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Issue Date: July 1, 2015
Deadline for Question: July 17, 2015 at 5 PM Washington, DC time
Closing Date: August 14, 2015 at 5 PM Washington, DC time

Subject: Request for Applications Number: SOL-306-15-000081

Program Title: Model Early Grade Reading (MEGR) Program

To All Prospective Applicants:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications for a Cooperative Agreement from qualified U.S. and Non-U.S. organizations to fund a program entitled the Model Early Grade Reading Program (MEGR).

Subject to the availability of funds, an award will be made to that responsible applicant(s) whose application(s) best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity and the selection criteria contained herein. While one (1) award is anticipated as a result of this Request for Applications (RFA), USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Eligible organizations interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this funding opportunity thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and evaluation process.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this RFA and meet eligibility standards in Section III of this RFA. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. Potential applicants should regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity. Applicants will need to have available or download Adobe program to their computers in order to view and save the Adobe forms properly. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the entire RFA has been received from the internet in its entirety and USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the RFA, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

The successful Applicant will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives. Please read each section of the RFA.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in section V. The deadline for questions is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted to www.grants.gov.

Issuance of this notice of funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of comments/suggestions or an application. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

This award is authorized in accordance with the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Stephen Wiese
Agreement Officer

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SECTION I – FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Program Description

A. Introduction/Executive Summary

The Model Early Grade Reading (MEGR) Program will develop, implement and test/refine a model to improve early grade reading outcomes to benefit an optimum number of grade 1-2 students in a maximum number of public schools/community-based education classes in targeted provinces/districts. Additionally, the MEGR Program will prepare Afghanistan's Ministry of Education, at all levels, to implement the MEGR Model on a national scale via a learn-by-doing approach. The purpose of the model is to improve reading outcomes for the maximum number of grade 1-2 students. (See Sections E-I for expanded description.)

This fits within USAID's global education strategy, specifically the goal of improving reading skills for 100 million children. USAID/Afghanistan's education portfolio supports the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) with funding for a variety of programs that contribute to the achievement of shared strategic goals.

B. Background and Context

Education in Afghanistan has made remarkable progress since 2001. In 2001, approximately 900,000 students were enrolled in school and almost all were boys. In 2014, more than 8 million students were enrolled in schools, 39 percent of whom were girls. There are now more than 14,600 schools and more than 180,000 teachers, of whom 54,000 are female (approximately 31 percent). Since 2001, over 6,500 schools have been constructed or rehabilitated, and today approximately 50 percent of schools have adequate buildings. There is a new Afghanistan national curriculum which promotes active learning methods.

Despite these achievements in access, the education sector continues to face significant constraints in achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) targets. Poverty and insecurity contribute to persistently low enrollment and attendance rates. Schools and delivery centers for education, (including community-based education classes, or CBEs), are unevenly distributed. Although census data are incomplete, an estimated 4.2 million children are out of school; 60 percent of whom are girls.[1]

In addition, the quality of education and learning outcomes has not kept up with the increase in access to education. Reliable data on the quality of education and, in particular, on early grade reading outcomes, is sparse. The small amount of data that is available has either been collected from the CBEs supported by NGOs or from the more recent Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) testing[2] of students' reading and math abilities at the 6th grade level. Although not nationally representative, these data indicate very low levels of reading mastery for children

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[1] Based on UNDP population project and school survey data, cited in "Education Joint Sector Review, Primary and Secondary Education June 2012," Education Joint Sector Review 2012, http://anafae.af/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/2012-06-19-FINAL-primary-secy-clean.pdf.

[2] Centre for Global Education Monitoring at the Australian Council for Educational Research, Monitoring Trends in Educational Growth (MTEG) in Afghanistan, "Class 6 proficiency in Afghanistan 2013: Outcomes of a learning assessment of mathematical, reading and writing literacy," http://research.acer.edu.au/mteg/1/

in the early grades. The Basic Education for Afghanistan Consortium's (BEACON) study[3] of grade two reading achievement found students' oral reading fluency in Dari to be 19.2 words per minute and in Pashto to be 22.9 words per minute, far below international standard norms of 45 to 60 words per minute.

USAID/Afghanistan is conducting a national early grade reading survey that will provide critical information for the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the international donor community to support early grade reading reform (see Annex 1 for details about USAID's "Survey of Resources, Skills, and Capacities in Early Grade Reading in Afghanistan," or EGR Survey). The results of the survey will be provided to the selected Applicant once available. The selected Applicant will use the survey findings as a starting point for the development of its technical assistance materials and for measuring progress of the MEGR Program in accordance with the Intermediate Results specified in the Results Framework. Preliminary findings should be available in spring 2016 and definitive findings in fall 2016.

C. The Ministry of Education in Afghanistan

Article 43 of Afghanistan's constitution guarantees every Afghan child the right to a free education. The MoE has set itself the goal of providing free, equitable, and quality education services to all Afghan children by 1399/2020. The improvement of early grade reading is an important priority of the Ministry's draft National Education Strategic Plan (NESP III). As that document states: "The MoE will specifically focus on the quality of education in grades one to three to ensure that children can read and write fluently at the end of grade three." USAID expects that work under this award will be conducted in close coordination with the MoE, and applicants should propose programming that advances the shared goals and objectives of USAID and the MoE. Multiple ministerial departments are involved in the country's new effort to improve early grade reading (see Annex 2).

D. Alignment with USAID Investments, Ministry Priorities, and Donor Investment

The proposed Model Early Grade Reading Program (MEGR Program) activity is intended to assist GIRoA and MoE in meeting the goals laid out under NESP III. In addition, the proposed activity supports the achievement of USAID's global and country-specific education goals, and is complementary to the work of the other actors supporting basic education in Afghanistan (see Annex 3). The MEGR Program is expected to work in synergy with all of these activities, particularly those supporting instruction and assessment in the early primary grades.

E. Activity Description: The Model Early Grade Reading Program (MEGR Program)

The MEGR Program will prepare and build the ability of MoE to implement a national early grade reading reform program while simultaneously developing and demonstrating an Early Grade Reading Model for grades one and two, with all necessary elements[4], at a reduced scale in a limited target area.

<u>Purpose, Goals, and Intermediate Results</u>

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[3] http://care.ca/our-work/beacon-basic-education-afghanistan-consortium-afghanistan

[4] Elements are the 5T framework adapted from Richard Allington's "The 6Ts of Effective Literacy Instruction."

The purpose of the five-year MEGR program, in line with USAID's Education Strategy's goal of improving reading skills, is to increase the proportion of Afghan children in grades one and two who are able to read and understand at the appropriate grade level[5].

The **goal** to be achieved by the conclusion of the MEGR Program is:
Improved early grade reading results for the students in grades 1-2. Target: "proportion of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling (in targeted areas), demonstrate that they can read and understand grade level text" (indicator 3.2.1-27) is 50% or better.[6]

Two activities are necessary to help Afghanistan meet the goal:

1. Develop, implement and test (in a limited area) a phonemic-based, Afghan-specific, Dari and Pashto early grade reading instruction methodology/approach (with all related activities, including curriculum, materials and teacher/learning aids, and teacher training and coaching, testing/assessments to measure improvements), using international research and best practice. This model for grades one and two will be one that can be replicated by the Ministry of Education (MoE). Target: "proportion of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling (in targeted areas), demonstrate that they can read and understand grade level text" (indicator 3.2.1-27) is 60% or better." (Applicants will implement the model throughout all five years, and will propose the number of grade cohorts beneficiary students to be worked with within the five-year time frame.)
2. Simultaneously, build the capacity of the Ministry, and develop the policy-enabling environment, for the nationwide implementation of the Early Grade Reading curriculum (helping relevant departments gain experience and build skills in all aspects of administering a sound early grade reading program using a participatory learn-by-doing approach (continuing to use the model developed in Step 1) (the implementation of Early Grade Reading by the Ministry will be supported under EQUIP III, funded by the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund). This includes:
   a. Improved MoE provincial and district capacity to implement early grade reading programs in targeted areas. Target: MoE at all levels starts implementing new reading curriculum, in limited number of new districts (key aspects, including testing/assessments as readiness is demonstrated,), in Year 3, with continued coaching from MEGR Program.
   b. A strengthened MoE management capacity and policy-enabling environment in the MoE for the implementation of early grade reading programming. Target: MoE assumes responsibility for implementation and rollout nationwide of new Early Grade Reading curriculum at end of Year 5.

