Acquisition & Assistance Policy Directive
(AAPD)

From the Director, Office of Procurement   Issued: January 23, 2004

AAPD 03-05 (Revised)

Revised Requirements for Posting of
Federal Acquisition & Assistance (A&A) Opportunities

Subject Category:	**Acquisition Management, Assistance, PSCs, Miscellaneous**
Type:	**General Information**

AAPDs provide information of significance to all agency personnel and partners involved in the Acquisition and Assistance process. Information includes (but is not limited to): advance notification of changes in acquisition or assistance regulations; reminders; procedures; and general information. Also, AAPDs may be used to implement new requirements on short-notice, pending formal amendment of acquisition or assistance regulations.

AAPDs are **EFFECTIVE AS OF THE ISSUED DATE** unless otherwise noted in the guidance below; the directives remain in effect until this office issues a notice of cancellation.

This AAPD: ___Is New   _X_Replaces/___Amends
                                                      CIB/AAPD No: _03-05__

Precedes change to: _X_AIDAR Part(s) _____ Appendix _A__

_X_USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapters 302, 303, 305

___Code of Federal Regulations _____

___ Other_____

___ No change to regulations

Applicable to: ___Existing awards; Modification required:

                                              ___Effective immediately

                                              ___No later than _____

                                              ___As noted in guidance below

___RFPs/RFAs issued on or after the effective date of this AAPD; all other Pending Awards, i.e., 8(a), sole source…

___ Other or N/A _____

New Provision/Clause
Provided Herein: ___ Yes; Scheduled update to Prodoc: ____(insert date)_____

_X_No

_____
TIMOTHY T. BEANS

1. **PURPOSE:** AAPD 03-05 was issued on May 13, 2003 and provided updated guidance on the USAID contract and grant opportunities Internet posting requirements and procedures. This revised AAPD replaces its May 13, 2003 version in its entirety and provides further updates to:

   a) Reflect the implementation of current eGov initiatives – FedBizOpps, and the change from Fedgrants to Grants.gov FIND;
   b) Revise the applicability of FedBizOpps to include notices for U.S. Personal Services contract actions as discussed herein; and
   c) Update the streamlined guidance on internally-mandated postings.

The AAPD continues to provide guidance for compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 as it relates to posting of USAID contract and grant opportunities

2. **BACKGROUND:**

As directed in CIB 01-13, Posting USAID Solicitations and other Acquisition & Assistance (A&A) documents on the Business & Procurement Internet Site, USAID A&A opportunities have been posted to the agency Business and Procurement website and the Commerce Business Daily. That CIB is now superceded by this AAPD which identifies when use of FedBizOpps/Grants.gov FIND vs. the agency website is required, and provides instructions for properly accessing the new systems for posting A&A opportunities. In addition, it outlines updated guidance for the posting of those other pre-solicitation notices on the agency website, i.e., Requests for Quotes (RFQs).

Previously, USAID procurement opportunities were posted to the Commerce Business Daily via the Office of Procurement Internet Coordinator (OPIC). On December 31, 2001, the U.S. Government website entitled "FedBizOpps" replaced the Commerce Business Daily as the single source for all federal procurement opportunities exceeding $25,000. Essentially all notices previously required to be posted in the CBD are now required to be posted through FedBizOpps. In addition, those opportunities for personal services contracts which were previously posted on the Agency website are now required to be posted on FedBizOpps. The transition to FedBizOpps has also de-centralized the posting process and provides contracting professionals with the ability to post their solicitations directly to the Internet.

To date, USAID assistance opportunities have been posted to the agency Business and Procurement website. On November 20, 1999, the President signed Public Law 106-107, the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act. The purposes of this law are to: improve the effectiveness and performance of Federal grant programs; simplify grant application and reporting requirements; improve the delivery of services to the public; and facilitate greater coordination among those responsible for delivering such services. In support of this initiative, the Federal Grant Opportunities has been implemented to advertise grant opportunities for all Federal grant programs. Previously referred to as Fedgrants, Grants.gov FIND essentially serves as a "storefront" where potential applicants

may search and **eventually apply electronically** for federal grants. Similar in its operation to FedBizOpps, this single portal currently allows potential applicants to search all Federal grant opportunities at one location instead of individually accessing each Agency's web site. Grants.gov FIND also provides you (the Grantor) with the ability to post complete announcement documents directly to the Internet.
 Where any other regulation or special authority (e.g., exceptions granted under AIDAR Subpart 705.202) provides for other avenues for advertising and/or posting of solicitations, those regulations supercede the requirements herein.

