



Request for Applications # RFA-641-14-000004 – Amendment No. 01

RFA Title: USAID Partnership for Education: LEARNING
Amendment No. 01 Issuance Date: June 18, 2014
Issued by: Yves Kore, Regional Agreement Officer 

The purpose of Amendment No. 01 is to:

- 1) Provide to all potential applicants the Questions and Answers received in reference to the RFA; and
- 2) Extend the Closing date for receipt of applications from **July 9, 2014 to July 14 2014.**

I. TECHNICAL RELATED QUESTIONS

- Q.1: Is Funding expected to complete its assessments of government partner institutions prior to Learning starting its activities? Or during Year 1 of Learning?
- A.1: The Mission's Education Partner Country Systems team will comply with USAID policy regarding government to government agreements with the aim of being granted Authorization for Use of Partner Government Systems for the relevant entities under the Partnership for Education Project. USAID awarded a GES Financial Management Risk and Programmatic Capacity Assessment in June 2014. The contractor, in conjunction with the Mission's Education Partner Country Systems team, is expected to complete the assessment by Quarter 1 of fiscal year 2015.
- Q.2: When does USAID anticipate awarding the *USAID Partnership for Education: Funding* award? According to the RFA, the risk and capacity assessments upon which Learning's institutional development work is predicated should be conducted directly by USAID or through the Funding mechanism by the time that Learning is awarded or during Year 1 of the Learning Activity (page 26). If the assessments have not been conducted by the end of Year 1, will expectations for timeline and extent of transfer to the Government of Ghana of the Learning activity be adjusted accordingly?
- A.2: Please see USAID response to Question 1. In addition the reports will be shared with the Learning Implementation Partner (IP) as soon as they become available.
- Q.3: Can USAID give an indication of what percentage of funds applicants should allocate towards subgrants for transitioning districts to support their transition to performing districts?

A.3: Any subgrants are to NGOs to build the district capacities of transitioning districts, not to transitioning districts themselves. The Applicant is expected to propose.

Q.4: Pages 12, 14, 20-21, 26-28, 36-37—Clarification of financial and management capacity assessments.

Finalizing actions to support these entities, as well as identifying performing and transitioning Districts, depends to a large extent on the findings and results of the risk and capacity assessments conducted directly via USAID / Ghana. Can USAID provide the terms of reference and timeline for these assessments and clarify if the Learning recipient will be responsible for conducting any such assessments? (On page 27 the RFA mentions “key findings from the GES Public Financial Management and Programmatic Capacity Assessment”—has this been completed and if so, can USAID provide a copy to offers?)

A.4: See USAID response to Question 1.

Q.5: On Page 14, the GES Financial Management Risk and Programmatic Capacity Assessment is mentioned. Can USAID please clarify who is responsible for designing and conducting this assessment and whether it has already been conducted?

A.5: See USAID response to Question 1.

Q.6: On page 20, under sub-component 1.2, the USAID financial management risk and programmatic capacity assessment will be conducted for institutions. Can USAID please clarify who is responsible for designing and conducting this assessment and whether it has already been conducted?

A.6: See USAID response to Question 1.

Q.7: Pages 12, 14, 20-21, 26, 32-34, 36 –Clarification of “direct funding”

Please clarify when/under what circumstances and to what extent funding (via grants or otherwise) to government entities or CBOs/NGOs is to take place via Learning project funds vs. funds from G2G or Funding.

A.7: Funding via Learning to government entities, particularly GES, are estimated and factored in during Year 1 and partially for Year 2, Any subgrants to NGOs to build the district capacities of transitioning districts, not to transitioning districts themselves, are also factored into Learning. Direct USAID funds are anticipated once the requisite Stage 2 assessments are completed and the mission has received Authorization for the Use of Partner Government Systems for the targeted entities.

Q.8: On page 27 the RFA states that the recipient will “have resources to support the GEU, IEU and Sped at the central level” in Year 1, but that after that these units should be able to “directly engage with USAID/Ghana”. On this point and others that are similar, please clarify if this means that Learning will not be involved in the funding of these entities after Year 1.