The MEGR Program will lay the groundwork for a national early grade reading program that MoE will implement under the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund's EQUIP III.

There are several aspects to sustainability in the MEGR Program and they will be addressed in different ways. First, there is the question of whether the interventions being scaled-up lead to sustained gains in reading outcomes. The Applicant will propose a MEGR application in a

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[5] Using the standard USAID indicator, "the proportion of Afghan children in grades one and two who are able to read and understand grade-level text."

[6] USAID anticipates reviewing this target once the baseline is known, upon completion of the "Survey of Resources, Skills, and Capacities in Early Grade Reading in Afghanistan" (EGR Survey).

manner to assure the feasibility of such a determination and take corrective action throughout implementation if needed, because this aspect of sustainability is necessary to assure long term program success and the overall.

Secondly, there is the critical question of whether EGR interventions implemented by the MEGR Program can be sustained and expanded nationwide after the end of the activity. This requires a clear-eyed assessment of the capacity of education authorities at all levels to manage early grade reading interventions for results. The MEGR Program is appropriately focused on improving management capacity for EGR as one of its main intermediate results. The replicability of a successful MEGR-type intervention at the national level must be a critical component of the initial application and design efforts.

The MEGR Program will bolster the capacity for the execution of high-quality early grade reading interventions, using on-the-job training, and development of materials and systems to assist MoE officials at national and decentralized levels to create a model of successful early grade reading instruction (and assessment of same) that meets international standards and can be replicated and continued given the resource profile of the government of Afghanistan. The activity will develop evidence-based reading materials, demonstrate successful, high-quality EGR interventions (such as teacher training and coaching) in select districts, utilize an Afghan-specific Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)[7] and strengthen GIRoA capacity and systems required for nationwide implementation by the MoE. It is expected that, starting in year three of the MEGR Program, the MoE will be ready to begin implementing the model demonstrated under IR 2, using existing multilateral and government-to-government agreements, in additional districts of the country.

[7] See Section B, Background and Context, and Annex 1, for information about the first EGRA to be designed/conducted under USAID's "Survey of Resources, Skills, and Capacities in Early Grade Reading in Afghanistan" (EGR Survey) to inform development and evaluation of technical activities (see paragraph 4 of Background Context and Annex 1).

Results Framework

MEGR Program GOAL: Early grade reading skills improved for grade 1-2 students	
IR 1: The Ministry of Education, at all levels, is able to implement the new Early Grade Reading program Sub IR 1.1 Policies, standards, and benchmarks that support improved early grade reading instruction developed and adopted Sub IR 1.2 Limited research to inform ongoing policy development in early grade reading conducted Sub IR 1.3 National and provincial early grade reading (EGR) data collection and analysis systems established Sub IR 1.4 Capacity of MoE, targeted Provincial Education and District Education Departments (PED/DED) to plan/budget for, manage, and monitor an early grade reading program developed	**IR 2: A model Early Grade Reading program developed and implemented which results in improved early grade reading outcomes for targeted first and second grade students** Sub IR 2.1 Evidence-based early grade reading instructional materials prepared Sub IR 2.2 Evidence-based early grade reading instructional materials printed/duplicated, distributed and in use in target districts Sub IR 2.3 In-service training for teachers on reading instruction developed and implemented in targeted areas Sub IR 2.4 Supervision and coaching systems/procedures and tools for teachers in early grade reading instruction developed and implemented in targeted areas Sub IR 2.5 Classroom-based and district-based early grade reading assessment processes improved Sub IR 2.6 Use of mobile phones and other technologies to support the acquisition of reading skills expanded in targeted areas Sub IR 2.7 School shuras and families support for quality reading instruction increased in targeted areas

F. MEGR Program Geographic Targets and Beneficiaries

Target Beneficiaries

Given the heavy emphasis within the program on national-level policy dialogue and improvements to the policy environment, it is understood that some program activities require travel outside of Kabul. The geographic areas for this model will be negotiated in a consensus-based fashion among USAID/Afghanistan, MoE and the Applicant.

USAID/Afghanistan seeks to benefit the maximum number of children and teachers possible within the resources available for the MEGR Program. Applicants are asked to propose a maximum and cost-effective geographic coverage for the model component of the program. In so doing, applicants must follow the guidelines below:

1. In any district selected, applicants must work in all public primary schools and all CBE classrooms. Implementation of the program should be coherent across the district.
2. The selected Applicant should work in at least 70% of the districts of each province included in the activity.
3. The successful Applicant must work in geographic areas where children of age 5 or 6 are ***predominantly*** native Dari or Pashto speaking.
4. The successful Applicant should travel frequently to the selected geographic areas to monitor progress and provide technical support if needed.

USAID/Afghanistan requires, with any application, information in the following chart, indicating names of the proposed provinces/districts, anticipated numbers of schools, beneficiary students, and teachers, of the Applicant's proposed intervention. See Annex 4 for data on all potential target provinces from which Applicant should indicate provinces/districts for implementation. Several provinces are not included due to language (more children likely to be native speakers of language other than Dari or Pashto), remoteness or security issues that would make work difficult in these areas.

Prov-ince name	District name	# of Public Primary Schools	# of Grade 1 Students in Public Primary Schools	# of Grade 2 Students in Public Primary Schools	# of Teachers Grades 1-3 in Public Primary Schools *(note: MoE database contains teachers in this group)*	# of CBE classes	# of CBE students (note: most will be in Grades 1-3 in CBE)	# of CBE Teacher s

See Annex 4.

G. MEGR Program Guiding Principles

The Applicant's technical approach should:

1. Be aligned with the USAID global education strategy and its parameters related to early grade reading.
2. Provide embedded and other direct technical assistance services to the MoE to develop a national early grade reading program, and complete the design and demonstration of a model that the MoE can then implement nationwide within its budget.
3. Be consistent with MoE standards and be feasible for the MoE to replicate and implement on a national scale. This includes utilizing and helping to improve the policies, systems, and resources that are available to the MoE, as appropriate.
4. Utilize findings of the USAID's "Survey of Resources, Skills, and Capacities in Early Grade Reading in Afghanistan" (EGR Survey) to inform development and evaluation of technical activities (see paragraph 4 of Background Context and Annex 1).

5. Utilize international evidence-based approaches to improve early grade reading and to increase family and community support for reading.
6. Foster positive gender norms, including a highlighted attention to girls and female teachers.
7. Demonstrate evidence of flexibility and the capacity to adapt to changing imperatives and conditions in the MoE.

H. Intermediate Result (IR) 1: The Ministry of Education, at all levels, is able to implement the new Early Grade Reading program

MEGR Program's first intermediate result is: The Ministry of Education, at all levels, is able to implement the new Early Grade Reading program. This intermediate result will be implemented in parallel with IR 2.

The MEGR activity will continue past and ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacity of MoE systems, school staff, and local NGOs to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate quality Early Grade Reading (Basic Education) activities. Activities will be conducted using a participatory learn-by-doing approach to strengthen technical and organizational skills. The Applicant will focus more on financial management once basic technical capacity is achieved, and education institution and school staff prove their technical readiness to lead and manage EGR activities. This includes:

1. Technical capacity to execute EGR interventions, including adequate monitoring and evaluation of activity performance.
2. Capacity to roll-out and execute interventions at scale (nationwide), including the management of necessary financial resources that this would require.

In addition, the Applicant will strengthen the capacity of MoE and civil society to use local and internationally generated evidence in policy formulation and management decisions. In addition, the Applicant will help the MoE become an effective consumer of independent research, and local studies that support improved reading. The Applicant will also work with MoE to pursue special studies and evaluations to generate local evidence in such crucial areas as gender and social equity in reading/learning achievement, and the integration of local language issues and reading standards in the early grades.

Another aspect of sustainability will be identifying the level of technical assistance, continued capacity building, and additional financial support that will be required to maintain high quality EGR interventions and reading outcomes as measured by periodic EGRA testing. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will assess the sustainability of interventions at the provincial, district and school level after initial interventions are completed. The results will inform design processes under EQUIP III as well as the estimate of investments needed to sustain and solidify gains.

Under IR 1, the Applicant will work with national, and targeted provincial and district-level counterparts, to advance data collection, policy implementation, resource management, and the formation of partnerships for improved early grade reading instruction. A component of the work under this result will be to assist the MoE to mobilize, plan for, and utilize pooled resources, such as Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund's (ARTF) Education Quality Improvement Project III

(EQUIP III), to expand the early grade reading activities shown to be successful in the MEGR Program.

