



USAID | BANGLADESH

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)

NOFO Number: 72038821RFA00007

Issuance Date: March 8, 2021

Amendment No. 1 Issuance date: April 1, 2021

Revised Application Deadline: April 22, 2021, 1600 Bangladesh Time

Subject: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Number: 72038821RFA00007, Amendment 1.

Program Title: USAID's Shobai Miley Shikhi (Everyone Learns Together) Activity

Federal Assistance Listing Number: 98.001 USAID Foreign Assistance for Programs Overseas

Dear Prospective Applicant:

The United States Agency for International Development in Bangladesh (USAID/Bangladesh) is seeking applications from qualified US and non-US organizations to implement an activity titled Shobai Miley Shikhi (Everyone Learns Together).

The purpose of this Amendment 1 is to:

1. Revise the Application Submission Due date from April 15, 2021 to April 22, 2021.
2. Update section D.4. a) (6) Institutional Capability and Experience
3. Provide answers to the questions generated from the NOFO which will automatically change/modify the 72038821RFA00007, as appropriate.

Thank you for your interest in USAID's programs.

Sincerely,

Nathan Hilgendorf
Agreement Officer
Office of Acquisition and Assistance

I. The NOFO is amended as follows:

- 1. Cover Page:** Delete "Application Deadline: April 15, 2021" and replace with "Application Deadline: April 22, 2021"
- 2. Section D.4. a) (6) Institutional Capability and Experience:** add the following as the second last paragraph under this subsection:

"USAID reserves the right to request additional information pertinent to past performance of the applicant as well as major subpartners (20% or more of the total proposed amount) at a later stage, if selected, should it be deemed necessary to conduct the applicant's risk assessment."

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II. Answers to all Questions received are provided below:

1. Will USAID provide the opportunity to ask further questions during the later phases of the application process?

Response: At USAID's discretion, questions will be allowed at later phases of the application process. Further information will be provided at the appropriate stage.

2. A.3 Scope (pg. 6): The RFA states that the rapid situational analysis will serve as a baseline for the activity.

- a. Does USAID envision this analysis also serving as a baseline for learning outcomes?

Response: No, this specific study will not include learning assessment and hence it will not serve as a baseline for learning outcomes of CWDs. But as explained in the NOFO (page 6) the study will serve as a baseline for the Shobai Miley Shobai activity. It is expected to build knowledge and evidence base around disability-inclusive education in Bangladesh. It will provide reliable data on the primary school-age children with disabilities and the practices of teaching and learning for children with disabilities in Bangladesh. It will also identify gaps between enrolled students and the estimated prevalence of disability nationwide.

Shobai Miley Shikhi Activity will also conduct a cross-sectional learning assessment of students at baseline and end-line for a cohort of beneficiary schools and for a comparison group of non-intervention schools (page 14).

- b. If so, is it linked to the subsequent longitudinal study of children with and without disability?

Response: Please see the response above.

3. A.3 Scope, (pg. 6) states that Shobai Miley Shikhi "...is a nationwide activity that will be implemented at the central level and in Government Primary Schools in marginalized hard-to-reach places." Should offerors propose activities in areas already covered by USAID education projects (ex. Eshoo Shikhi) as part of this geographic scope?

Response: USAID expects this activity to be implemented in selected upazilas (sub-districts) across the country. Divisions, districts, sub-districts, schools, and non-formal education centers will be selected in consultation with USAID and MOPME after award (Page 6).

4. A.5 Results Framework/Result 1 (pg. 12) states that interventions should not support the provision of assistive devices.
 - a. Please clarify the situations in which USAID will approve the provision of assistive devices using project funds.

Response: Result 1 focuses on the pedagogy, strengthening the existing practices and enabling environments for learning to have as wide an impact as possible, rather than supporting the provision of assistive devices, which can be cost-prohibitive. The Government of Bangladesh is also providing need based assistive devices to CWDs. The provision of assistive devices using project funds need to

be: (1) assessed properly and justified to USAID; (2) approved by USAID; and (3) procured through the local system.

- b. Do assistive devices provided by outside funds (private sector, DPOs, etc.) require case-by-case approval from USAID?