Since the issuance of CIB 01-13, Posting USAID Solicitations and other Acquisition & Assistance (A&A) Documents on the Business & Procurement Internet Site,
we have gained significant experience with implementation of Section 508(a)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. (See CIB 01-21 for specific details regarding the Act.) The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) issued final standards for electronic and information technology covered by the 1998 amendments to the Act. In response, USAID revised its standards for web accessibility based on these federally mandated standards which means that all notices and solicitation documents submitted for posting must comply with these new standards. This directive provides the most recent guidance to assist you in complying with the statutory requirements as they affect posting of these documents.

3. <u>**GUIDANCE**</u>:

A. **FedBizOpps and Grants.gov FIND**

   (1) <u>Applicability</u>

   <u>FedBizOpps</u>, designated as the Government-wide point of entry for Federal government contract opportunities that exceed $25,000[1], is applicable to contract actions as specified in FAR Part 5, Publicizing Contract Actions. Specific exceptions to the posting of federal opportunities are as noted in FAR Part 5 and AIDAR Part 705. FedBizOpps is also applicable to synopses of contract awards exceeding $25,000 and as specified in FAR Subpart 5.3. FedBizOpps is now also applicable to U.S. Personal Services Contract (USPSC) actions based in Washington and in USAID missions. It is not applicable to resident hire Mission-based PSC actions.

   <u>Grants.gov FIND</u> is applicable to all competitive assistance actions of any dollar level. Effective immediately, posting of all agency assistance opportunities must be done via Grants.gov FIND, except for

       (1). A program specifically designed to be available only for local or regional (indigenous) organizations, when all awards will be less than $25,000 each;

---

[1]This is qualified in accordance with AIDAR 706.302-70 to exclude overseas RFPs or IFBs for activities not in excess of $250,000.

(2) A program that will only publish funding opportunities in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (See USAID General Notice "Registering USAID Programs in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance" dated May 2, 2003 or www.cfda.gov);

(3) Non-competitive awards which are directed to a known recipient.

(2) Training

FedBizOpps:
A&A professionals may contact the FedBizOpps Agency Administrator (at e-mail fbo@usaid.gov) for one-on-one tutorials; however, on-line training is strongly encouraged and is available at the FedBizOpps demo website provided in Section (3) below. Additional FedBizOpps links are listed in that same section which provide useful resources such as the FBO Buyer's Guide, available for download.

Requests for registration information: A&A professionals requiring FBO access for posting the types of business opportunities noted above should contact the FBO Agency Administrator at fbo@usaid.gov for information about registering on the FedBizOpps system, or to effect any changes in registration. New users are given a user name and login, and may then post their own documents directly to FedBizOpps.

Grants.gov FIND
On-line training remains available at http: www.fedgrants.gov, the GRANTOR GUIDE. This site walks you through the steps of posting, discusses the parameters, and provides tips. You must first be registered to access the Grantor Guide. You may submit your registration request at http://inside.usaid.gov/M/OP/SolutionsCenter (Click on eGOV on the top navigation bar, then select Grants from the left navigation bar, and click on Email (Egov) Support).
Please direct questions or concerns on Grants.gov FIND to the M/OP Solutions Center Agency Administrator at phone 202-712-1799.

> ***Note for overseas personnel***: FedBizOpps and Grants.gov FIND have been set up to identify overseas opportunities/actions by country; overseas procurement professionals will be registered by country as well. FS Contracting/Agreement Officers should modify their registration accordingly when they transfer to a new office overseas or return to AID/W, since registration is country-specific. Some adjustments will need to be made to user registrations when a user needs to be designated as Point of Contact for solicitations from more than one country, i.e., when a regional CO covers multiple countries. Please notify the FBO Agency Administrator and the M/OP Solutions Center Agency Administrator (for Grants.gov FIND) if this case applies to you and he/she will ensure that your registration in both systems properly reflects your registration in multiple locations.
>
> All overseas missions are expected to post their notices directly.   However, the FBO Agency Administrator or M/OP Solutions Center Agency Administrator are

available as a resource in the event of technical/communication difficulties that may arise in posting from overseas.   All requests for assistance should be forwarded to the respective e-mail addresses above.