In collaboration with MoE, the Applicant will create a cohesive, MoE-led EGR program. The first step to creating such a MoE run early grade reading program is to create a strong policy environment and systems within which it can operate. At this time, the MoE has no policy framework for the implementation of reading programming; all instructional efforts focus on language instruction, which differs from reading instruction in several important aspects. The assistance provided through the MEGR Program under IR 1 will help MoE strengthen its enabling environment for successful reading programming, building the 'incubator' that will eventually enable the successes achieved under IR 2 to be implemented nationwide with MoE resources and leadership.

Objectives for Intermediate Result 1

Policy development: The ability of the MoE to review, harmonize, develop, and implement educational policies that advance EGR outcomes will be strengthened. The support provided will help the MoE to develop high quality and relevant standards and benchmarks for student performance and teacher classroom practice in reading instruction. Targeted districts will adopt policies mandating minimal reading instructional time for grades one and two. Districts will collect and analyze accurate data about school location, numbers of students enrolled in the early grades, languages used for communication at school by students and teachers and student performance in reading. Data collected will help inform teacher assignments and materials distribution for early grade reading. Data-gathering or research under this IR will be limited to topics that will help MoE develop policies relating to EGR or processes to aid MoE in successfully implementing the EGR model nationwide. Other district level and national level policy initiatives relating to EGR should be supported.

Systems Strengthening: Embedded MEGR Program specialists within the MoE will deliver targeted assistance for EGR in Afghanistan and improve data management, planning, and budgeting processes, specifically targeting the improvement of early grade reading outcomes. MoE departments, as described in Annex 2, will have increased capacity to develop learning materials for early grade reading, increased capacity to train and monitor teachers in early grade reading in grades one and two, and increased capacity to administer and analyze national EGR assessments (the first grade 2 EGRAs in Dari and Pashto will be conducted by USAID's "Survey of Resources, Skills, and Capacities in Early Grade Reading in Afghanistan.") MoE departments will understand and be able to replicate the MEGR Program interventions in the provinces/districts not supported through the Model EGR Program. Such replication of the model by the MoE is projected to start in Year 3 of the Model EGR Program in a few provinces/districts, so that by end of program, the MoE is fully able to continue replication nationwide, with funding from the ARTF's EQUP III. (See Annex 5 for anticipated phasing of activities.) Applicant will propose method for monitoring and measuring MoE capacity to implement the MEGR Model.

ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAM DELIVERABLES for IR 1
Sustainable Reading Steering Committee for the MoE created
Student performance standards and benchmarks for grades one and two reading performance validated
Policy guidelines in reading validated and distributed
Language mapping for primary school teachers and students completed
Study on languages spoken at school entry completed and introduced to MoE for use in policy decisions on language(s) for EGR instruction
Parent and community perceptions about reading and language studied
EGR book procurement and distribution process review completed
Provincial EGR five-year plans developed and implemented in targeted areas
National EGR five-year plans developed and implemented
National early grade reading assessment (EGRA) processes instituted and strengthened (note – first EGRA designed and conducted in 2015/16 under USAID's "Survey of Resources, Skills, and Capacities in Early Grade Reading in Afghanistan.")
Provincial early grade reading assessment processes developed and implemented in targeted areas

See Annex 6 for Illustrative Activities for IR 1.

I. Intermediate Result 2: A model Early Grade Reading program developed and implemented which results in improved early grade reading outcomes in targeted first and second grade students

The second Intermediate Result is "A model Early Grade Reading program developed and implemented which results in improved early grade reading outcomes in targeted first and second grade students." This intermediate result will be implemented in parallel with IR 1. Under this IR, the Applicant will work with provincial and district-level counterparts to **ensure that students in grades 1-2 in target districts read and understand grade level text.** Districts with MEGR Program assistance will implement evidence-based reading programs that successfully change student scores and outcomes. All work under this intermediate result will be accomplished through a partnership between embedded MEGR Program staff and ministry counterparts; no parallel systems should be created. Successfully implementing this EGR model and distilling lessons learned and best practices from the Model into a national program (supported by the policies developed under IR 1) will require significant collaboration with the MoE at national, provincial, and district levels.

Objective for Intermediate Result 2

Instructional Material Preparation: The Applicant will propose the specific instructional and learning materials that will be necessary for an effective and outcome-driven early grade reading program which the Applicant will develop. The term 'materials' is inclusive of all material necessary for an international best practice model of early grade reading. Grade one and two teachers will possess and use sets of validated materials for early grade reading in Dari and Pashto. These materials will build on the validated student achievement benchmarks developed under sub-IR 1.1 and on the inventory of early grade reading materials from the USAID "Survey of Resources, Skills, and Capacities in Early Grade Reading in Afghanistan." At a minimum, materials to be developed will be consistent with MoE requirements, and will include student books, teacher's guides, decodable readers and leveled texts (fiction and non-fiction) for reading instruction in the two target languages (Dari and Pashto), including scripted lessons for reading instruction for teacher use. Messages related to gender equality, disability, health, nutrition, hygiene/sanitation, and social cohesion should be integrated into educational materials developed under this award. EGR materials will be developed in close coordination with the MoE Teacher Education and the Curriculum Departments, as well as being designed at a price point that can be supported by the MoE and development partners at national scale. All student materials for both grades and in both languages will be accompanied by scripted lessons included in teachers' guides.

Early grade reading instructional materials printed/duplicated, distributed and in use in target districts: The Applicant, in close consultation with the Curriculum Department and Publications Department, will prepare specifications for the purpose of printing. The Applicant should propose how the MEGR Program will print quality EGR materials for grades 1-2 for the model at costs that could be borne by the MoE in the future. The Applicant will provide a plan for printing and delivery of EGR materials to the target districts, including detailed justifications for the choices proposed in their plan. Each student benefitting from the model under the MEGR Program must have his/her own book(s) for learning to read; student-to-text ratios of greater than 1:1 will not be accepted. The MEGR Program will work with the MoE to ensure that student reading materials are included in the MoE annual work plan and budget by the end of this activity.

Teaching and Learning: Districts will provide at least 8-10 days of face-to-face training annually to all grade one and two teachers, targeting teachers on the use of the approved early grade reading and other learning materials in an evidence-based manner. Grade one and two teachers' capacity to use evidence-based instructional approaches to teach early grade reading will increase. All EGR training should leverage local capacity for training delivery. The MoE's Teacher Education Department currently contracts with local "teacher training" organizations; working with this department, the Applicant will coordinate the method of delivering teacher training that the Department can sustain nationwide. See Annex 7 for a list of these organizations.

Monitoring and Assessment: Districts will possess and use simple, research-based, criterion-referenced monitoring tools and classroom and student assessments that enable them to measure progress in improving early grade reading instruction. Teachers will be supported/coached through regular classroom-level visits structured through observation and feedback forms. Current knowledge indicates that a teacher should be coached at least once every two weeks; Applicants should propose the ideal times each teacher should receive in-person coaching and how this will be accomplished. Formative evaluation will be used during these visits. Rigorous M&E tools (including the EGRA developed by USAID's "Survey of Resources, Skills, and Capacities in Early Grade Reading in Afghanistan.") will be applied by the Applicant in baseline, midline, and end-line assessments for all beneficiary cohorts, yielding a rich and reliable set of data on reading performance in target districts. The MoE's Academic Supervision Unit and the Learning Achievement Unit will be included in development of all materials and implementation of monitoring and assessment activities, so that the units are capable of administering and analyzing EGRAs in the future.

Community Mobilization: The Applicant will work in coordination with MoE's Community Mobilization[8] Unit as well as provincial and district community mobilizers in targeted areas to increase and improve family involvement in and support for children's improved reading outcomes. The Applicant is requested to use the best available evidence to structure an intervention that will change parental and community behaviors vis-à-vis early grade reading in sustainable ways. To the extent possible, the applicant will also liaise with the community mobilization initiatives financed by the EQUIP and Global Partnership for Education (GPE) programs in Afghanistan.

