SECTION 1: ELIGIBILITY AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Question 1: Is it possible for an organization (such as a University in Nepal, established by an Act of parliament as a tax-free public institution) to be the lead applicant considering it is not registered in the Social Welfare Council. The University is permitted by National legal provisions to receive foreign-funded grants.

Response: Please refer to Section 5 of the RFA regarding Eligible Organizations. In the case of Nepal, applicants must be in compliance with the provisions of The Social Welfare Act, 2049 (1992), as applicable in order to be eligible to receive foreign funded Grant. In case the provisions of the Social Welfare Act, 2049 (1992) are not applicable or if the entity is permitted to receive foreign funded grants under any other legal provision, the applicant may submit the application with relevant supporting documents to prove their eligibility to receive foreign funded grants. This is also applicable for applicants in other SAREP countries (except India where FCRA registration is required).

Question 2: Is there specific criteria regarding minimum eligibility in terms of years of relevant experience for the lead as well as partner organizations? Is the criteria of the social welfare act (Nepal) applicable to lead applicants only or to all partners?

Response: There is no criteria for minimum years of eligibility. The eligibility requirements to receive a grant as per locally applicable laws are applicable for the lead as well as sub recipients of the grants.

Question 3: The Social Welfare Act is applicable only to NGOs in Nepal. Can private limited companies registered in Nepal apply for the SAREP Grant?

Response: Entities registered in Nepal must comply with the provisions of The Social Welfare Act, 2049 (1992) and / or Associations Registration Act, 2034 (1977) and / or The Income Tax Act, 2002 (2058) as applicable, in order to be eligible to receive a grant under this RFA. Evidence of such eligibility must be submitted along with the application. In case the provisions of the Social Welfare Act, 2049 (1992) are not applicable or if the entity is permitted to receive foreign funded grants under any other legal provision, the applicant may submit the application with relevant supporting documents to prove their eligibility to receive foreign funded grants. This is also applicable for applicants in other SAREP countries (except India where FCRA registration is required).

Question 4: Are for-profit organizations (in India) eligible to receive SAREP grants. What are the suggested requirement to be eligible.

Response: Please refer to Section 5 of the RFA on Eligible Organizations. Registration under the Foreign Contributions Regulations Act (FCRA) is mandatory for Indian entities to receive foreign funded GRANTS. Applicants from India must have an active and valid FCRA registration valid for at
least 6 months from the date they submit a grant application. A copy of the FCRA registration must accompany the grant application.

**Question 5: Is FCRA registration a requirement for Indian For-profit entities?**

**Response:** As per regulations applicable in India, FCRA registration is mandatory for Indian entities to receive foreign funded GRANTS, irrespective of whether the applicant is a for-profit or non-profit entity.

**SECTION II: CONSORTIUM**

**Question 6:** What is the prospect of having a US organization as a partner and its influence on the ceiling amount of funding. The lead applicant will be a University from Nepal.

**Response:** Having a US organisation as sub partner will not influence the ceiling amount. The US sub-partner will not be able to receive more than USD 250,000 from a sub grant under the SAREP funded grant. The lead applicant must ensure there is a legal mechanism for transferring funds to the partner organisation in US.

**Question 7:** Can the main applicant based in US subcontract to non-FCRA companies for the implementation of the project?

**Response:** Yes, however, the legal compliances related to such partnership must be confirmed by the lead partner in advance. However, profit or fee is not allowed for any subcontract made under the Grant, irrespective of the nationality of the subcontractor.

**Question 8:** Is it possible for consortiums formed for a specific work program to apply or should there be a main applicant with subcontractors?

**Response:** The consortium should have a lead partner (the applicant) and sub-partners / sub-contractors. RTI will issue a Grant award to the Lead Partner (main applicant), if selected for award of a Grant.

**Question 9:** Can two organizations pitch jointly for $1 million, i.e., $500,000 each?

**Response:** No. However, two separate organizations can submit separate applications with different program descriptions which are not interlinked or have anything in common. Alternatively, they can submit an application as a consortium with a lead partner (the applicant).

