Proposal Costs – Key Takeaways

- Specify early: contract vehicle, small/socio-economic business set aside, dollar range and requirement for facility clearance to help offerors focus resources.

- Onerous solicitation requirements increase USAID's review time and increase costs which represent barriers to entry for local organizations and small businesses.

- RFIs, draft RFPs, and other engagement are great. When USAID is clear about the intent, provides eligibility information, and when draft RFPs include instructions and evaluation criteria, it can help drive down proposal costs.

- Proposal costs are recovered in partners' indirect costs and ultimately reimbursed by USAID. When USAID takes steps to reduce partner costs in the procurement, efficiencies can be dedicated to supporting successful programs.

- For non-traditional solicitation processes, the use of virtual events, inception phases for co-creation, and down-select for phased approaches, helps avoid unintended consequences and reduce cost to USAID and to partners.

Deciphering Requirements: Key Takeaways

- Well written RFPs result in well written proposals. Review for consistency across sections C, L and M.
- Communicate and share thinking with bidders early. The FAR encourages communications throughout the solicitation process.
- RFPs should only ask for what you will need to evaluate the proposals (per section M) - and no more.   For example, consider fewer annexes: e.g. leave MEL plans and workplans as deliverables after award.
- Phased procurement should winnow down competitors at each phase, include sufficient time for successful Phase 1 offerors to prepare Phase 2 response, and should be tested before going live.
- Templates, templates, templates – to reduce questions from offerors, make evaluation easier, and ease barriers to entry. This can include a template for promoting SB subcontracting.