ILLUSTRATATIVE PROGRAM DELIVERABLES for IR 2
Evidence-based early grade reading instructional materials (see above, paragraph entitled "Instructional Material Preparation" for minimum materials required) in Dari and Pashto for grade one and two students, in a 1:1 ratio, developed, piloted, revised, and in use
Measurable positive changes achieved in teacher practices in early grade reading, as quantified through regular teacher observation practices
Measurable positive changes in coaching practices in early grade reading, as quantified through gender-sensitive, regular coaching evaluation procedures
Increased provincial and district level capacity to monitor the quality of early grade reading instruction
A group of adequately trained teachers, teacher trainers, supervisors and curriculum experts made ready at the provinces to rollout the MEGR Program
Increased numbers of children demonstrating grade appropriate reading achievement on tests of early grade reading abilities (first EGRA conducted under USAID's "Survey of Resources, Skills, and Capacities in Early Grade Reading in Afghanistan;" MEGR Program to repeat and train MoE to administer)

See Annex 8 for Illustrative Activities for IR 2.

J. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

In compliance with USAID evaluation policy, rigorous independent evaluation(s) will be conducted (by an outside entity selected by USAID) to improve activity implementation and management, justify assistance resources with empirical evidence and data, ensure accountability. The selected Applicant will cooperate with any such evaluation(s). MEGR Program applicant will conduct baseline, midline, and end line data collection for each cohort of beneficiary communities and schools (the EGRA will be a primary assessment tool). See Annex 9 for Illustrative Indicators.

Monitoring the MEGR Program should strengthen supervision structures and M&E arrangements used by the MoE at the provincial and district levels. The Applicant should propose an M&E plan for encouraging the provincial and district level structures to gather, analyze, and utilize collected data for quality control and resource allocation purposes.

Data collection towards required indicators for USAID's Global Education Strategy Goal 1 will take place using early grade reading assessments (EGRAs) and instruments similar in purpose to those used in other USAID-funded reading work. The implementing partner is expected to

[8] This is synonymous with "Social Mobilization" in Afghanistan and either term, Community or Social Mobilization, is acceptable.

coordinate with external and/or third-party monitors and evaluators engaged by USAID/Afghanistan.

K. Gender Equality

Gender issues, in particular cultural, economic, and legal gender inequalities, are a critical underlying factor in making progress in all development sectors in Afghanistan. Addressing and considering gender in all USAID programs is a mandatory requirement, and USAID has identified gender as a cross-cutting theme that is built into all USAID programs. The Applicant should consider and address gender issues during the design and implementation of all program components giving consideration to gender disparities in all interventions, regardless of their focus or specific objectives. Interventions must take into consideration future difficulties that will be faced by female students and offer safe spaces for girls to enjoy learning. Learning materials will take advantage of opportunities to broaden attitudes toward gender and attempt to establish a foundation of respect and safety. The applicant must promote gender equality and female leadership at the project level and through their own organizational structures and staffing. As stated in Guiding Principle 6 (Section G), the MEGR Program will foster positive gender norms, including a highlighted attention to girls and female teachers.

L. Conflict Sensitive Considerations

Although Afghanistan has made progress in peace and stabilization efforts, the country still harbors an active insurgency that has been known to target schools. Programming in a conflict-affected environment requires special considerations and must be based on principles of conflict-sensitive education. Conflict-sensitive integration methodologies take into consideration issues such as emotional and physical safety, and students' psycho-social status, which are basic conditions for learning. In addition, the principle of "do no harm" as found in the "Principle of Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations" (OECD DAC, April 2007) must be incorporated into programming by keeping in mind the impact of education assistance on conflict. This requires making all decisions with an awareness of how they could affect power relations and inter-group relations that may contribute to conflict.

[END OF SECTION I]

SECTION II – AWARD INFORMATION

A. Estimate of Funds Available

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID intends to provide up to $65 million in total USAID funding for the life of the project.

B. Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID intends to award one (1) Cooperative Agreement pursuant to this RFA. USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

C. Start Date and Period of Performance

The anticipated period of performance is five (5) years. The estimated start date is on the date of USAID signature of the award.

D. Type of Award

USAID plans to award a Cooperative Agreement (CA). A CA implies a level of "substantial involvement" by USAID through the Agreement Officer Representative (AOR). The intended purpose of the AOR's involvement during the award is to assist the Recipient in achieving the supported objectives of the CA.

E. Substantial Involvement

In accordance with ADS 303.3.11, USAID/Afghanistan's substantial involvement in this Cooperative Agreement will include the following:

(a) Approval of Recipient's Work Plans

USAID AOR is authorized to approve the detailed annual work plans. The Recipient must submit the first year work plan within 60 days from the start date of the period of performance. The first annual work plan should cover the period from the date of the award until the end of that same fiscal year. In addition, the work plan shall describe the Recipient's planned activities by component for the year, including a timeline with relevant milestones indicated, and include expected results, tied to the Recipient's Monitoring & Evaluation Plan. The work plan should be prepared in collaboration with USAID, and any other partners. Significant changes by the Recipient to the approved implementation plan will require prior AOR approval. Subsequent annual work plans should be submitted for approval no later than 30 days before the end of the fiscal year.

(b) Approval of Specified Key Personnel

Prior written approval by the Agreement Officer of any additions to or changes of key personnel is required. Prior to replacing any of the specified individuals, the Recipient must notify both the USAID Agreement Officer and AOR at least 30 days in advance and must submit written justification (including proposed substitutions) in sufficient detail to permit evaluation of the impact on the program. No replacement will be made by the Recipient without the prior written consent of the Agreement Officer.

The personnel listed below are considered essential to the work to be performed under this cooperative agreement. The Applicant may propose alternate titles for these positions.

- Chief of Party
- Senior Reading Specialist
- Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
- Senior Finance Specialist

(c) Agency and Recipient Collaboration or Joint Participation

For this program, collaboration or joint participation will be limited to the following areas:

(1) Concurrence on the substantive provisions of sub-awards: USAID requires technical concurrence by the AOR on the substantive provision of sub-awards and the selection of sub-awards as prescribed in 2 CFR 200.308. The Agreement Officer must approve, unless funded in the approved budget of the award, the sub-award, transfer or contracting out of any work under this award. This provision does not apply to the purchase of supplies, material, equipment or general support services.

(2) Approval of the recipient's monitoring and evaluation plans: The AOR will approve monitoring and joint evaluation plans, and will be involved in monitoring progress toward the achievement of program objectives during the course of the Cooperative Agreement.

USAID shall approve the Implementing Partner’s Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E Plan). The M&E Plan shall be submitted to the USAID AOR within 60 days of the start date of the Cooperative Agreement. The USAID AOR shall also be involved in monitoring progress towards the achievement of program objectives during the course of the Cooperative Agreement through joint participation in Technical Committees and other Institutional Committees.

The recipient will collaborate effectively with the independent monitoring contractors/awardees from USAID and the project AOR to ensure that all required project data is provided in a timely manner. The recipient should work directly with the AOR in determining whether and how the USAID multi-tiered monitoring data would successfully aid implementation of the MEGR program.

(END OF SECTION II)

SECTION III – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

U.S. and non-US organizations may participate under this RFA.

USAID welcomes applications from organizations which have not previously received financial assistance from USAID.

Applicants must have established financial management, monitoring and evaluation processes, internal control systems, and policies and procedures that comply with established U.S. Government standards, laws, and regulations. The successful applicant(s) will be subject to a responsibility determination assessment (Pre-award Survey) by the Agreement Officer (AO).

The Recipient must be a responsible entity. The AO may determine a pre-award survey is required to conduct an examination that will determine whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing is not required under this RFA.

SECTION IV – OTHER INFORMATION

A. Funding of Applications

USAID reserves the right to fund one, or more or less than one, application submitted under this RFA.

B. Authorized Geographic Code

The Authorized Geographic Code for procurement of goods and services for this activity is 937. However, USAID/Afghanistan currently has a waiver in place that permits the use of geographic code 935 on a case-by-case basis, if necessary. If 935 is used, the recipient will need to document the files regarding the circumstances of its use.

C. Standard Provisions

If awarded a Cooperative Agreement under this RFA, the Recipient shall adhere to and govern itself under the Mandatory Standard Provisions and the Required as Applicable Provisions for U.S. NGOs and Non-U.S. NGOs found here http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303maa and here http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mab, and incorporated into this Section by this reference.

For U.S. organizations, 2 CFR 700, 2 CFR 200, and ADS 303maa, Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental Organizations will apply.

For non-U.S. organizations, ADS 303mab, Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations will apply.