A.8: Contingent on completion of GES Assessment and mission receipt of Authorization for the Use of Partner Government Systems of GES, Learning includes funds for funding of the relevant GES Divisions, Units and DDEs. The mission anticipates obtaining the required approvals during Year 1, and direct funding beginning Year 2 though exact timeframe is not yet determined. Funding for teacher professional development activities (pre and in-service) are included in Learning during Year 2. As per the RFA, while the Learning Applicant will not be expected to fund the government entities once they begin to receive direct funds, it is expected they will continue to provide support to these entities commensurate with needs in line with the Program Description and in agreement with MOE/GES.

Q.9: Does the \$71,800,000 estimated funding ceiling include the funding intended as of Year 2 to flow directly to MOE, GES, NIB, NCCA, NTC, COEs, performing DDEs? If yes, is there a particular portion of this amount set aside for this direct funding?

A.9: See USAID response to previous question. It is anticipated that Stage 2 Assessments will be conducted for all other MOE institutions during FY15 and that direct funding will begin at a time to be determined. Though the exact timeframe is not yet determined, the mission anticipates the required assessments to be completed and Authorization for the Use of Partner Government Systems to be granted to allow direct agreements to those entities during Year 2 of the Learning activity.

Q.10: Page 24: "Activities will review and strengthen the role of the Regional Education Offices (REO), NIB, NCCA and NTC in their oversight and management functions." Would you kindly share the Ministry of Education management and oversight structure as it stands now with the 3 newly created institutions – NIB, NCCA and NTC? And would you also share the operational status of each of these institutions and their roles and responsibilities?

A.10: Applicants are encouraged to view the MOE (www.moe.gov.gh) and GES (www.ges.gov.gh) websites that include narratives of management and oversight structures.

The NIB has an operational secretariat in Accra. The NTC has an Executive Director, to be named officially though they and NCCA have experienced delays in having running secretariats. USAID recommends that Respondents review GNECC's "Scoping Study on the Implementation of Ghana's Education Decentralization Reforms", November 2013. *[Referenced document is attached as a separate file].*

Q.11: On page 37, the RFA states, "USAID Partnership for Education Learning will have the lead technical assistance role for the MOE/GES and manage disbursement of funds to MOE, GES, NTB, NTC, NCCA and other local education organizations." Are the amounts of the disbursement of funds to government partner institutions pre-determined by USAID already? If yes, can USAID please specify the amounts?

A.11: Please see estimates only for the targeted entities, specific division/unit (where applicable). This amendment therefore revises/updates this section to include the table shown below.

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TARGET ENTITY(IES)	SPECIFIC DIVISION/UNIT	INTERVENTION/ACTIVITY AREA	YEAR 1 ESTIMATES (\$)	YEAR 2 ESTIMATES (\$)
POLICY SUPPORT				
MOE, UEW, UCC, GES, others as necessary	As necessary	Reading Policy and Policy Implementation Development Support	600,000	
TEACHER INSTRUCTION, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT and TEACHING & LEARNING MATERIALS				
Autonomous bodies	NIB	Teaching and Learning Quality Oversight	132,000	
	NTC	Teaching and Learning Quality Oversight	103,000	
	NCCA	Teaching and Learning Quality Oversight	110,000	
UCC, UEW	UEW (TBD) and Institute of Education (38 Colleges of Education), others as necessary	Pre-Service Early Grade Reading (EGR) Support & Grants	1,000,000	
GES	TED, CRDD, others as necessary	KG Orientation and Training	6,600,000	
	TED, CRDD, others as necessary	Primary Child Literacy/EGR Refresher or related needed Training	12,540,000	
	TED, CRDD, others as necessary	Pre-Service EGR Support	1,000,000	
	CRDD, Logistics & Supply, others as necessary	EGR Teaching & Learning Materials	5,503,467	4,503,467
	CRDD, Logistics & Supply, others as necessary	Supplementary Readers, including supplementary materials plan	1,510,875	1,420,875
	GEU	Inclusive education that targets conventionally excluded populations and emphasizes	150,000	

		reading improvements		
	IEU	Inclusive education that targets conventionally excluded populations and emphasizes reading improvements	290,000	
	SpEd	Inclusive education that targets conventionally excluded populations and emphasizes reading improvements	900,000	
ASSESSMENT/DATA SUPPORT				
	NEAU, Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD)	School Education Assessment pilot/testing	194,850	
	Basic Education	Assessment/Data Support: School Report Cards	1,297,800	
	Basic Education	Assessment/Data Support: District/EDUNet Connectivity	570,294	