Response: No, this will not require USAID's approval. In fact, the partnerships and collaboration with the private sector, non-governmental organizations, Disabled People's Organizations, the health sector, and other partners could meet these needs (page 12 of the NOFO).

5. A.5 Results Framework/Result 1 (pgs. 11-12): Does USAID envision providing teacher training on inclusive practices to a broad scope of mainstream teachers or should the training on inclusion should be targeted to special school teachers, with teacher "representatives" from mainstreamed public schools and non-formal settings?

Response: With the Shobai Miley Shikhi Activity, USAID envisions providing teachers training mainly to mainstream teachers of pre-primary and primary grades. USAID also anticipates the Activity to support the GOB's plan for teachers training on inclusive practice through the Directorate of Primary Education's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) framework for teachers development and Inclusive Education Framework.

6. A.5 Results Framework/Result 1 (pgs. 11-12): Result 1 focuses mainly on government primary schools but will include a small number of non-formal education centers. Does USAID consider non-formal education centers to be any educational institution outside of primary education, or does it follow the approach under the BNFE Act 2016?

Response: USAID does not consider non-formal education centers to be any educational institution outside of primary education. This activity is designed in support of PEDP4, so any schools or learning centers that the activity selects need to fit within the broad scope of the PEDP4 for primary school aged children.

7. A.5 Results Framework/Result 1 (pgs. 11-12): Result 1 references the provision of inclusive learning materials. Is the primary focus for adapted government-approved textbooks?

Response: To ensure full and equal participation of children with disabilities in mainstream settings the primary focus is on adapted government-approved textbooks. The objective of result 1 is to improve the existing practices for a disability-inclusive school environment with high-quality, inclusive instruction that is adaptable to the needs of children with disabilities and that can be scaled by the Government of Bangladesh.

8. A.8 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (pgs. 14-16): Does USAID envision assessments of children with different types of disabilities, and if so, how should assessments be structured to reflect subgroup disaggregation?

Response: There is no need for disaggregation of learning assessment results by types of disabilities. The disaggregation will be by grade, and sex. It will also analyze the results for children with disabilities as one group and children without disabilities as another group.

9. A.8 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (pgs. 14-16): All learning outcomes indicators are to be disaggregated by grade. How should this apply to children out of school and in multi-grade

classrooms?

Response: Out of school children will not be part of the learning assessment envisioned in this Activity.

10. D.4 Content and Form of Application Submission (pg. 27): May Offerors use smaller fonts, but not smaller than size 10, for textboxes in addition graphs and charts?

Response: Yes, smaller fonts, but not smaller than size 10, may be used for textboxes in additional graphs and charts.

11. D.4 Content and Form of Application Submission (pg. 29) states that “[i]f the Applicant feels that revisions to the objectives are warranted, an amended results framework should be presented as part of its general technical approach.” May Offerors provide the amended results framework as an annex?

Response: No, it should come along with the proposed technical approach within the eight-page limit.

12. Is Shobai Miley Shikhi expected to work at the pre-primary level? This is mentioned in section 3.A. Scope, but pre-primary is not mentioned in the results framework. Please clarify. Could USAID also clarify the grade levels for primary level interventions?

Response: Shobai Miley Shikhi is expected to work at both pre-primary and primary level.

13. For applicants that move onto the Oral Presentation Phase 2, it is understood that two key personnel must attend/present. Are there any parameters for others that may attend the Oral Presentation?

Response: As stated in the NOFO, page 33, “Selected Applicants are also highly encouraged to include participants that are sub-partners and/or consortium members, as applicable and from local organization partners (if applicable). Selected Applicants are not limited to the number of participants.” The applicant will have to determine the team that will be in the best position to give the presentation and to answer any questions that arise for further clarification.

14. Can USAID provide the number of private schools and community based non-formal education centers that USAID expects Shobai Miley Shikhi to reach?

Response: USAID expects this activity to select divisions, districts, sub-districts, schools, and non-formal education centers in consultation with USAID and MOPME after award. It is expected that the Applicant will come up with the best cost-effective idea which would be discussed during the co-creation workshop.