Once registered, A&A professionals will have the ability to post solicitations directly to the Internet. Prior to posting, review and approval by the cognizant Contracting/Agreement Officer must be obtained; approval procedures will be at the discretion of the individual CO/AO.

(3) <u>Helpful Websites</u>

Specialists are strongly encouraged to take advantage of useful tools offered by the initiatives, particularly the FedBizOpps Interested Vendor's List (IVL) Module. By activating this function, bidder's may register their interest in a specific solicitation, thereby streamlining your ability to easily publish a "Bidder's List" <u>on-line</u>.   See the website below for more information.

<div align="center">

<u>FedBizOpps</u>

</div>

<u>FBO Interface Description</u>
This site provides a brief overview of the FBO System for new users
http://www.fbo.gov/pilotGeneralInfo/Overview.html

<u>FBO Buyers Guide (for posting mechanics)</u>
This site includes a link which provides an overview of the FBO Training/Demo Site as well as detailed instructions on how to use the FBO system.
http://www.eps.gov/EPSBuyersManual/BG1-Index.html

<u>Training</u>
FedBizOpps (FBO) DEMO site with tutorial (click on "FedBizOpps Buyers" icon).   http://demofbo.gsa.gov/

<u>FBO - What's New</u>
This site provides updates such as planned FBO enhancements.
http://www.eps.gov/what_is_new.html

<u>FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions re: FBO</u>
http://www.eps.gov/FAQs-r2-0622.html

<u>Interested Vendor's List (IVL) Module</u>
Those interested in receiving an IVL demonstration should contact the FBO Administrator
http://www.eps.gov/EPSBuyersManual/BG7-IVL.html

Grants.gov FIND

Grants.gov FIND Homepage
Website address for both Grantors and Applicants to access Grants.gov FIND
http://www.grants.gov

Grantor Guide (for posting mechanics)
http://fedgrants.gov/GrantorManual/FG-Coversheet.html/

USAID M/OP Solutions Center
Provides access to grants.gov FIND website, tips and USAID user e-mail support
http://inside.usaid.gov/M/OP/SolutionsCenter/ (Click on eGOV, then
GRANTS tab)

B. Posting Notices to the USAID Internet Website

(1) Applicability

It is mandatory that the Agency website continue to be used for posting the following types of notices:

  (a) All Procurement Information Bulletins (PIBs)

  (b) All Ocean Transportation Tenders

  (c) All Amendments to any of these solicitation documents

The following types of notices <u>may</u> also be posted to the Agency website:

  (a) Competitive Requests for Quotes (RFQs)-Under $25,000

  (b) Host Country Contract Solicitations
       (Please note: The CO must include language to clarify that the solicitation is NOT an USAID procurement, but one financed by USAID)

The OPIC will no longer post draft Statements of Work or Program Descriptions as FedBizOpps and Grants.gov FIND both provide the capability to post these documents.

(2) <u>Submission of Posting Requests to the OP Internet Coordinator</u>

The OP Internet Coordinator (OPIC) is the liaison between the Office of Procurement and M/IRM who is responsible for posting information on the agency website. A&A professionals must send all posting requests to the "opic@usaid.gov" address only.
(<u>Note</u>: Please type in "opic@usaid.gov" and not OP Internet Coordinator as we have

been experiencing problems with the OP Internet Coordinator alias.) Further contact information for the OPIC is listed below under Section (6).

For all items above, you must submit all sections of the document including those attachments that are available electronically in ONE electronic file via e-mail to the OPIC—any exceptions must be discussed in advance with the OPIC.