Q.12: On page 37, the RFA states in the first paragraph, “USAID Partnership for Education: Learning will have the lead technical assistance role for the MOE/GES and manage disbursement of funds to MOE, GES, NIB, NTC, NCAA, and other local education programs.” In the second paragraph, it states that “Resources for technical assistance and implementation will be included in the resource allocation to Recipient for Year 1. Is Learning responsible for granting to MOE/GES in Year 1?

A.12: [Yes. See USAID response to Question 6.](#)

Q.13: Please clarify which activities are to be national in scope and which are to be implemented only in the 159 transitioning and performing districts.

A.13: [Please see Section C – Geographic Focus on page 14 that defines the specific Learning activities that at national in approach. In addition, the GPE project and USAID's Learning activity are complementary. The two ensure national coverage as GPE is supporting 57 deprived districts, whereas, USAID's Learning activities will support 159 transitioning and performing districts.](#)

Q.14: Page 14—Clarification of geographic focus: Learning is “predominately national in scope” and should “take into account regions where learning and reading outcomes are the weakest, such as, but not limited to, the Northern Region”, but “concentrate its support on the approximately 159 remaining [non-deprived]...districts”. Please clarify how Recipient is to determine whether to work in a given deprived district.

- A.15: The Ministry of Education has operated with the concept of deprived districts since o/a 2004. Ghana's Global Partnership for Education Grant (GPEG) was developed to target 57 deprived districts out of a total of 170 districts at the time. The deprived district criteria were determined in collaboration with the World Bank, GOG and education development partners. The criteria include Ghana's poverty index and education indicators e.g., primary education retention, share of girls enrolled, BECE English pass rates, etc. The Learning activity will focus on transitioning and performing districts, with an estimated, approximate 1/3 of non-deprived districts to be deemed in that category for planning and cost estimate purposes. The Learning Applicant will work with MOE/GES and USAID/Ghana to determine which districts fall in the 'performing and transitioning' categories based on existing criteria and additional criteria agreed upon with GOG.
- Q.16: Page 31 of the RFA indicates that "the Recipient will work with MOE/GES and USAID Ghana to determine which districts fall in the performing and transitioning categories." Is the recipient expected to come up with the criteria for the performing and transitioning districts or are there already criteria available?
- A.16: As per question 11, deprived district criteria have been determined in collaboration with GOG, World Bank and education development partners for the purposes of the GPE Grant. The Learning Applicant will work with MOE/GES and USAID/Ghana to determine which districts fall in the 'performing and transitioning' categories based on existing criteria and additional criteria agreed upon with GOG. The Learning Applicant will work with MOE/GES and USAID/Ghana to determine which districts fall in the 'performing and transitioning' categories based on existing criteria and additional criteria agreed upon with GOG.
- Q.17: The RFA on pg. 14 states that the scope of teacher training is national. However, GPE is currently covering 59 districts. Should respondents plan for teacher training in all districts or only the 159 transitioning and performing?
- A.17: Please see Section C – Geographic Focus on page 14 that defines the specific Learning activities that are national in approach.
- Q.18: What should respondents assume will be covered by GES in terms of costs for teacher training?
- A.18: Applicants to propose based on discussions with GES.
- Q.19: Should respondents plan to provide teacher training to all districts including the districts covered by GPE?
- A.19: Please see USAID response to Question 13.
- Q.20: Similarly should materials be printed and procured for all schools including for the districts covered by GPE?
- A.20: As per Section C – Geographic Focus on page 14, Learning will provide teaching and learning materials nationwide.

Q.21: Page 15, IR 4.1, it states that the overall IR is “enhanced reading and Math instruction”; however it is unclear which sub-IRs includes Math. Is Math restricted only to IR 1.4?

A.21: Math is restricted to IR 1.4.

Q.22: Page 15: Are any Math components expected in IRs 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, or are those components only for reading?