15. In Section A.2 page 9, USAID notes “the Recipient will conduct a rapid situation analysis of children with disability.” Could USAID provide a timeframe for the completion of the rapid assessment?

Response: USAID expects this assessment to happen quickly, without affecting the startup and implementation of the activity.

16. In Section A.2 page 9, USAID notes that “Divisions, districts, sub-districts, schools, and non-formal education centers will be selected in consultation with USAID and MOPME after award.” Could USAID provide targeted or provisional information on the number of "catchment areas" and schools to be involved in the interventions?

Response: At this point USAID does not have this information.

17. Regarding the expectation of working in a "small number of private schools," could USAID provide more information as to the characteristics of, and/or student population being served by, these private schools?

Response: USAID does not have detailed information on this.

18. Can USAID confirm that it does not expect applicants to address the needs of students who attend schools that exclusively serve children with disabilities?

Response: The Activity is expected to support only government primary schools, a small number of private schools and community based non-formal education centers.

19. Does the project need to identify disability prevalence in each school participating in the Activity?

Response: The implementing partner is expected to report on the number of children with disabilities in the intervention schools.

20. Is the Activity expected to use only the existing academic assessments for tracking the progress (as requested in the M&E section), or could the Activity consider other types of assessments?

Response: USAID anticipates this activity will supplement GOB's initiative within the existing school system. The learning assessment will be based on the current curriculum of GOB. The implementing partner may develop new learning assessment instruments in collaboration with the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) and the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) of Bangladesh

21. Can USAID provide provisional timelines for the four different application stages and project commencement?

Response: At this moment, USAID does not have this information available; however, USAID intends to follow the timelines for each stage as generally outlined in the NOFO.

22. What is the anticipated start date of the award?

Response: USAID anticipates to award this activity in August 2021.

23. D.4, (a), (2) Executive Summary states that "The Executive Summary should include a brief overview of the overall technical approach, funding requirements, and proposed implementing partners (consortium, local organizations). The Executive Summary is excluded from the 8-page limit; however, it must not be more than 2 pages."

Could USAID confirm if the "funding requirements" listed above are intended to be simply an overall dollar value or, is the phase 1 summary budget to be included within the Executive Summary while also submitted separately in its original Excel format?

Response: The "funding requirements" are intended to be the overall dollar value.

24. We would like to know if there is a template available for download of the concept note that is needed for submission under Phase 1 of this call, or should we create our own template in Word based on the format provided on Page 28 of the NOFO for this call.

Response: There is no particular template for the concept note.

25. Is there any limit/bar of operations costs (vs program cost) of total projects?

Response: There is no limit/bar of operation cost vs program cost; however, as stated in the NOFO, "USAID's goal is to achieve low administrative costs and focus funds for local engagement and program implementation." Applicants are to make the judgement how best they can achieve this goal and ensure maximum contribution to the activity implementation.

26. Is there any preference of geographical location(s) by USAID in Bangladesh for this intervention?

Response: There is no preferred geographical location. USAID expects this activity to select divisions, districts, sub-districts, schools, and non-formal education centers in consultation with USAID and MOPME after award.

27. What is the maximum number of organizations/members that can be engaged in a consortium to apply to this NOFO?

Response: No maximum number of consortium members is mandated under this NOFO. The consortium will be assessed for its potential in effectively carrying out the aims of the activity.

28. A.3. SCOPE, Page 6, Relevant RFP Language: The Activity will also support children with disabilities in a small number of private schools and community based non-formal education centers.

Does USAID have a specific number of private schools and non-formal education centers in mind for the Activity to support?

Response: USAID expects this activity to select divisions, districts, sub-districts, schools, and non-formal education centers in consultation with USAID and MOPME after award.

29. A.3. SCOPE, Page 6, Relevant RFP Language: It is anticipated that the Shobai Miley Shikhi Activity will provide technical support at the central and district levels of the government and schools in selected upazilas (sub-districts).

How many upazilas does USAID intend to target with this Activity for school level implementation? The NOFO only refers to "selected upazilas".

Response: USAID expects this activity to select divisions, districts, sub-districts, schools, and non-formal education centers in consultation with USAID and MOPME after award.

