**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):**

**Q: What criteria does a SME have to fulfill to be eligible for USAID WHAM funding?**

**A.** Have fewer than 250 employees; **and**

**B.** Annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million; **and/or**

**C.** Annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million

**OR**

**A.**  Have more than 250 employees; **and**

**B**. Annual turnover not exceeding EU 50 million; **and**

**C.** Annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million

**Q: Are intermediaries such as the chambers of commerce/economy and regional development agencies eligible to apply for this RFA?**

**A:** The main focus of this RFA is on applications from individual companies for grant funding, but intermediaries are eligible to apply and receive grant funding.

**Q:** **Does every activity in workforce training have to result in new employment?**

**A:** The short answer to this question is: yes. This is because new employment is one of the main WHAM goals, in addition to sales and export increase in supported SMEs. It is highly desirable that each activity co-financed through grants meets all three WHAM goals.

**Q:** **The companies are organizing trainings with their internal resources. Can this activity be financed through grants?**

**A:** When organizing training with internal resources, only some costs can be financed through grants, such as training materials, utility costs that can be allocated to training activities, and similar. Some costs related to internal training cannot be financed through grants due to compliance with USAID rules, such as financing costs of full-time employees in SMEs that are providing training to trainees, etc. However, it is legitimate to calculate those type of costs as the company’s contribution in financing activities, such as workforce development programs, access to market activities, and/or quality systems certifications.

**Q:** **In terms of new employment, do companies have to employ unemployed people registered at the Employment biro and to submit proofs?**

**A:** Companies do not have to employ unemployed people registered at the Employment bureau, since this is not a USAID request. For WHAM, it does not make a difference where new employees are coming from. The only relevant proof is the PD 3100 form about the new employment (the new employment registration form for tax authorities).

**Q: Is it possible for a company to use the grant for equipment purchasing or construction work related to expansion of production facilities?**

**A:** It is not possible to use WHAM grants for purchasing equipment or construction at the company level due to market distortion issues, limited project grant life, etc. However, it would be possible to use the grant for equipment purchase only in case that this equipment will be available to multiple companies, i.e. for training centers, technology parks/incubators, and educational institutions (both public and private) where the benefit and usage of that equipment would be made available to all companies involved in project activities.

**Q: Is it possible for a company to use the grant for software purchasing?**

**A:** It is possible to use the grant funds for co-financing the cost of the software that will contribute to improving the efficiency of a company’s operations, upgrade in existing and/or new technology, design of new products, and optimization of operations processes.

**Q: What types of grant applicant resources are allowed to be used as cost shares?**

**A:** Grant applicant resources (cost share) can be cash or in-kind. Examples of grant applicant resources which can be used as a cost share include salaries of employees, fringe benefits of employees, equipment (with amortization value), raw materials and supplies, infrastructure, and software/IT equipment.

**Q: What are examples of third-party resources/leverage?**

**A:** Examples of third-party resources/leverage can include funds received from relevant Ministries (ex. Ministry of Development, Entrepreneurship and Crafts), municipalities, government organizations, other companies, employment bureaus/institutes, and international donors/programs. Funds received from other USAID funded projects cannot be considered third party resources/leverage.

**Q: How many applications for grant funding are permitted per one company?**

**A:** Each company is allowed ***one*** grant application per this RFA.

**Q: How long does the proposed project have to last, and how long does WHAM monitor the progress and activities of the applicant?**

**A:** The minimum duration of the project is not prescribed. However, in line with the WHAM mandate, all of the project activities must be finalized and completed by March 1, 2020.

**Q: Is it possible for a private company to receive support in purchasing equipment?**

**A:** Yes, but only if the equipment is meant for the establishment of and/or support of a private training center which would be open for use and training for the needs of other companies in the region and BIH as a whole. Purchasing of equipment for the single needs of one company is not allowed.