A.22: Those components are focused only on reading.

Q.23: Page 9 of the RFA indicates that the current language policy includes 11 Ghanaian languages. Is it expected that more Ghanaian languages will be included in this language policy over the course of the project or before that time?

A.23: At this time it is not expected that the language policy will change during the life of the Learning activity.

Q.24: On page 15, under IR 4.1.1 it is stated that an expected project outcome is ‘In-service training for reading instruction...using Ghana’s current bilingual child literacy curriculum and approach.’ Does this reference to curriculum mean what was developed through NALAP? If so, do existing official syllabi now include the standards, milestones, and bilingual approach of NALAP?

A.24: The current child literacy curriculum is based on NALAP. GES is in the process of standardizing learning measurements in mother tongue, English and math.

Q.25: Under IR 4.1.2 it is stated that ‘Pre-service training for reading instruction improved.’ Currently the pre-service teacher training curriculum and examinations are managed by the University of Cape Coast’s Institute for Education. The institute bases its teacher training curricula on existing official syllabi. Is the implication that the awardee should work with the Institute to modify the basic education teacher training curriculum on syllabi and curricula based on the NALAP approach?

A.25: Yes, as articulated on page 20 Sub-component 1.2: Pre-Service Teacher Training.

Q.26: It is noted that, on p.18 ‘This could include the establishment of national targets for early grade reading instruction.’ This reflects the fact that such indicators and targets do not currently exist in the Education Strategic Plan, 2010-2020. Is it expected that the awardee be responsible for a revision in the ESP and its annual reviews to include early grade reading indicators and targets?

A.26: Targets have been set by MOE/GES for early grade reading and math. Respondents are encouraged to read the Eddata II Website, *Ghana Benchmarking Activity Report (24 May)* for a summary of the process and outcomes of the early grade reading and early grade mathematics benchmarking activities that took place in Ghana in 2014.

Q.27: Under IR 4.1.3, the ‘Improved use of quality teaching and learning materials.’ This statement implies that appropriate and sufficient materials exist, but they need to be

better used. Or, is it the case that the project would have to provide new and additional instructional materials to the schools?

A.27: All new and old TLMs should be reviewed, redesigned (if appropriate) and training provided accordingly in collaboration with GES. As per page 21, “The Learning Applicant will assist GES to make this determination and provide relevant support. Efforts should take into account relevant materials that have been developed in addition to or linked to NALAP, to include but not be limited to the NALAP Formative Evaluation, the Textbooks and Learning Materials Program, and the Teacher Community Assistant Initiative. The Applicant will work with the MOE/GES to ensure that materials developed are relevant to the Ghanaian context and the efforts to establish the bilingual child literacy approach to date.”

Q.28: The expected outcome of sub-component 1.1 on page 19 is “strengthened early grade reading instruction of at least 51,000 KG1-P3 teachers using Ghana’s current bilingual child literacy curriculum and approach.” Does this number include pre-service training of teachers? Or is it only in-service teachers?

A.28: This refers to in-service teachers only.

Q.29: On page 19 of the RFA, it states “Review, build on and support MOE/GES efforts to improve the child literacy (formerly NALAP) curriculum.” To what extent is the recipient expected to support the MOE/GES in this endeavor? Is the review of the curriculum to identify gaps and then develop supplementary materials to support the NALAP curriculum, or will revisions to the curriculum itself actually be accepted?

A.29: The extent of support is to be determined with MOE/GES. As per page 21, “GES will identify a time within the duration of this activity to review the child literacy materials and propose any critical, necessary changes”.

Q.30: To what extent is the recipient expected to “review” vs. “review and update” vs. “produce” a National Reading Policy, taking the following references in the RFA into account: Page 19: “NALAP/child literacy curriculum for early grades reviewed,”

A.30: Learning will review and update the child literacy curriculum in collaboration with GES. Respondents are encouraged to review NALAP Formative Evaluation and other relevant documents that identify gaps and provide recommendations.

Q.31: “Language-specific” interventions are referred to repeatedly in the RFA. Are these intended to be developed in all 11 national languages on which NALAP focuses.

A.31: Yes.