**Question 10:** Can a government academic organisation choose a private company to lead a consortium?

**Response:** An Indian Private company can lead the consortium provided it is eligible to receive a foreign grant under FCRA. However, a government academic organization, being a para-statal entity, cannot receive USAID grants either as a sub-grantee or a sub-contractor under the Grant.

**SECTION III: TECHNICAL APPROACH**

**Question 11:** Can the applicant take energy efficiency of small and medium enterprises into consideration while designing the project? Can the project be limited to smaller entities like micro utilities, electricity cooperatives? Can the applicant take transition of small scale interventions (like household level cooking) from biomass to clean energy into consideration with the proposed project interventions?
Response: It is up to the applicant to propose a program that is consistent with the requirements of Section 3 of the RFA and contributes to the defined objectives of the SAREP Project.

Question 12: Can the applicant propose a concept in a state other than the states listed by the SAREP team or do the activities have to be implemented within the defined SAREP states?

Response: SAREP intends to work in the following seven states in India: Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Telangana, Karnataka, Assam and Uttarakhand, apart from other five SAREP Countries. While the preference is for these seven states, applications may also be submitted for other Indian states. The proposed interventions must be aligned to SAREP’s objectives.

Question 13: Please clarify if engineering, procurement and construction/installation of clean energy technologies and equipment is covered within or outside the grant budget of proposals submitted under this call. If yes, then is there any specific process/protocols to be followed for procurement?

Response: Please refer to Section 4 of the RFA on ineligible activities. These include construction, infrastructure, renovation, and rehabilitation projects. “Construction” for the purposes of this RFA means; construction, alteration, or repair (including dredging and excavation) of buildings, structures, or other real property and includes, without limitation, improvements, renovation, alteration, and refurbishment. The term includes, without limitation, roads, power plants, buildings, bridges, water treatment facilities, and vertical structures. Therefore, such costs are not eligible for funding. Such activities may be carried out through alternate funding sources and/or leveraged funds identified by the applicant in their application.

Question 14: The RFA states that "to achieve the results outlined under the four technical objectives, the SAREP Partnership Fund will support the types of activities illustrated below:" Please let us know is it mandatory or not to address all of the activities.

Response: These are illustrative objectives. Section 3 of the RFA further states that other eligible activities, or a combination of the above activities with or without other eligible activities, can also be proposed, provided they support achievement of the RFA outcomes and are consistent with one or any of the four technical objectives. Activities that are ineligible for funding are listed in Section 4.

Question 15: The applicant wishes to propose a hardware prototype development depicting a scaled-down electric vehicle charging station to showcase its dynamic behaviour. The intended proposal falls under the "Feasibility studies, detailed project reports, and market assessments" However, if a hardware prototype is developed under the criteria of "Pilot demonstrations", would it be conflicting and unacceptable as two scopes are merging?

Response: It is up to the applicant to propose a program that is consistent with the requirements of Section 3 of the RFA, and it is up to SAREP to evaluate and determine which of the proposals can be funded.

Question 16: Does development of a hardware-based prototype fall within the criteria of ineligible activity. Please confirm whether SAREP would accept building a hardware prototype though the Grant?

Response: Please note that SAREP will support activities that are replicable and scalable. SAREP cannot pay for any pre-award expenses to build and showcase a set-up before the grant is awarded. SAREP expects the applicants to have the necessary means to implement their program as soon as a grant is awarded.

Question 17: Are there any guidelines to be followed for building a prototype?

Response: In such cases, the Ownership and intellectual property rights of the prototype will remain with USAID.
SECTION IV : BUDGET, COSTING, DISBURSEMENTS AND TIME FRAME

Question 18: Should applicants be successful, what is the expected timeline for disbursement of funds?

Response: SAREP cannot commit to specific timelines since various approvals including client approvals are required before award decisions are made. Also, a lot depends upon the number of applications received.

Question 19: If the total project budget exceeds requested grant, should additional costs to be borne by the proposer be indicated in the budget format? (Should the entire budget be outlined)

Response: The additional cost to be borne by the proposer should be indicated in the budget in the column provided for Leverage.