In addition to the Mandatory Standard Provisions and the Required as Applicable Provisions, mentioned and incorporated above, the following provisions shall also apply and must, therefore, be incorporated into all awards made under this RFA.

1. Branding Strategy – Assistance (June 2012)

a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Branding Strategy," describing how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, and how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and host country citizens.

b. The request for a Branding Strategy, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.

c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Branding Strategy within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.

d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.

e. The Branding Strategy must include, at a minimum, all of the following:

(1) All estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth.

(2) The intended name of the program, project, or activity.

(i) USAID prefers to have the "USAID Identity," comprised of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline "from the American people" as found on the USAID Web site at transition.usaid.gov/branding, unless Section VI of the RFA or APS states that USAID Administrator has approved the use of and additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

(ii) USAID prefers local language translations of the phrase "made possible by (or with) the generous support of the American People" next to the USAID Identity when acknowledging contributions.

(iii) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.

(iv) If branding in the above manner is inappropriate or not possible, the applicant must explain how USAID's involvement will be showcased during publicity for the program or project.

(v) USAID prefers to fund projects that do not have a separate logo or identity that competes with USAID Identity. If there is a plan to develop a separate logo to consistently identify this program, the applicant must attach a copy of the proposed logos. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional of substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

(3) The intended primary and secondary audiences for this project or program, including direct beneficiaries and any special target segments.

(4) Planned communication or program materials used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries.

(i) Describe the main program message.

(ii) Provide plans for training materials, posters, pamphlets, public service announcement, billboards, web sites, and so forth, as appropriate.

(iii) Provide any plans to announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens, such as media releases, press conferences, public events, and so forth. Applicant must incorporate the USAID Identity and the message, "USAID is from the American People."

(iv) Provide any additional ideas to increase awareness that the American people support this project or program.

(5) Information on any direct involvement from host-country government or ministry, including any planned acknowledgement of the host-country government.

(6) Any other groups whose logo or identity the applicant will use on program materials and related materials. Indicate if they are a donor or why they will be visibly acknowledged, and if they will receive the same prominence as USAID.

e. The Agreement Officer will review the Branding Strategy to ensure the above information is adequately include and consistent with stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.

f. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Branding Strategy will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement

2. Marking Plan – Assistance (June 2012)

a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and 17 negotiate a "Marking Plan," detailing the public communications, commodities, and program materials, and other items that will visibly bear the "USAID Identity," which comprises of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline "from the American people." The USAID Identity is the official marking for the Agency, and is found on the USAID Web site at http://www.usaid.gov/branding. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.

b. The request for a Marking Plan, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.

c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Marking Plan within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.

d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.

e. The Marking Plan must include all of the following:

(1) A description of the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the applicant plans to produce and which will bear the USAID Identity as part of the award, including:

(i) Program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other sites physical in nature;

(ii) Technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audio-visual productions, public service announcements, web sites/internet activities, promotional, informational, media, or communications products funded by USAID;

(iii) Commodities, equipment, supplies, and other materials funded by USAID, including commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs; and

(iv) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.

(v) Events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences and other public activities. If the USAID identity cannot be displayed, the recipient is encouraged to otherwise acknowledge USAID and the support of the American people.

(2) A table on the program deliverables with the following details:

(i) The program deliverables that the applicant plans to mark with the USAID Identity;

(ii) The type of marking and what materials the applicant will use to mark the program deliverables;

(iii) When in the performance period the applicant will mark the program deliverables, and where the applicant will place the marking;

(iv) What program deliverables the applicant does not plan to mark with the USAID Identity, and

(v) The rationale for not marking program deliverables.

(3) Any requests for an exemption from USAID marking requirements, and an explanation of why the exemption would apply. The applicant may request an exemption if USAID marking requirements would:

(i) Compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials. The applicant must identify the USAID Development Objective, Interim Result, or program goal furthered by an appearance of neutrality, or state why an aspect of the award is presumptively neutral. Identify by category or deliverable item, examples of material for which an exemption is sought.

(ii) Diminish the credibility of audits, reports, analyses, studies, or policy recommendations whose data or findings must be seen as independent. The applicant must explain why each particular deliverable must be seen as credible.

(iii) Undercut host-country government “ownership” of constitutions, laws, regulations, policies, studies, assessments, reports, publications, surveys or audits, public service announcements, or other communications. The applicant must explain why each particular item or product is better positioned as host-country government item or product.

(iv) Impair the functionality of an item. The applicant must explain how marking the item or commodity would impair its functionality.

(v) Incur substantial costs or be impractical. The applicant must explain why marking would not be cost beneficial or practical.

(vi) Offend local cultural or social norms, or be considered inappropriate. The applicant must identify the relevant norm, and explain why marking would violate that norm or otherwise be inappropriate.

(vii) Conflict with international law. The applicant must identify the applicable international law violated by the marking.

f. The Agreement Officer will consider the Marking Plan's adequacy and reasonableness in the award criteria, and will approve and disapprove any exemption requests. The Marking Plan will be reviewed to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.

g. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Marking Plan, including any approved exemptions, will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement, and will apply for the term of the award unless provided otherwise.

3. Fraud Reporting

The awardee is required to report on indications of fraud in host-country institutions or other matters that could reasonably be expected to be of foreign policy interest to the U. S. Government’s development and stabilization efforts. Corruption, real or perceived, may critically impact USAID programming objectives as might other knowledge the awardee acquires in its normal course of business. This provision must not be construed to require the awardee to conduct investigation for such information outside of its normal business practices or to report on matters not directly or indirectly related to USAID programming or the proper use of U.S. Government funds. In the event awardee has special non-disclosure requirements or confidentiality requirements (such as are prevalent in the legal and banking industries), or awardee determines such reporting would conflict with applicable laws, awardee must include a proposal to obtain any necessary waivers from the applicable host-country institution allowing such reporting to the maximum extent possible. Reports under this requirement must be submitted as a deliverable under the award.

4. Sub-Award Requirements (March 2012)

(a) Applicability: This section limits the number of tiers of sub-awards to two tiers below the awardee for all Contracts and Cooperative Agreements. The awardee must not allow lower-tier sub-awards without the express written approval of the Contracting/Agreement Officer.

(b) Definitions: The term "award" in this clause refers to either the direct contract between USAID and the prime contractor or a direct Cooperative Agreement between USAID and the recipient. A "first-tier sub-award" is a direct award between the awardee and a sub-awardee (the "first-tier sub-awardee"). A "second-tier sub-award" is a direct award between the first-tier sub-awardee and its sub-awardee (the "second-tier sub-awardee").

(c) USAID's objective is to promote, to the extent practicable, competitive, transparent and appropriate local sub-awards with legitimate and competent sub-awardees. Awardee will ensure that all sub-awardees at any tier are actively engaged in the performance of sub-awarded work. Awardee will ensure that sub-awardees do not engage in "brokering" or "flipping" their sub-awards under this award and that all sub-awardees at any tier self perform appropriate portions of the work. "Brokering" or "flipping" is the practice of a sub-awardee receiving a sub-award and either selling such sub-award or not performing a significant percentage of the work with the sub-awardee's own organization.

(d) Should exceptional circumstances warrant sub-awards below two tiers, the awardee will promptly request approval in writing from the Contracting/Agreement Officer, which for contracts may be done in conjunction with a request under FAR 44, provided that the additional information set forth in paragraph (e) below is also provided.

(e) Awardee's written request for approval to allow sub-awardees below the second tier will include the following information:

> (i) Sub-award number and title (or a general description of the sub-award work) of the existing sub-award;
> (ii) Detailed explanation regarding why the work to be performed by the lower-tier sub-awardee cannot be performed by the prime or the two levels of sub-awardees.
> (iii) The total value of the work and total value of the work to be self-performed by the existing sub-awardee;

(f) For purposes of calculating tiers, the following will not be considered a tier:

> (i) subsidiaries of the awardee;
> (ii) members of a joint-venture, provided the joint venture is either the awardee or otherwise a "tier" hereunder;
> (iii) employment awards for a single individual, provided that such individual issues no further sub-awards;
> (iv) suppliers/service providers for component parts for a sub-award issued for finished commodities purchased on the market. Only the sub-awardee supplying the finished commodity shall be considered a "tier" for purposes of this clause/provision;

(v) suppliers of administrative or professional services incidental to the completion of the award nor their sub-awardees, such as legal or financial services, provided such suppliers or their sub-awardees do not perform substantive work related to the scope of work hereunder.
(h) With exception provided in paragraph D above for sub-awards. The awardee will include this clause in all sub-awards, and will require sub-awardees to include this clause in all lower-tier sub-awards. The awardee will be responsible for compliance with this clause/provision by all sub-awardees and lower-tier sub-awardees.