Q.32: Is the recipient expected to develop teacher supported classroom-level assessments, or only a plan for them, as stated on page 20 of the RFA?

A.32: As per page 20, “Building on the EGRA model...include step-by-step instructions a typical teacher will use to assessing student learning during classroom activities”.

Q.33: Is the recipient expected to develop teacher supported classroom-level assessments? (p. 19 and 20 of the RFA) is the recipient expected to develop only a plan for classroom-level assessments?

A.33: Please see answer A.28.

Q.34: When does USAID expect the benchmarks for reading under the Testing activity to be completed? At what stage is the process of benchmark development currently? To what extent do they parallel the NALAP benchmarks developed under EQUALL? Learning is to “review and as necessary update the Ghana national reading standards” (p. 20); how is this work intended to coordinate with the benchmarking activity under Testing?

A.34: Benchmarks have been set by MOE/GES for early grade reading and math. Respondents are encouraged to read the Eddata II Website, Ghana Benchmarking Activity Report (24 May) for a summary of the process and outcomes of the early grade reading and early grade mathematics benchmarking activities that took place in Ghana in 2014.

Q.35: Ref p. 21: “Given that NALAP/child literacy teaching and learning materials have been produced and disseminated in the eleven languages and English, GES will identify a time within the duration of this activity to review the materials and propose any critical, necessary changes.”

a) Does NALAP/child literacy teaching and learning materials refer to the NALAP/TLMP materials which were fused/integrated in 2013-2014 by the University of Chicago?

A.35(a): While NALAP is a terminology used to describe the MOE/GES child literacy approach; we strongly encourage the use of the term, “child literacy,” as per official MOE/GES documents.
Official child literacy materials include those developed via the TLMP effort.

b) Does NALAP/child literacy teaching and learning materials refer to the materials funded by USAID and developed by the EQUALL project?

A.35(b): While NALAP is a terminology used to describe the MOE/GES child literacy approach, we strongly encourage the use of the term, “child literacy,” as per official MOE/GES documents.

Child literacy TLMs refer to MOE/GES materials in line with their language policy. Prior USAID support, including under EQUALL, has led to MOE/GES introducing the approach as a child literacy approach nationwide.

Q.36: On the first paragraph of page 36 of the RFA, it states: “USAID/Ghana has issued ILs to the GES ranging from approximately \$250,000 to \$7,000,000 and \$23 million in Fixed Amount Reimbursable Agreements to the MOE and metropolitan level local government.” Would you clarify whether the ILs and Fixed Amount Reimbursable Agreements are part of the Ghana Reading Grants funding and whether these funds are separate from the Ghana Learning solicitation amount? If this is not the case, please confirm whether the DRGs are part of another award and which one(s)?

- A.36: Yes, the mentioned ILs and FARAs are historical references and separate from the Learning solicitation.
- Q.37: Please clarify whether Learning Recipient is responsible for disbursing and managing district reading grants (DRG) under sub-component 3.2 or whether funds for all district reading grants will be provided directly from USAID/Ghana to the districts.
- A.37: Please see Sub-component 3.2. of the RFA, “[District Reading Grants] are expected to begin, via direct USAID funding...” The same paragraph describes the intended role of the Learning Recipient. Please also see USAID response to Question 6.
- Q.38: Please clarify whether district reading grants begin in Year 1 or Year 2.
- A.38: Please see USAID response to Question 6.
- Q.39: Under IR 4.3.2 the outcome is ‘(DRG) effectively used by ‘performing’ districts to help promote reading...’ This implies that the awardee for this RFA would provide District Grants. Would these DRG be ‘on-budget’? What would be the relationship and scale of the DRG in relation to the ‘USAID Partnership for Education: Funding’ component of the project?
- A.39: Please see USAID response to Question 38. As with Learning and the M&E-related activities, Funding is intended to support districts and other entities receiving, or with the potential to receive, direct USAID funds.
- Q.40: Page 24: “Recipient efforts will support the MOE/GES to review, clarify and, where necessary, update the policies, mandates and guidelines related to the language policy and use of mother tongue instruction, ” Page 25: “Ghana Reading Action Plan co-produced with GES/MOE.”?
- A.40: Question unclear. USAID could not provide a response.
- Q.40: Ref p.27:” modern forms of information & communications technology integrated into existing communications systems.”
Question: Would this include marking email communications legally equivalent to traditional paper exchanges for GES?
- A.40: Applicants to determine with MOE/GES and stakeholders as they prepare their proposal.
- Q.41: Is there a specific dollar target for each of the major components that offers are advised to follow?
- A.41: Applicants are expected to propose a budget which reflects their technical approach.
- Q.42: Ref p. 56, Section 1: “USAID anticipates that at least half of the planned resources for the USAID Partnership for Education: Learning will be allocated over the first and second year for activities to be implemented, based on the availability of funds.” Could USAID confirm if that means: a) at least 35.9 million (appr. half of total award) should be