Question 20: Can an organization submit a proposal targeting $500,000 for a 12 to 18 month duration?

Response: It is up to the applicant to propose their program duration. Please refer to the summary of funding opportunity table on Page 3 of the RFA. The duration cannot exceed 24 months, with potential renewal award based on performance review, but not to exceed SAREP project duration.

Question 21: Should the grant award cover each of the objective individually or all of them together?

Response: An applicant can submit a proposal under each or any of these four objectives. The total amount that can be funded will be $500,000, except for US organizations where the ceiling is $250,000.

Question 22: Will the signing of the grant application suffice or is there a separate anti-terrorism certificate required?

Response: Please refer to Page 20, Para 15 of the RFA. The certification is included in it. By signing off in the block provided at the end of the certification on Page 22 of the RFA, the applicant will be providing the required certification.

SECTION V : SUBMISSION OF MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS

Question 23: Can one entity apply for more than one grant?

Response: Yes, but with different program descriptions.

Question 24: Can two or more entities get awarded for the same activity?

Response: Yes, if the country or geography or beneficiaries are different.

Question 25: In accordance with ADS 302, the total value of any individual grant to a U.S. organization, if any, must not exceed the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT), which is $250,000. The applicable ceiling for grant awards to non-U.S. organizations is $500,000. Can a firm submit multiple proposals for different countries where each proposal does not exceed the SAT threshold of USD 500,000.

Response: The SAT threshold is $250,000. Multiple applications targeting different countries can be submitted, but not to exceed the specified thresholds.

Question 26: Can we have collaboration with Indian company / organization operating in India to apply for the proposal?
Response: Yes, you may collaborate with eligible Indian entities, provided they have a valid FCRA registration.

Question 27: Is it possible for a company to apply individually in one proposal and at the same time apply in another proposal in collaboration with some other company or organization?

Response: Yes, an applicant can be a prime and a sub-recipient under different applications.

Question 28: Can the same organization submit 2 proposals each for $500,000 targeting different geographies/ themes?

Response: Multiple applications targeting different countries can be submitted, but not to exceed the specified thresholds.

SECTION VI: APPLICATION PACKAGE AND SUBMISSION DOCUMENTS

Question 29: Does the auditor information need to be provided at the time of the application or will that be reviewed after receiving the grant?

Response: No. If SAREP requires an external audit to be conducted, SAREP will approve the selected Auditor and Scope of Work. However, if an applicant plans to charge an indirect or overhead rate to the budget, and the indirect or overhead rate has been audited, the applicant is required to provide a copy of the audit report with the audited indirect rate and explanation of basis of determination of the rate.

Question 30: Does the detail of the collaboration or partnership have to be supported with a support letter from the partner/collaborator?

Response: Please refer to the technical evaluation criteria "Technical Approach and Merit" on page 12 of the RFA. Demonstrated evidence of collaboration/commitment with host institutions, i.e., a beneficiary that will enable sustainability and scaling of the grant-funded activities" will be evaluated.

Question 31: Does the partner/collaborator have to submit information contributing to the organizational capabilities section as in section 9 part 11?

Response: Section 9, Part 11, Page 19 of the RFA clearly indicates that "if the applicant is proposing a partnership with other organizations, organizational and technical capabilities must be presented for each partner and the management team description must demonstrate how the partnership will be effectively coordinated. The Technical Evaluation Committee will consider the consolidated credentials of the consortium with primary emphasis on the lead applicant.. Commitment letters detailing the scope and budget of each of the consortium members is required."

Question 32: What will be the actual page limit for Monitoring and evaluation plan (2 pages or 1.5 Pages)?

Response: The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan can be submitted in 2 pages.

Question 33: Can the past performance references be from two collaborative organizations applying for the Proposal?

Response: Not if these collaborating organizations will be sub-recipients under the same proposal.

Question 34: Our organization has worked for a USAID Project within last 3 years. Can this be mentioned?
**Response:** Please refer to Para 14, Past Performance References on Page 20. The Applicant should have worked with the referee(s) in the last three (3) years implementing similar programs. SAREP may and will cross check with the references during evaluation of the applications. Applicants should inform their references accordingly since a “no response” from the references will impact the applicant’s evaluation.