5. 4-14.001 Information for Non-US Contractors, Subcontractors, and Key Individuals

(a) For all Awards, Sub-Awards, and their amendments over $25,000.00, the awardee must complete and submit the "Information Form" (Attachment D; Appendix B), for:

(i) Itself, if it is a non-U.S. entity;
(ii) Each sub-award or sub-awardee of a sub-awardee, regardless of the tier, that is a non-U.S. entity; or
(iii)Each key individual that is a non-U.S. entity.
If an amendment, modification, or additional order would increase the amount of an Award or Sub-award above $25,000.00, vetting shall be required. The threshold is cumulative for multiple awards, i.e., if the amount under an Award to an Awardee would, if taken together with all other Awards previously awarded to the Awardee, cause the total amount awarded to the Awardee to exceed the $25,000.00 threshold, vetting should be performed. Additionally, all Awards for Private Security Services, including PSCs and RMCs whose employees are authorized to carry firearms are subject to vetting regardless of the Award amount.

(b) For purposes of this clause, the following definitions apply:

"Non-U.S. entity" means (1) any non-US citizen or non-permanent legal resident of the United States; or (2) any entity that is not formed in the United States or for which 50% or more of the equity is owned or controlled by persons who are not U.S. citizens or permanent legal residents of the United States.

"Key individuals" means (i) an individual or entity owning 10% or more equity stake in the organization, whether publically- or privately-held; (ii) principal officers of the organization's governing body (e.g., chairman, vice chairman, treasurer or secretary of the board of directors or board of trustees); (iii) the principal officer and deputy principal officer of the organization (e.g., executive director, deputy director; president, vice president); (iv) the program manager or chief of party for the USAID-financed program; and (v) any other person with significant responsibilities for administration of USAID financed activities or resources.

"Award" means any contract, grant, guarantee, cooperative agreement, or any other instrument that acts as any of the same awarded by USAID. Unless the context otherwise requires, an Award includes Sub-awards, as defined below.

"Awardee" means any individual or organization that receives an Award. Unless the context otherwise requires, an Awardee includes Sub-awardees, as defined below.

"Sub-award" means any grant, subgrant, guarantee, subcontract, or any other instrument that acts as any of the same awarded by an Awardee pursuant to an Award.

"Sub-awardee" means any individual or organization that receives a Sub-award**.**

(c) The requirements of paragraph (a) of this clause must be completed at prior to the Government's acceptance of the award and following that, at the earlier of:

(i) Once a year; or
(ii) When there is a change or addition to any entity or person identified in paragraph

(d) The requirements of paragraph (a) must be sent via email to Kabul_usaid_vsu@state.gov. The subject line shall include the prime award number the awardee name and the awardee's Joint Contingency Contracting Registration number.

(e) USAID reserves the right to rescind approval for a sub-award in the event that USAID subsequently becomes aware of information indicating that the sub-award is contrary to U.S. law or policy prohibiting support for terrorism, or facilitating criminal activity. In such cases, USAID's Agreement Officer will provide written instructions to the recipient to terminate the sub-award**.**

6. Special Provision for Performance in Afghanistan (July 2010):

All recipient personnel deploying to Afghanistan under grants or cooperative agreements with a performance period over 30 days or valued at more than $100,000 must be accounted for in the Department of Defense maintained Synchronized Pre-deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) system. Information about SPOT is available at http://www.dod.mil/bta/products/spot.html as well as from the Agreement Officer (AO) or Agreement Officer's Technical Representative (AOTR). Recipient shall register those individuals requiring SPOT-generated Letters of Authorization (LOAs) in SPOT before deploying any employees or consultants to Afghanistan. If individuals are already in Afghanistan at the time the recipient employs them, the recipient must enter each individual upon his or her becoming an employee or consultant under this award. Personnel that do not require LOAs are still required to be accounted for in SPOT for reporting purposes either individually or via an aggregate tally methodology. The recipient must maintain and keep current all employee and consultant data in SPOT. Information on how individual and/or aggregate tally registrations will be made in SPOT is available from the Agreement Officer (AO) or Agreement Officer's Technical Representative (AOTR). Recipient performance may require the use of armed private security personnel. To the extent that such private security contractors (PSCs) are required, recipients are required to ensure they adhere to Chief of Mission (COM) policies and procedures regarding the operation, oversight, and accountability of PSCs. PSCs will be individually registered in SPOT. Under this award, the term "PSC" includes any personnel providing protection of the personnel, facilities, or property of a recipient or sub-recipient at any level, or performing any other activity for which personnel are required to carry weapons in the performance of their duties. As specific COM policies and procedures may differ in scope and applicability, recipient is advised to review post policies and procedures carefully in this regard and direct any questions to the Embassy Regional Security Office (RSO) via the Agreement Officer's Technical Representative. Any exception to these policies must be granted by the COM via the RSO. A copy of any exception must be provided to the AO and AOTR. COM policies and procedures may be obtained from the RSO via the Agreement Officer's Technical Representative. Recipient is also advised that these policies and procedures may be amended from time to time at the post in response to changing circumstances. Recipient is advised that adherence to these policies and procedures is considered to be a material requirement of this grant/cooperative agreement. The recipient must include this provision in all sub-awards at any tier or contracts under their grant/cooperative agreement. Recipient is reminded that only the Agreement Officer has the authority to modify the Notice of Award. Recipients shall proceed with any security guidance provided by the RSO, but shall advise the Agreement Officer and the Agreement Officer's Technical Representative of the guidance received and any potential cost or schedule impact.

7. Gender Requirements

Congress has mandated that USAID programs address the needs and protect the rights of Afghan women and girls, including efforts undertaken to prevent discrimination and violence against women and girls; provide economic and leadership opportunities; increase participation of women in the political process at the national, provincial and sub-provincial levels; improve security for women and girls; and any other programs designed to directly benefit women and girls. As required by USAID policies, the Recipient shall integrate assistance to women into all stages of development, planning, programming and implementation as a part of this assistance program, even if such integration requires separate but equitable programming approaches. Such integration shall focus on Afghan-led programs directly aligned with any or all the three pillars of development outlined in the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA): 1) Security; 2) Government, Rule of Law, and Human Rights, including leadership and political participation); and 3) Economic and Social Development. The Recipient shall establish the necessary accounting and management systems to separately track and report to USAID fiscal year expenditures under the Agreement supporting issues of gender equality and women and girls as direct beneficiaries during each fiscal year of the Agreement. The Recipient shall establish the necessary implementation, management and reporting systems to separately track and report to USAID data on female beneficiaries and measurable impacts of activities intended to address the needs of women and girls. Project quarterly implementation reports shall specifically include information on the following, to the extent that it is applicable to the Agreement: 1) the total number of women and girls supported through the Agreement on a quarterly basis through Afghan Info; 2) number of interventions resulting in increased participation of women in government and civil society; 3) qualitative outcomes, in additional to quantifiable outputs, for women who have benefited from the Agreement. The Recipient shall refer to USAID/Afghanistan's comprehensive Performance Management Plan (PMP) for list of gender indicators and may add customized indicators as needed. Indicators applicable to the Agreement shall be disaggregated by gender.

8. Database Reporting Requirements

The demands for performance information are constant and various in a high profile program such as Afghanistan's. The Afghan Info database, enabled to track performance indicators in addition to activity inputs and outputs, will be the basis for contributing to other regular, on-going reporting exercises and to the many ad-hoc requests for performance analysis that are a constant element of the environment of high profile program. USAID/Afghanistan uses a management information system to track program and project information for all mission-funded activities at the provincial, district, and village levels. The purpose of this database is to track the location of project implementation to the nearest village or geospatial coordinate, document the use of funds at the district level, and monitor the performance of development projects, while maintaining coordination between USAID/Afghanistan, USAID/Washington, Congress, implementing partners, the Government of Afghanistan, and other donors. This reporting process supports the Government of Afghanistan's requirement that USAID provide information to the Ministry of Finance in order to track ongoing and completed donor-sponsored development activities. The Recipient shall provide at least a quarterly update of information on the activities under the Agreement by entering this information into the USAID/Afghanistan management information system. The Recipient shall enter information via an Internet website or a Microsoft (MS) Access Database; USAID will provide the URL address or Access Database, and a user ID/password. A comprehensive user manual will be provided after that details information on the required information and processes needed for managing the information in USAID\Afghanistan information system.