allocated in Year 1 and 2, or b) at least half of funds planned for program activities only should be allocated in Year 1 and 2.

A.42: USAID confirms (a) at least 35.9 million (appr. half of total award) should be allocated in Year 1 and 2.

Q.43: Does the program already have a draft theory of change and/or logical framework? If yes, would it be possible to share this with the applicants?

A.43: Yes. This Amendment provides a copy of the Partnership for Education Logic Tree. *[Referenced Document Attached as a separate file]*

Q.44: Can USAID provide the definition for the required custom indicator: “% of targeted education management systems that meet or exceed minimum management requirements”?

Q.45: As stated on page 16, “Custom indicators that must be taken into consideration are outlined below; however, final indicators will be agreed between USAID/Ghana and Recipient upon award”.

II. CONTRACTUAL RELATED QUESTIONS

Q.1: Can USAID please provide point values for the evaluation criteria described in Section C, Pages 61-64?

A1: Numerical values were not assigned to the evaluation criteria. Rather, an adjectival scoring methodology has been chosen for this evaluation as defined on page 61 of the RFA.

Q.2: On page 55, the RFA states that applicants must include a list of five (5) past performance references. Please clarify if this number applies to each applicant and each sub-applicant separately or if this is the maximum for the entire application. How many past performance references are required for each sub-applicant allocated more than 20% of the budget?

A2: USAID confirms that a list of five (5) Past performance references is needed for each applicant and five (5) more for each sub-applicant whose budget exceeds 20% of the proposed budget.

Q.3: The budget template USAID has provided shows breaks down costs per program component but does not include categories of cost which are detailed in the SF424A, including fringe benefits, equipment, and materials/supplies. Could USAID please clarify where within the budget template provided applicants should detail these costs? Budget notes are to be prepared along Object Class Categories of SF–424A. As the layout of the budget line items in the budget and SF-424A is different, the reviewer might find it difficult to find a link in line items in the budget and notes. Please confirm the submission formats of the budget and budget notes.

A.3: Applicants are no longer required to use Annex 3-Budget Template. This Amendment revises Section B-Application & Submission Information of the RFA.

Q.4: Are sub-applicants required to submit certifications and representations (Annex 4 of the RFA)? The RFA states that the recipient is required to, but does not refer to sub-applicants.

A.4: Sub-applicants are required to fill out Annex 4 as well.

Q.5: Page 49: The RFA states: “Applicants must submit a Draft Mobilization Plan for the first 90 days as an Annex that demonstrates their ability to rapidly and effectively mobilize staff and resources to commence work. Applicants will also submit a Draft Work Plan as an Annex with proposed year one activities detailed by month. Years two to five must be shown by quarter. The implementation plan will specify a timetable for the implementation of all planned activities, reflecting major tasks, milestones, deliverables, and institutional responsibilities.”

May we understand that “implementation plan” refers to the same thing as the “Draft Work Plan”?

A.5: USAID confirms that implementation plan and draft work plan are referencing the same document.

Q.6: Page 62-63—Clarification of proposal evaluation: Can USAID provide the distribution of evaluation points across the Technical criteria and sub-criteria listed?

A.6: Please see Answer A.1.

Q.7: Can USAID confirm if value-added taxes should be excluded from proposed budgets? Can USAID confirm if Recipients will be reimbursed for value-added taxes incurred under the project?