(3) <u>Formatting mechanics</u>

    a. <u>File size</u> – Solicitation documents, including attachments, should not exceed 200 pages. If you have an upcoming solicitation that will exceed 200 pages, please notify the OPIC before you send any materials, to discuss options. Advance notice of anything greater than 2MB should also be given. (File size can be determined as follows: Open Windows Explorer, highlight the file, right click on your mouse to open the Properties window).

    b. <u>File Types</u> – MS Word and .pdf are acceptable file types, provided they have no 508 violations. Forms are the most difficult documents for 508 compliance. There are two ways to create compliant forms:

        i) If you have Adobe Acrobat Writer you can create a PDF file directly from ProDoc by choosing Adobe Acrobat in the printer drop down select menu in the print dialog box.   This will include all forms in a text-based format. (You can also send the forms to print to pdf separate from the body of the solicitation.)

        (ii) If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Writer, please submit your documentation in MS Word format. You will need to regenerate in Word any included forms, outside of ProDoc, because those forms are currently not exportable from ProDoc.

(4) <u>File Naming Conventions</u> -

 a. Please include the type of notice you are submitting in your file name. Please include the solicitation number in your file name.

  <u>**Examples**</u>**:**

     rfq_mop_03_1234.doc   (RFQ)
     hcc_03-1234.doc   (Host Country contract)

  The solicitation type is needed to direct your request to the appropriate location on the web site.

 b. Please do not use uppercase, spaces, slashes, dashes, or special characters in your file names. If you want to separate words or numbers use the underscore (_) key.   See examples above.

 c. Please do not use file names such as amendment1, volume, solicitation, or any other generic name. Also, please use only words from the English language.

    Examples of incorrect file names:
      M/Op 456 78.doc
      Volume1.pdf
      Amendment 2.doc
      TOMO.zip

(5) <u>Submittal Times and Posting Duration</u>

 You must submit any document that you would like posted to the Internet site **at least 2 business days in advance** of your required issuance date. The documents will be posted as soon after receipt by the coordinator as possible, but not before the issuance date. (If posted after the issuance date on the solicitation, the coordinator would have to let the CO know prior to posting so the issuance date can be changed in the document.)

 Ocean Tender Solicitations, RFQs, and Host Country contract solicitations will be removed after 30 days and PIBs up to one year after the closing dates. Records of these documents are not maintained electronically or otherwise; therefore, requests for documents that have been deleted from the Internet site will be directed to the appropriate Overseas Mission or USAID/W Office.

 All other documents are deleted at the discretion of the OPIC in consultation with the Chief of the Procurement Support Division.

(6) GENERAL OPIC CONTACT INFORMATION:

Address: Office of Procurement Internet Coordinator
M/OP/SPU, Room 7.8-85, RRB
U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, D.C. 20523-2702
Phone: (202)-712-4442
Facsimile: (202)-216-3143
E-mail address: (for posting requests and general inquiries):
OPIC@usaid.gov

C. Section 508 Update

Generally, the 508 requirements are aimed at ensuring that all information posted to Federal government websites can be read through assistant devices that may be used by the visually impaired (i.e., text readers). Our Word documents are generally compliant except when it comes to forms.   Acceptable formats include HTML and Word forms. Unacceptable formats are those that provide an "image" or use Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to provide a "picture" of a form. This AAPD does not mandate a particular format; however, adhering to the following guidelines will help you meet the requirements:

1. Do not submit scanned documents that present material or information solely in a graphic or picture-based format. Posting of these documents is prohibited.

2. If you include any type of graphic in your document, that graphic must be explained in full text within the body of the document. Graphs and flowcharts that contain text captions must also be explained in full text because a text reader will only pick up the captions and not be able to describe the visual cues.

3. Logos must also be described in text. For example, under the USAID logo, you will need to type "USAID logo". If you do not want this text to be visible, you can change the font color to white (it will not be viewable on screen but will be picked up by a text reader).

4. Formal tables must be used when presenting data in a row and column format. Do not use tabs and spaces to align data to look like a table. A text reader will not be able to follow the logic.

5. All documents must be sent electronically.

You may check with your local Systems Administrator to ensure your documents are Section 508 compliant. If you need further assistance on this matter or have further questions, please contact the OPIC at 202-712-4442 or via e-mail (see contact address above).

4. **POINT OF CONTACT**:

Technical Support, Judy Britt, M/OP/CIMS, jbritt@usaid.gov, 202-712-0397