30. A.3. SCOPE, Page 6, Relevant RFP Language: Shobai Miley Shikhi Activity is a nationwide activity that will be implemented at the central level and in Government Primary Schools in selected marginalized-hard-to-reach areas.

Are there any "marginalized-hard-to-reach areas" that USAID has prioritized for school-based implementation?

Response: No, USAID doesn't have priority areas. But USAID expects this activity to select divisions, districts, sub-districts, schools, and non-formal education centers in consultation with USAID and MOPME after award.

31. D.4 CONTENT AND FORMAT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION, Page Number 31, *Relevant RFP Language*:2. List of the three most relevant U.S. Government or other donor funded awards

Can USAID clarify if the "three most relevant U.S. Government or other donor funded awards" are limited to those of the prime, or can they include experience from consortium partners?

Response: Yes, the “three most relevant awards” are limited to those implemented by the prime applicant.

Please note that the NOFO has been amended as follows: “USAID reserves the right to request additional information pertinent to past performance of the applicant as well as major subpartners (20% or more of the total proposed amount) at a later stage, if selected, should it be deemed necessary to conduct the applicant’s risk assessment”

32. A.9 COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION, Page Number:16, *Relevant RFP Language*: A close and trusting working relationship with the Government of Bangladesh is essential to achieve results under Shobai Miley Shikhi Activity.

The NOFO indicates the winner will work with the Government of Bangladesh. Can USAID please clarify if USAID has or will have negotiated all necessary agreements from the Government of Bangladesh for this Activity in advance of award, or will the successful applicant be expected to enter into MOUs with the GoB following award?

Response: No, the implementing partner is not expected to sign MOU with GOB. USAID Bangladesh has signed an MOU in 2019 with the Economic Relationship Division (ERD) and Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, to support PEDP4 Sub-Component 2.6 (“Special Education Needs and Disability”).

33. D.4.a.1 Cover Page, Page Number:28, *Relevant RFP Language*: The cover page must include: (i) Program Title; (ii) NOFO Reference Number; (iii) Name of Organization(s) applying for the agreement; and (iv) Applicant’s point of contact (name both types and his/her signature, position, telephone number, email address).

Can USAID clarify what “(name both types.....)” means? Will USAID accept one name and signature from the applicant’s Authorized Signing Official?

Response: This was a typo, it would be “Name both Typed.....”.

34. D.4.a.3: Phase 1 Initial Application, Technical Approach, Page Number:29, *Relevant RFP Language*:The technical approach should include:.... Detailed sustainability plan clearly demonstrating how activities/programmatic results will continue in the long term without USAID support when the activity ends.

Given the concept note stage and space limitations for the Technical Approach (8 pages), would USAID consider reserving the following requirement until after the collaboration workshop, or modify this requirement for the concept note stage?

“Detailed sustainability plan clearly demonstrating how activities/programmatic results will continue in the long term without USAID support when the activity ends.”

Response: "Detailed" is taken out. And the statement should read "a sustainability plan clearly demonstrating how activities/programmatic results will continue in the long term without USAID support when the activity ends".

35. B.1 Estimate of Funds Available and H.2 Award, *Page Number:19 and 86, Relevant RFP Language:*USAID intends to award one (1) Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity. The Government may award up to two Cooperative Agreements resulting from this NOFO to the responsible applicants whose applications best meets the requirements of this NOFO.

Would USAID please clarify whether there is the potential for two (2) Cooperative Agreement awards made from this NOFO? If so, how would that affect the four stage process?

Response: USAID prefers one Cooperative Agreement. However, in the event, the government considers two Cooperative Agreements, this will affect only phase 3 and 4; the processes reflected in the NOFO will be followed as stated.

36. D4.4 Staffing Plan, *Page Number:30, Relevant RFP Language,* A supporting narrative should include a brief description of all long-term staff positions and level of experience. Description of the role of short-term technical staff including the proposed level of effort and the process to be used for selecting them should be indicated.

Given the concept note stage and space limitations for the Technical Approach (8 pages), would USAID consider this requirement to be included as an annex that doesn't count toward the 8-page limit or modify this requirement for the concept note stage to include only senior or technical staff?