A.7: USAID confirms that value-added taxes should be excluded from proposed budgets. For all purchases made using USAID funding for project expenses Implementing Partners (IPs) have an obligation to be seeking exoneration or receiving VAT invoices to seek reimbursement.

Q.8: Due to the large procurement aspect put forth in the scope of work, would USAID allow geo code 935 for the procurement of goods and services in support of this effort?

A.8: Please see Answer A.20.

Q.9: On page 48 of the RFA, it states “the Annexes, cover page, table of contents and dividers do not count towards the page limit.” Can we include an acronym list, and if so, does this count towards the page limit?

A.9: Agreed. An acronym list page maybe included and will not count towards the page limitation.

Q.10: On the top of page 55 of the RFA, in reference to the past performance, it states: "Applicants must include a list of five (5) U.S. Government, other donor, and/or privately funded contracts, grants or cooperative agreements received by the organization, and for each 'major sub-applicant' for work of similar size and scope to the work covered by the Program Description." Can the prime and each of its major sub partners submit 5 past performances? Or is it 5 past performances for the entire consortium?

A.10: The RFA requests 5 past performances for the prime and each of the major sub-partners. Also See Answer A2.

Q.11: On page 56 of the RFA, it states "detailed budget notes and supporting justification of all proposed budget line items which provide in detail the total costs for implementation of the program your organization is proposing should be included as a separate written document." Is it necessary to include budget notes for our partners and sub applicants in the cost proposal as well?

A.11: Yes. Budget narratives for proposed partners/sub-applicants must be submitted.

Q.12: On page 68 of the RFA it states that the recipient "must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID." Is it necessary to respond to the environmental compliance requirement anywhere in the technical or cost proposal? Or is this something that must be addressed only once the recipient has received the award?

A.12: The RFA does not request applicants to address any environmental compliance in the technical or cost proposal. The excerpt on page 68, only reminds applicants compliance with the host country environment regulations. Further, as stated on page 69, an Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) has been approved for the USAID/Ghana's partnership for Education Program funding the proposed Cooperative Agreement. USAID determined that implementation of activities under LEARNING "carries no risk of adverse environmental impact (direct or indirect)".

Q.13: Annex 4 in the cost proposal is reserved for our representations and certifications. Is it necessary to include representations and certifications for our partners and sub applicants as well?

A13: Please see Answer A.4.

Q.14: Please confirm if offers can include a list of acronyms in the Technical Application and, if so, please confirm that the acronym list will NOT count toward the 40 page limit.

A.14: Please see Answer A.9.

Q.15: Please confirm if charts, tables and graphics in the Technical Application can be in a smaller font size than 12 point and, if so, what is the acceptable font size.

A.15: Agreed. However, Applicants are advised not to choose font size smaller than 10pts.

Q.16: Please confirm if charts, tables and graphics in the Technical Application can be in a different font type than Times New Roman.

A.16: Agreed. Charts, tables and graphics may be in a different font type than Times New Roman.

Q.17: Please confirm if offers can include additional Annexes besides the seven (7) Annexes that are required for submission.

A.17: Additional Annexes, on top of the seven (7) required ones, will not be accepted. Any additional annex included will not be considered.

Q.18: Please confirm if Annex G, Letters of Commitment from Sub-Applicants should only include major sub-applicants who receive 20% of total cost, or if it is permissible to include Letter of Commitment from sub-applicants with less than 20% of total cost.

A.18: Prime Applicants are permitted to include Letters of Commitment from Sub-Applicants with less than 20% of budget cost.

Q.19: Would it be possible to elaborate on the adjectival scoring system? Will criteria be assessed for each major category, or at lettered sub criteria?

A.19: Please see Answer A.1.

Q.20: What will be the authorized geographic code for this solicitation?

A.20: It is anticipated that the geographic code for any award resulting from this RFA will be 937.

Q.21: On page 52, USAID requests bidders to list technical and professional titles. Please confirm that USAID does not expect personnel to be identified for non-key positions.

A.21: Personnel for non-key positions do not need to be identified at the submission stage. However, USAID expects to see position titles, number of days proposed, salary, etc. included in the budget.

