

fermata arts foundation

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## USAID's Unsolicited Proposal Response

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AI Decie

Fri, Mar 4, 2016 at 2:10 PM

To: Fermata Arts Foundation Office <office@fermata-arts.org>

Dear Ms. Ishutkina:

Please find attached USAID's reply to your unsolicited proposal on a "World Quality Naval Center for Ships in Ukraine."

In addition, as we had discussed during our meeting in February, I wanted to relay to you some food for thought that is meant to help you and FAF as you consider approaching possible donors. I want to emphasize that these are my personal reflections and not part of USAID's formal reply to your proposal. The Agency's reply is captured in the attached letter.

\* I'd suggest doing a good bit of research on the possible donor. For example, at minimum I would look at: What are its funding priorities? What type of activities is it currently funding / has recently funded? What are the ways that the donor most commonly provides its support – e.g., through tenders or competitions? How much of its resources are distributed through open door / unsolicited policies? are awards mostly made from its headquarters or field offices? What are its guidelines for proposal submissions – including whom to submit (this person is almost never the head of the donor agency), how to submit and what should be in the submission. If any of these basics aren't clear by perusing a donor's website, then I would suggest that you seek clarifications before investing time and resources into developing a proposal.

\* I'd keep your submission and its accompanying cover letter concise, on target/focused and confined to one transmittal message. I would not send additional attachments with the submission that do not unequivocally support the submission to the donor. If the donor has a format for how it likes to receive proposals, then I would absolutely follow those guidelines. I also would send it to the point of contact designated by the donor in its application materials.

\* Whatever the donor's desired format for proposals, I would make sure to clearly articulate (and concisely articulate) what is the problem that we are trying to address, what is the objective of our intervention(s), what are we proposing as our intervention(s), what do we hope to achieve from our intervention(s) and over what time period and for what resources (including what we and are partners will be putting forward as well as what we are asking from the donor)? I'd make sure that what I am proposing is clearly linked to the donor's current funding priorities. Throughout the proposal, I would suggest showing analysis that backs up the description of the problem as well as the rationale for the interventions being proposed to address the problem. Likewise, I would reflect consultations with and buy-ins from in-country stakeholders.

There's a lot to unpack in each of these points but if they were considered thoughtfully, I believe that they'd greatly increase the competitiveness of your proposals as well as make sure that you are investing your efforts on the proper venues for possible support. Perhaps an investment by FAF in a proposal writing training for one of its staff may be useful. Anyway, those are a few personal points from me as you requested and are meant to help FAF as it considers its further proposal endeavors.

Thank you again for your submission and your proposal. Best of luck to FAF and to you and Mr. Synkov.

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