Response: The summary should be provided within the eight pages limit. However, the detailed requirements could be presented as an annex.

37. Page 6. Please clarify USAID's expectations on budgeting for the number of divisions, districts, sub-districts, schools, and non-formal education centers and private schools whose selection will be made post-award.

Response: The volume of tasks that will be implemented at the different levels will determine the total budget. The volume of the tasks and the total budget will determine the number of divisions, districts, and schools. This area can be explored during the collaborative workshop at phase 3. But the identification (selection) of divisions, districts, and schools will be made after the award.

38. Page 6. Can USAID provide any initial criteria considered for private schools and non-formal education centers to be included among the target following award.

Page 9. PEDP4's sub-component 2.6 "Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND)" targets "107,000 children with disabilities [to be] enrolled in schools by 2022." Will the USAID Shobai Miley Shikhi Activity adopt the PEDP4 target of 107,000 enrollments?

Response: USAID did not set a target for this. USAID anticipates this activity will supplement GOB's initiative within the existing school system in line with the scope of PEDP4. It is expected that the Applicant will come up with the best idea which can be discussed in the co-creation workshop.

39. Pages 9, 12: For EGRA/EGMA/SEL foundational learning assessments, to what level will USAID be expecting the national sample size to be comparable – Upazila or a larger or smaller administrative zone?

Response: The comparisons should be at district and division levels, not at lower levels.

40. Page 19. Please clarify a start date for budgeting purposes. Page 20. Would USAID consider changing the geographic code from 937 to 935 to allow Offerors to work with a greater diversity of subgrantees?

Response: The anticipated date of the award is August 2021. At this point USAID does not have a waiver authorized under Subpart D of 22 CFR Section 228 and ADS 310.3.4.

41. Page 23. Please clarify if applicants are expected to demonstrate cost share at Phase 1 concept note stage as the budget template in Attachment 5 does not show a line item for cost share.

Response: Yes, the cost share is required to be shown at Phase 1. Please see attached revised budget template. However, the details of the cost share can be shown at the later stage, as selected.

42. Page. 23 (C.3). Considering the lengthy NGO registration process combined with anticipated COVID related delays in obtaining document authentications, will USAID afford any flexibility for this requirement? Would USAID allow the awardee to implement through a legally registered local entity?

Response: The prime implementer of the activity must be the named awardee under the final, executed cooperative agreement. Note that the requirement for local registration with the Government of Bangladesh does not apply until the actual start of activity implementation.

43. Page. 23 (C.3). Does an applicant registered as a legal entity with the Bangladesh Board of Investments meet the requirements of C.3?

Response: The requirements of Section C.3 flow directly from the registration requirements of the Bangladesh government. Whether a particular type of registration qualifies an organization to conduct business in Bangladesh is a question for the appropriate department/agency of the Government of Bangladesh.

44. Page. 23 (C.3) Will USAID accept proof of intent to register or is USAID specifically limiting competition to only those organizations already registered?

Response: Note that registration with the Government of Bangladesh is not an eligibility criterion for submission of application under this NOFO. It is, however, a requirement for an organization to receive an award and to begin program implementation.

45. Section D: Application and Submission Information On page 42, D.5 part b, USAID states that if the applicant does not have a NICRA and does not elect to use the 10% de minimis rate, that USAID may request additional financial documentation, including financial statements and audits. In D.5 part c, USAID says that any applicant or subrecipient without a NICRA must provide USAID with financial statements, and audited documents from the past 3 years. According to 2 CFR 200.414(f), non-federal entities that elect to use the de minimis rate do not need to provide any backup documentation to support that rate. Could USAID clarify whether applicants or their subrecipients, if they elect to use the de minimis rate, must also provide the requested financial documentation to USAID as a part of their application?

Response: This is correct. No documentation is required to justify the 10% de minimis indirect cost rate. As described in §200.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but

may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

46. Could USAID kindly provide applicants with the latest mission LCP?

Response: The Mission Local compensation plan is an internal document; and therefore, will not be shared with external entities at the moment.

[END OF AMENDMENT 1]