**SECTION IV: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

Applications must be fully complete in all aspects in each step. An application may not be considered if it is received after the submission deadline. Costs associated with the preparation of the application shall be at the expense of the Applicant.

This RFA includes a single-stage review and selection process, which includes the following elements:

* + 1. Review and evaluation of applications
		2. Selection and notification of apparently successful applicant(s)
1. **PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE**

The Feed the Future Resilience in Northern Ghana Systems Strengthening Activity will conduct Pre-Application conferences in each of the four (4) target Districts as shown below. All interested applicants are encouraged to attend.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Location** | **Venue** | **Date** | **Time** |
| Northern | Modern City HotelTamale | April 25, 2024 | 9:00 am |
| North East | Sans HotelNalerigu | April 30, 2024 | 9:00 am |
| Upper East | GhanassBolga | May 02, 2024 | 9:00 am |
| Upper West | Delagio Wa | May 07, 2024 | 9:00 am |
| Confirmation Email | An email confirming attendance must be sent to  ftfring\_grants@abtassoc.com |

The purpose of these orientation sessions is to provide a briefing to prospective Applicants about the grants program, and the RFA process, and to respond to questions or concerns. To reserve your spot at a Conference, please send an email to ftfring\_grants@abtassoc.com with your name, your organization, and your contact information.

If you are not able to attend a pre-application conference but have a question about this RFA, you may submit it in writing to ftfring\_grants@abtassoc.com before May 15, 2024. A consolidated Q&A document will be circulated to all interested Parties upon the conclusion of all sessions.

Only written answers from Abt Associates’ authorized representative will be considered official and carry weight in the RFA process and subsequent evaluation. Any answers received outside the official channel, whether received verbally or in writing, and whether from employees of Abt Associates or another party, should not be considered official responses regarding this RFA.

1. **EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS**

The Feed the Future Resilience in Northern Ghana Systems Strengthening intends to issue up to a total of ten (10) grants to the organization(s) considered to have the best Technical Approach and Methodology, Strategic Fit, Organizational Capabilities, Gender and Youth Considerations, and Cost Effectiveness for the overall project. The criteria below will serve as the basis upon which each application will be evaluated. Selection will also be based on the capabilities of the organizations as detailed in the application.

**Evaluation Criteria**

The technical applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria, which are listed in order of importance, with the most important listed first. Additional details are included below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Maximum Points (100 total)** |
| 1. Technical Approach & Methodology
 | 30 points  |
| 1. Strategic Fit
 | 30 points  |
| 1. Organizational Capabilities
 | 25 points |
| 1. Gender and Youth Considerations
 | 10 points |
| 1. Cost Effectiveness
 | 5 points  |

*\*Applicants must receive an average score of 70 points or higher to proceed in the grant process*

**Technical Approach & Methodology (30 Points):**

Technical Approach and Methodology criteria include:

* The Application includes a clearly defined problem statement (proposed services to the target population that demonstrate an understanding of local needs and provide appropriate assistance).
* Goals are clearly outlined and contribute toward the project's overall objectives.
* A clear and practical relationship between the defined problem and the solution proposed.
* The technical approach is innovative, cost-effective, transformative, and sustainable.
* The proposed plan is realistic and demonstrates that the organization is moving toward self-sufficiency (e.g., sustainability).
* Potential obstacles are identified, and solutions sufficiently addressed.
* A grant sustainability plan in place with future actions that the grantee will take to ensure lasting results of the grant-funded interventions.
* Sustainability of results (organization demonstrates a credible plan to reach self-sufficiency in the short to medium term).

**Strategic Fit (30 Points)**

Strategic fit criteria include:

* Contribution toward the project's overall objectives
* Sustainability of results (organization demonstrates a credible plan to reach self-sufficiency in the short to medium term)
* Anticipated benefits to the beneficiaries.

**Organizational Capabilities and Past Performance (25 Points)**

Organizational Capabilities criteria include:

* Organizational, financial, and technical capabilities and resources to implement activities.
* Past experience implementing similar activities.
* Proposed staffing structure and grant award management to allow for successful implementation. Include technical/programmatic and financial/administrative staff.
* Experience in the geographic region.
* Soundness of accounting and procurement practices.
* Capacity to adhere to USAID financial guidelines.

**Gender and Youth Considerations (10 Points)**

Gender considerations include:

* Impact on women’s empowerment: opportunities for women’s participation and involvement in governing bodies
* Anticipated benefits to the beneficiaries (WRA, CU5, Youth)

**Cost Effectiveness (5 Points)**

Costs will be evaluated in terms of feasibility, cost realism, reasonableness, completeness, allowability, and cost-effectiveness for undertaking activities outlined in the application. As technical scores converge, applications that maximize the portion of direct activity costs including cost sharing and leveraging, and that minimize administrative costs will be more favorably considered. The cost evaluation criteria will allow the project to evaluate the applicant’s cost application.

* Reasonableness of proposed budget based on the scope of activities proposed.
* Summary budget, detailed budget, and budget notes included.
* Proposed budget is reasonable and cost-effective.

Feed the Future Resilience in Northern Ghana Systems Strengthening will evaluate applications primarily by considering the technical and cost quality prior to award. If the application is successful in the technical and cost evaluation process, it will be submitted to USAID for approval of an award following a pre-award responsibility determination. The project will notify the Applicant of the results of the grant evaluation process in writing and will offer them an opportunity to contact the project’s Grants Manager within 10 days to respond to or ask questions. All grant awards are contingent on a positive applicant responsibility determination and final approval by USAID.