RFA #2019-016 Q&A #2 Transcription

Q: We are currently implementing a project under the Notice C1 mechanism to integrate openIMIS with the Bahmni EHR platform in Nepal. I just wanted to understand, since this is being framed as sort of a continuation of a Notice C1 award or to support ongoing work with that, if a continuation of our work in Nepal to build functionality with the integration of openIMIS with Bahmni would be eligible under this because reading the RFA, it's a little bit unclear in terms of whether this is only focused on development of the core openIMIS or if integration with other platforms is eligible for this grant.

A: I don't think there's anything preventing you from submitting that type of work. We do say linkages to other OpenHIE components, and we consider Bahmni as one of the global goods with a component. I know of work right now that's happening with a claim module. There may be additional work on the claims module or that could happen that wasn't ready at the time that your work started so that would potentially be within scope. We also talked about the enrollment beneficiary modules, so I would think that potential linkages there around the enrollment module between Bahmni and openIMIS would also be considered.

From the Nepal perspective, I guess it doesn't stop you from adding on to the work that you are currently doing, but in terms of the requirements from Nepal and prioritization, it would not fall very high on the priority list. You've already started the Bahmni integration and given that we have basically only two facilities where insurance is active where Bahmni is being used, that could send claims in Nepal and we have none in Tanzania right now. On the priority list, it would just make it be further down than some of the requirements that we already put onto the wiki, such as the claims processing, because that's something from the Nepal perspective that is more of a burning issue right now.

An added value could be the payment layer and within Bahmni you're talking about Odoo as a financial management system. I think it would be worth seeing how to create a generic payment layer. We have a payment layer for Tanzania, for example, in the legacy system right now, but that is of course specific for the Tanzanian situation. But somehow managing accounts, managing payments from beneficiaries, getting them through mobile money services or other money transaction systems, I think that could be an interesting idea.

Yes, with the Odoo part because you guys have experience using Odoo on Bahmni trying to take something out, just from the Odoo part of Bahmni and integrating it on openIMIS so that there is more accounting work in openIMIS so that the insurer will have more accounting functionality. That'll be an interesting take that we haven't looked into yet and I'm sure there could be a use case developed. Right now we don't see a lot, but I think especially if we look into mobile payments as well once payments start coming in from there, an accounting module would definitely be required. I agree it's worth looking into. The funding levels and the needs are not necessarily aligned. Currently, if a proposal comes in that is a high-quality application, it can be marked as yes, this should be funded, although we don't have resources currently available, in which case, Digital Square will be working to identify additional resources. So even if something isn't perhaps the highest priority right now, I wouldn't necessarily discourage the submission of an application because it could be funded at a later time and this would help to get it into the queue.

Q: For the co-creation phase, will we have to travel to attend workshops?

A: No, the intent of the Open Application Process (OAP) and the platform that we have is to reduce the barriers, including fiscal and funding barriers for co-creation collaboration. So, the OAP is a publicly accessible website for concept notes and application materials. The narrative of the application materials will be public to help encourage and provide visibility so that you can do the co-creation. In terms of the budgets, the high-level budgets of the work packages would be visible but the detailed budget breakdown that's required for the full application would not be visible to the public.

During this completion place, it's possible to create completely new constellations, like a smaller company or organization in an expression of interest during the concept note phase, and we'll find a number of overlapping expressions of interest addressing the same topic or maybe neighboring topics, then it's also a possibility that during the co-creation phase those companies will form a consortium to work on something together and they could join for one application, meaning a smaller organization joins with the more experienced organization and learn something from that corporation. I'd say this would be a great opportunity for those who do not have that much experience with international tenders and all that to really get involved into the development. If you submit a concept note and you only have expertise in one domain and are looking for a partner, you can call that out in your concept note and that way others can see that you're looking for a partner to work with. We can also try to help work with you to identify missing partners. For example, we talked about linkages with other systems, and if you have experience with a facility register or product registry and want to provide that expertise but are new to open them, you could submit a concept note highlighting what you can contribute, as well as making a request to the broader community for a partner.

Q: Just looking at the timeline and thinking about the process for finding partners on this – how do you see that happening and how is Digital Square helping to facilitate that?

A: If during the concept notes phase you indicated desire to find a partner, we would look at some of the other concept notes that are submitted to see if there's an alignment. Try to make some of the connections through that platform or other means, potentially interested partners to work with you if that's what you're considering. What we've seen happen in the past, for example, is that let's say two or three concepts notes get submitted. Then the partners of those say "oh, yes, I think there's a lot of opportunity for us to work together" and so they'll only end up taking one of the concept notes and taking that to a full application. And then the other partners drop their concept notes but get incorporated in that large one. We're not going to be directive on who you need to partner with, but we do want to help facilitate and find center connections. I know the project timeline is a bit compressed on this, although sometimes it seems quite long, but since the funding available needs to be expanded by August or September of next year, we want to maximize the amount of time to actually work.