Q.22: On pg. 55, the RFA states: "Applicants are to send the Past Performance Questionnaire (See Annex 3) to their references and instruct the references to return the questionnaire directly to accracontract@usaid.gov by the application submission deadline." However, Annex 3 is the Budget Template. Annex 2 is the Past Performance Short form, including Part II—does USAID intend applicants to send the questions found in the short form to references?

A.22: Thank you for catching this inconsistency. Yes, USAID confirms that "Annex 2" (Past Performance Questionnaire-Short Form) should be used to send in references. Please note that applicants are no longer required to use Annex 3-Budget template.

Q.23: What is the geographic code for this project?

A.23: It is anticipated that the geographic code for any award resulting from this RFA will be 937.

Q.24: Page 56 of the RFA states: "Include a budget, in US Dollars, with an accompanying budget narrative in MS Word to facilitate USAID's determination that costs are allowable, allocable, and reasonable. A detailed budget notes and supporting justification of all proposed budget line items which provide in detail the total costs for implementation of the program your organization is proposing should be included as a separate written document, with section titles mirroring the "Object Class Categories" listed on the SF-424A (personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, etc.). In addition, a summary of the budget must be submitted using Standard Form 424 and 424A which can be downloaded from the web site."

However the budget format template included as Annex 4 with the solicitation includes different elements/categories.

- a) Please confirm that it would be acceptable to include additional categories such as: Fringe Benefits, Equipment and Supplies.
- b) Please confirm that consultants should be included in the Contractual/Subawards category.

A.24: Please see Answer A.3.

Q.25: Are other cost documents requested (NICRA, Representations and Certifications, Evidence of Responsibility, etc.) required from the prime only or from partners as well?

A.25: Copy of NICRA is requested for each proposed partner/sub-applicant as well as Representations and Certifications. Evidence of Responsibility however is only needed for the prime applicant.

Q.26: Will USAID consider candidates for key personnel positions without a Master's degree but with equivalent professional experience?

A.26: Key personnel are required to have a Master's degree.

Q.27: Please confirm that the Financial Plans to be submitted with the Annual Work Plans will be expected to be estimates by major budget category, not formal realignments to the award budget in accordance with 22 CFR 226.25.

A.27: Confirmed.

Q.28: Would USAID revise the second bullet point under minimum requirements for the DCOP to the following: Ten years' experience with increasing responsibilities in management of complex education programs in African countries, including leading large projects of similar complexity, guiding policy-level dialogue and/or action and managing a diverse range of expatriate and local staff.

A.28: The qualifications for the DCOP remain as stated in the RFA.

Q.29: Can USAID clarify how it would like applicants to align project years in the budget template provided in Annex 4? Section D asks applicants to align quarterly and annual reports with the government fiscal year ending September 30th. Therefore, the first project year would begin in November and last 11 months. The following four years would be twelve months and the “sixth” year would last one month. The template only provides for five years.

A.29: Applicants to propose budget which reflects their technical approach.

III. SPECIFIC CHANGES TO RFA

Specific changes made to the RFA as a result of Amendment No. 01 are as follows:

1. Cover Letter, DELETE: “July 9, 2014 – 16:00 Accra Time” and REPLACE with “July 14, 2014 – 16:00 Accra, Ghana Time”.
2. Section B – APPLICATION & SUBMISSION INFORMATION, Sub-section II (B)-Cost/Business Application, 2nd paragraph, DELETE in its entirety and REPLACE with the following in lieu thereof:

“While there is no page limit for this portion, applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible, but still provide the necessary detail to address the following:

1. A copy of the applicant’s business/cost application formatted in Excel. For the purpose of accurately tracking amount of resources allocated for this project, applicants are requested to prepare their budget by showing breakdown per program component”.
3. Section D – AWARD & ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION, sub-section V (4)-List of Annexes, DELETE “Annex 3 – Budget Template” and renumber the remaining list of Annexes accordingly”.
4. The following Attachments are posted as additional “Other Supporting Documents” to the RFA:
 - A. GNECC’s “Scoping Study on the Implementation of Ghana’s Education Decentralization Reforms”, November 2013.
 - B. Ghana Reading Action Planning (GRAP) Matrix
 - C. Partnership for Education Logic Tree

[END OF AMENDMENT No. 01]