**Q: Does a company have to be a recipient of WHAM grant funding in order to be eligible to apply for technical assistance through engagement of WHAM volunteer experts?**

**A:** No. Technical assistance through the engagement of volunteer experts is opened to all companies from metal, wood, and textile/footwear sectors. A company does not have to receive a grant in order to be eligible for technical assistance. Companies that have needs for technical assistance and engagement of volunteer experts should send their ideas and profile needs to WHAM via e-mail whamgrants@iesc.org.

**Q: Are companies that have fewer than 10 employees and are less than three years old eligible to apply for grant and technical assistance?**

**A:** Yes. WHAM will review and analyze the project proposals from all applicants. Small companies that are new on the market and have fewer than 10 employees are also eligible to apply and receive assistance if their project proposal’s potential is in line with WHAM goals and objectives. Exceptions will be made for smaller enterprises of five to nine employees that we expect can double in size by project end.

**Q: What is the maximum grant amount a company/applicant can receive?**

**A:** A maximum amount a grantee can receive is stated in each RFA and is indicated in USD.

**Q: What is the documentation an applicant has to submit to WHAM in order to show new employment or increase in sales and/or exports?**

**A:** The documentation an applicant has to submit in order to prove and show new employment is the annual PD 3100 form as well as, if possible, documentation from the relevant employment bureau (ex. statement of unemployment). In regard to increase in sales and/or export, applicants have to submit official financial statements submitted to the relevant authorities, as well as copies of new contracts and/or proofs of new transactions (ex. Statements/cover letters from buyers and clients).

**Q: In the case of establishment and/or development of a training center, what minimum documentation does the applicant have to submit to WHAM in order to show duties and activities of partners/companies?**

**A:** A Memorandum of Partnership or Memorandum of Understanding must be developed, outlining which companies will be initial partners in the project, what are the duties of each partner/company, training programs and modules, as well as a plan for sustainability of the center. In the grant application, an applicant must show firm commitment from the partners/companies (minimum 3) for involvement and support of the training center. WHAM will seek clear indication of demand for training services before funding such grants.

**Q: Can the received grant be used for retroactively financing the completed activities of the applicant?**

**A:** No. WHAM cannot retroactively finance activities and employments that were completed and/or generated before.

**Q: What is the minimum amount of companies needed for a joint application?**

**A:** WHAM does not have a prescribed minimum amount but encourages that at least 3 companies are included in the case of joint applications.

**Q: Can a company apply for certification and introduction of standards?**

**A:** Yes. This RFA provides opportunities for companies to apply for assistance in certification and introduction of standards.

**Q: What is the average duration period from submission of the grant application to the approval of grant funds?**

**A:** This depends on the dynamic and speed of the applicant. WHAM evaluates each received grant application within 10 days of their submission. The average thus far has been two months from the submission of the grant application to the signing of the grant agreement.

**Q: What type of assistance is available from WHAM to the applicant during the process of grant application development?**

**A:** WHAM stands at the disposal of all applicants through phone and e-mail assistance as well as visits to the applicant companies and sites.

**Q: Can workers employed through service/seasonal agreements be considered new employees?**

**A:** Yes. WHAM recognizes the importance and number of seasonal workers in the BIH private sector, especially those employed in textile and footwear sectors. Applicants are expected to submit legal documentation justifying the engagement and seasonal employment of these workers.

**Q: What documentation do applicants need to submit by the deadline, other than the Grant Application Template?**

**A:** Other than the grant application, applicants need to submit a Grant Budget Form, Indicators, and an Environmental Review. Besides these documents, applicants also need to submit all other documentation relating to their project activities, such as CVs, salary sheets, letters of commitment/support (if relevant), as well as quotes for raw materials and supplies requested from WHAM.

**Q: Under question number four (4) in the Grant Application document, applications are asked to "list personnel who will be involved in implementing this program (CVs and salary history sheets are required for all program personnel)". Does this refer to employees of the company that will be in charge of implementation of the project, consultants on the project, or even both­?**

**A:** This refers to all people who will be included in the project and/or whose time the applicant will show as their cost-share. In that regard, this can include consultants and project managers on behalf of the company.