**Question 35:** Should electronic applications be submitted to the same address provided for questions?

**Response:** Yes. Please submit the applications to SAREP-Grants@RTI.Org with “Application” and name of your organisation mentioned in the subject line.

**Question 36:** Part 1 of the application form seems to have 9 items as opposed to the 6 items as suggested by point 9.5 in RFA. Request you to confirm which section to adhere to.

**Response:** Section 9 point 5 of the RFA is revised and reads “Applicants must complete Part I (items 1-9) and submit the signed form along with all the required documents in Part 2 plus the three attachments.

**Question 37:** Are the subsections (a) to (l) listed under point 9.7 of the RFA, elements of the required ‘Program description’ section of the Part II of the application form? Or are they separate additional elements?

**Response:** Items listed in points (a) to (l) of section 9 point 7 are additional elements to be submitted with Part II of the application.

**Question 38:** What's the total page limit for Part II? Request you to clarify page limits for the total section and individual subsections.

**Response:** The page limits are specified in each section of the RFA.

**Question 39:** Request you to clarify if the following table of contents is accurate along with the page limits:

**Part I: Completed Application Cover Sheet**
1. Date of application: 
2. Name of Applicant: 
3. Address of Applicant: 
4. UEI Number: (see attachment C) 
5. Names and titles of officer(s) authorized to represent the Applicant and his/her alternate: 
   a. Authorized Officer: 
   b. Alternate: 
6. Proposed period of performance: 
   Start date: MM/YYYY 
   End date: MM/YYYY 
7. Proposed budget in USD), please include exchange rate considered for budget calculations: 
8. Geographic focus 
9. Signature/Name/Title

**Part II**
1. Executive Summary (1 page) 
2. Program Description (15 pages, section limit excluding subsections k and l) 
   a) Problem statement 
   b) Situation Assessment 
   c) Solution & Technical Approach 
   d) Project goal 
   e) Implementation plan and Strategy (5 pages including GANTT chart, subsection limit)
o Objectives
o Detailed activities
o Expected results and Impact.

f) Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (2 pages, subsection limit)
g) Sustainability Plan (1 page, subsection limit)
h) Organizational capabilities, technical and management team, and brief (5 pages, subsection limit)
i) Past Performance References
j) Anti-Terrorism Certification
k) For non-US organizations, proof of registration in the relevant country as per ADS 310
l) For non-US organizations, documents and licenses to prove their eligibility to receive foreign grants

Attachment A - Budget & Budget Narrative
Attachment B - Completed Organizational Control Environment Questionnaire
Attachment C - Unique Entity Identifier

Response: Yes, this is correct

SECTION VII : OTHERS

Question 40: We have applied to obtain UEI Number following the exact steps in the RFA on the sam.gov website but the document [Business Registration] I have uploaded has been rejected from the platform.

Response: The www.sam.gov page will have a link to their Help Desk. Please try contacting them.

Question 41: Does a company registered with DUNS get SAM UEI number automatically or need to apply as mentioned in Attachment C? If we are already registered with DUNS, do we still have to register for UEI?

Response: If the entity is already registered in SAM with a DUNS number, it will already have a UEI number and which can be viewed on www.sam.gov.

Question 42: Do we need to apply for SAM UEI number? Our company has worked already with USAID projects earlier.

Response: The UEI number is a mandatory requirement. SAREP will not award a grant to an applicant without a UEI. If your entity is already registered in SAM with a DUNS number, you already have a UEI number and can look it up in www.sam.gov.

Question 43: Will Nitrogen based fertilizers produced using Green Ammonia for domestic consumption be considered as a restricted commodity?

Response: Yes. Please refer to "Restrictions" on page 41 of the RFA. All fertilizers are a restricted commodity as per USAID ADS 312.3.3.7. (https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/312)

Question 44: Any possibility we could get the presentation...

Response: The Presentation is available on the SAREP website. The YouTube link to the presentation is also available. (https://sarepenergy.net/grant-opportunities/)