 matching investment from applicants (50% of total investment). For example, if a partner submits a budget indicating an MSP investment of \$200,000 USD; they must also demonstrate a unique commitment of \$200,000 USD of their own funds to be considered for this partnership (making the entire project cost \$400,000 USD in total). If loans or equity investments are included in partner activities, MSP requires a 5:1 matching investment. Please see page 3 of the RFA regarding the applicant contribution requirements.

Q3: Is other donor's fund can be treated as matching?

A3: Only equity investment or debt investment that is financed by a non-USG donor can count towards the eligible match. In such a case, the partner will be required to provide written documentation to demonstrate that this donor-financed debt or equity investment capital has been secured. No programmatic grants from any donor or government can count as an eligible match.

Q4: Is a start-up (an innovation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZN92tAmdFg>) based solution in food security with 4 years experiences in grounding agribusiness system (supported by 16 years of direct engagement with the innovation as innovator and programme manager with the colleagues at a charity) is eligible for the call?

A4: MSP allows and encourages start-up projects from applicants so long as they meet the objectives of the activity listed on page 2 of the RFA. It should be noted that the RFA's selection criteria will remain the same for all activities.

Q5: Minimum bar for the call 200K. If we go for 100K PY-1 and 100K PY-2 for a 24-month project. How much contribution do we need to secure from our own or other donors?

A5: Considering the required 1:1 match, in the example provided in the question, the applicant will be required to contribute not less than \$200,000 USD as the partner contribution. This contribution can be made over the life of the project, meaning that the partner can financially plan their contribution as such: 100k in PY-1 and 100k in PY-2. Please note Q3 regarding other donor funding.

Q6: I want to check if our company can ask for less than \$200K for our business expansion plan in grant funding from MSP while still meeting the minimum co-investment requirement of \$200K. Or the grant funds have to be also \$200K in the budget.

A6: At this time, MSP must be firm on the funding floor for this opportunity and cannot accept applications requesting less than \$200k in co-investment from MSP. However, if the applicant invests more than \$200k in their project, but only requires \$200k from MSP, it is acceptable for the partner contribution to be greater than 50%.