USAID Bureau for Economic growth, Education and Environment requires data to meet the following collection and reporting parameters:

- Successful Applicant will provide USAID with data, technical materials, and other relevant materials produced in the execution of this contract in line with USAID's Open Data Policy as outlined in ADS 579 http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/579.pdf. This includes pedagogical materials and other technical inputs developed to support early grade reading outcomes and other contract objectives, as well as data and information needed for reporting under the relevant foreign assistance objectives, areas and elements.
- *Pedagogical Materials and Technical Inputs:* The successful Applicant shall provide pedagogical materials and other technical inputs developed to support early grade reading outcomes and other contract objectives. Examples of technical inputs to be provided to USAID include scripted lesson plans, supplementary readers, assessment instruments, observation tools, training guides, workshop reports, radio programs, assessment tools, sampling frames, photographs, videos, and other recordings. The successful Applicant will transmit technical materials to the AOR, and submit them to the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (https://dec.usaid.gov/).
- *Data for Reporting Under Foreign Assistance Objectives:* The successful Applicant shall provide datasets and codebooks that include data on student learning outcomes and information needed to estimate the number of unique pupils benefiting from program activities over the life of the program. The successful Applicant, and other Implementing partners, may be responsible, in collaboration with USAID, for obtaining country level

memoranda of understanding that allow for the sharing of the datasets and other data with USAID, as well as public access to the data through the partner organization, where possible.

- Within 90 days of the completion of data collection, the successful Applicant will transmit requested data to USAID. The transmittal shall be according to the following specifications:
    - Datasets should be complete, clean, and final, and include any derived or secondary variables used to calculate indicator values provided in assessment reports
    - Datasets must be cleansed of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) prior to transmittal to USAID. PII includes any information that could be used to identify an individual student, teacher, or administrator for whom data have been collected
    - Datasets will include all variables included in the initial data collection, with the exception of any data that must be edited or cleaned to protect the privacy and anonymity of students, teachers, or administrators represented in the data
    - If variables are edited or removed in order to protect the privacy and anonymity of research subjects, steps should be taken to ensure that sufficient information is retained to allow analyses that require grouping students by school, or track schools/students across datasets if appropriate
    - Data must be transmitted along with relevant supporting materials and instruments. This includes questionnaires and other instruments, codebook, data dictionary, information on sample design, setup and weights, assessment reports, performance management plans or other materials that describe the structure of the assessment and/or program, and any other information a researcher may need when working with the data
    - Learning Assessment data can be transmitted in formats including Stata, SPSS, SAS, R, or an open and machine readable format. Supporting documents can be transmitted in MS Office or an open and machine readable format
    - Successful Applicant shall provide information on the number of pupils benefiting from the program, disaggregated by sex and grade for each year that the program is active
    - Datasets will be delivered through email, addressed to the AOR. The successful Applicant may also be directed by USAID to submit data and related documents to a third party site (e.g. https://sartdatacollection.org)
    - All prerequisites to providing the complete, cleaned datasets must be completed by the implementing partner prior to the provision of the dataset to USAID, such as review and approval by Missions and host country governments, as appropriate.

9. Materials

Materials developed under this Cooperative Agreement contract are subject to FAR 52.227-14 (RIGHTS IN DATA – GENERAL), and the Government of Afghanistan and others will be granted a paid-up, nonexclusive, irrevocable, worldwide license (under the Creative Commons By “CC BY” http://creativecommons.org) license or otherwise as USAID may determine) to reproduce, prepare derivative works and distribute copies to the public. Any material not first produced in the performance of this contract is subject to clause FAR 52.227-14(c)(2).

10. Environmental Compliance

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201.5.10g and 204 (http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/), which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities. Recipient environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this cooperative agreement.

USAID has determined that a **NEGATIVE DETERMINATION WITH CONDITIONS** applies to some proposed activities. This indicates that if these activities are implemented subject to the specified conditions, they are expected to have no significant adverse effect on the environment. For activities determined to have a **CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION** then this indicates that these activities are expected to have no significant adverse effect on the environment. The Recipient shall be responsible for implementing all IEE conditions pertaining to activities to be funded under this award.

In addition, the Recipient must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter shall govern.

Pursuant to 22 CFR 216.3(a)(9), if new information becomes available that indicates activities to be funded by the Project might be "major" and the Project's effect "significant," or if additional activities are proposed that might be "major" and their significant, the IEE and its applicable Amendments will be reviewed and revised by the originator of the project and submitted to the BEO for approval and, if appropriate, an environmental assessment will be prepared. The Recipient shall inform the USAID/Afghanistan Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) of any changes to the Project that might impact IEE requirements. It is the responsibility of the AOR to keep the Mission Environmental Office and the BEO informed of any new information or changes in the activity that might require revision of the IEE.

As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the recipient, in collaboration with the USAID Agreement Officer Representative and Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this Cooperative Agreement to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.

If the Recipient plans any new activities outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation, it shall prepare an amendment to the documentation for USAID review and approval. No such new activities shall be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval of environmental documentation amendments.

Any ongoing activities found to be outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 Environmental documentation shall be halted until an amendment to the documentation is submitted and written approval is received from USAID.

11. Key Personnel

Key Personnel Requirements are as follows. The Applicant may propose alternate titles for these positions.

Chief of Party:
The Chief of Party (COP) provides overall technical and administrative leadership and expertise for the MEGR Program activity and serves as the primary liaison with USAID/Afghanistan on management and technical matters. He/she will be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the activity and report directly to the designated USAID Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR). S/he will supervise activity implementation and ensure the activity meets stated goals and reporting requirements. The COP will take a leadership role in coordination among USAID and key stakeholders. The COP position requires political savvy, as s/he will interact with numerous GIRoA institutions and senior-level national and county-level government officials. The Chief of Party will have demonstrated ability to work in complex, politically charged, unstable environments, work across different cultures, and manage diverse teams to deliver impact within agreed timelines.

Education: Requires degree in education from an accredited university. A focus on curriculum, education policy development, early childhood development or early grade reading is preferred. An advanced degree is preferred but not required.

Skills and Experience: At least eight years of experience in relevant management, supervisory, technical experience working with programs that are of a similar scope and scale to this activity is required (at least four of these years must be in a management/leadership position). Experience in the education sector in Central Asia, preferably in Afghanistan is preferred, with ample experience in project designs, policy dialogue, strategic planning and implementation, education reform and national-level quality improvement. Experience in early grade reading is required. S/he should also have demonstrated experience and knowledge of capacity development and professional development.

Language: The candidate must be professionally proficient and fluent in written and spoken English. Proficiency in either Dari or Pashto is preferred, but not required.

Senior Reading Specialist:
The senior reading specialist provides overall technical oversight and guidance to the project's

support to improved reading instruction. He/she supervises the production of all MEGR Program-supported reading material, all MEGR Program-supported trainings in reading, all teacher and classroom supervision and monitoring and all student testing efforts. He/she ensures complementarity of activity approaches in reading across the MEGR Program regions, liaises with government representatives and technicians on technical matters, and bears ultimate responsibility for ensuring that children in MEGR Program schools achieve improved outcomes in reading.

Education: Requires a Master's Degree in education from an accredited university. A specialized degree, with a focus in early grade reading, is preferred but not required. A focus on early childhood education and/or early grade learning is preferred.

Skills and Experience: At least four years of experience with work specifically to improve early grade reading is required, and more experience is preferred. Prior experience with the development of early grade reading materials, training programs, classroom monitoring protocols, and tests and assessments, including EGRA, is required. Prior experience with supporting civil-society based monitoring of reading outcomes is preferred, but not required. Two or more years' experience in programs in Central Asia is preferred, but not required.

Language: The candidate must be professionally proficient and fluent in written and spoken English. It is preferred, but not required, that the candidate be conversant and fluent in written and spoken Dari or Pashto.

Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist:
The Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist establishes, manages, and analyzes the overall activity system to track progress towards meeting program/contract results, indicators and targets. The individual will ensure that performance monitoring/monitoring & evaluation, action research, and evaluations are consistent with program results and track activity progress towards achieving targets and results. He/she will manage and coordinate field-based monitoring and evaluation specialists, and any other staff responsible to performance monitoring/monitoring & evaluation, oversight, and data collection and reporting. The individual must ensure that the methodologies proposed by the Applicant to measure the programs impact on access, retention, reading and learning outcomes, school safety, community engagement, gender, disability-inclusive, and conflict sensitive measures, are being consistently and systematically tracked and reported.

Education: Requires a Degree in the social sciences or a related field. An advanced degree is preferred.

Skills and Experience: At least four years designing, monitoring, and evaluating programs (in the education sector preferred). This individual must have demonstrated success and experience in monitoring results and indicators of education quality, learning outcomes, access, retention, and community engagement.

Language: The candidate must be professionally proficient and fluent in written and spoken English. It is preferred, but not required, that the candidate be conversant and fluent in written and spoken Dari or Pashto.

Senior Finance Specialist:
The Senior Finance Specialist will ensure full financial and contractual compliance of MEGR Program activities with USAID regulations. Working with selected Applicant's internal auditing system and Financial Comptroller, the MEGR Program's Senior Finance Specialist will establish internal control systems as well as accounting and financial reporting protocols for local subcontractors and grantees. S/He will supervise activity financial staff and program budget matters, managing accounting and disbursement needs, verifying that procurements comply with USAID and selected Applicant's financial guidelines, overseeing the training of staff and partner NGOs in financial systems, ensuring adherence to grants management policies, and assuring timely financial reporting to USAID. The Senior Finance Specialist reports directly to the COP.

Education: A Degree in Business and/or Public Administration, Accounting and/or Financial Management, or appropriate equivalent academic degree is required.

Skills and Experience: At least five years' experience in financial management of development activities with increasing levels of responsibility. Experience managing multi-faceted development program required. Experience working in Central Asia, and specifically in Afghanistan, is preferred. Membership in a professional body such as those for Certified Public Accountants preferred.

Language: The candidate must be professionally proficient and fluent in written and spoken English.

All personnel must be willing and able to travel to target regions for the Model Early Grade Reading Program in Afghanistan.

[END OF SECTION III]

SECTION V – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Points of Contact

The primary points of contact for this RFA are:

Stephen Wiese
Agreement Officer
USAID/Afghanistan
U.S. Embassy Compound
Great Masood Road
Kabul, Afghanistan
swiese@state.gov

Abdul Karim Farooqi
Acquisition and Assistance Specialist
USAID/Afghanistan
U.S. Embassy Compound
Great Massoud Road
Kabul, Afghanistan
AFarooqi@state.gov

The AOR for this Award will be designated by letter after the signature of the Award.

Any questions concerning this RFA must be submitted in writing to kblaidoaaossd@state.gov, with a copy to Stephen J Wiese at swiese@state.gov and Abdul Karim Farooqi at AFarooqi@state.gov , no later than the time and date listed in the cover letter of this award.

B. Required Forms

The Applicant must submit the application using the SF-424 series, which includes:

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance;
- SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-construction Programs; and
- SF-424B, Assurances Non-construction Programs.

Please see paragraph F of this section for more information on these forms.

C. Pre-Award Certifications, Assurances and Other Statements of the Recipient

In addition to the certifications that are included in the SF-424, both U.S. and non-U.S. organizations (except as specified below) the Applicant must provide the following certifications, assurances and other statements. Complete copies of these Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements may be found in Attachment A to this RFA.

- For U.S. organizations, a signed copy of the mandatory reference, Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs;
- A signed copy of the certification and disclosure forms for "Restrictions on Lobbying" (see 22 CFR 227);
- A signed copy of the "Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers" for covered countries and individuals (ADS 206 **;**
- A signed copy of the Certification Regarding Terrorist Funding required by the Internal Mandatory Reference AAPD 04-14;
- A signed copy of "Key Individual Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking;"
- Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants; and
- All Applicants must provide a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number.

D. Application Preparation and Submission Guidelines

USAID will accept an application from the sole source qualified entity of this RFA. The application may be submitted by the institution individually or in a group. In the case of a group, the application must include only one prime Applicant, which shall enter into sub-agreements or contracts with partnering institutions. In this case, the Prime Applicant will be responsible for establishing and maintaining sub-agreement and/or contracting relationships with proposed partners. For the purposes of this RFA, the term "Applicant" is used to refer to the prime and any proposed partners.

The application received by the deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in these guidelines and the application format. Section IV addresses the technical application review information for the applications. Applications which are incomplete; are not directly responsive to the terms, conditions, specifications and provisions of this RFA may be categorized as non-responsive and eliminated from further consideration.

Applications shall be submitted separately: (a) technical and (b) cost or business application. The format of submission will be email submission only; no hard copy applications will be accepted. Acceptable file formats are Word, Adobe Acrobat and Excel. The applicant submitting electronic applications are responsible for ensuring that complete applications are received by the deadline. The time of receipt for electronic submissions will be based on the automatic electronic delivery time stamp from the usaid.gov e-mail server. USAID servers may automatically reject e-mails with zip files. The applicant submitting zipped files do so at the risk that their application will not be received. The applicant shall submit electronic applications to kblaidoaaossd@state.gov copying Stephen Wiese at swiese@state.gov and Abdul Farooqi at AFarooqi@state.gov. The application should be prepared according to the structural format set forth below. The application must be submitted no later than the date and time indicated on the cover page of this RFA. The application shall be prepared in English. An application in any other language shall be treated as non-responsive and eliminated from further consideration.

The Applicant should retain for their records one copy of the application and all enclosures which accompany their application. Erasures or other changes must be initialed by the person signing the application. To facilitate review of the application, USAID will consider only an application conforming to the format prescribed below.

Page limitations are specified below for each section. The application must be on letter size paper (A4 or 8-1/2 by 11 inches), single spaced, using Times New Roman font, size 12 or a similarly sized typeset, and have at least one inch margins on the top, bottom and both sides. The response is to strictly follow the technical application format and outline of the evaluation criteria in the RFA. If the technical application does not respond to the following technical application format and evaluation criteria outline, it may be eliminated from further consideration.

If the applicant will include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purposes, it should:

(a) Mark the title page with the following legend:

"This application includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the U.S. Government and shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, an agreement is awarded to this Applicant as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government shall have the right to duplicate, use or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting grant. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government's right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets;" and

(b) Mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following legend:

"Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application.

E. Technical Application Format

The Technical Application shall contain the following sections:

a) Cover Page (1 page)
b) Executive Summary (2 pages)
c) Program Narrative (35 pages)
d) Annexes

The cover page should be one (1) page consisting of this RFA's title, number, and the names of the organizations/institutions involved in the proposed application. In the case of a group, please clearly indicate the lead or primary Applicant followed by any proposed sub grantees and/or recipients (hereafter referred to as "subs"), including a single sentence narrative describing the unique capacities and skills being brought to the program by each institution.

In addition, the Cover Page should include information about a contact person for the prime applicant, including this individual's name (both typed and his/her signature), title or position with the organization/institution, address, e-mail address and telephone and fax numbers. Also state whether the contact person is the person with authority to enter in agreement for the applicant, and if not, that person should also be listed.

CV's included in the Annexes section are limited to 2 pages.

a) Application Executive Summary

The executive summary should be no more than a two (2) page description of proposed project activities, goals, and anticipated results (both quantitative and qualitative). Please describe your organization's technical and managerial resources and how the overall program will be managed. State the bottom line funding request being made to USAID for the proposed program.

b) Program Narrative

The Program Narrative should be thirty-five (35) pages or less and provide a clear, well-conceived, technically sound description that reflects an understanding of Afghanistan's context, following the points outlined in the Technical Evaluation Criteria (Section V below).

F. Cost Application Instructions

The Cost Application is to be submitted under separate cover from the technical application. Certain documents are required to be submitted by an Applicant in order for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility.

The cost application should contain the following sections:

a) Cover Page
b) SF 424 Forms
c) Budget
d) Certifications, Assurances, and Representations
e) Marking and Branding Plan
f) Security Plan
g) Other Supporting documentation (as applicable)

a) Cover Page

The cover page should be one (1) page consisting of this RFA's title, number, and the names of the organizations/institutions involved in the proposed application. In the case of a group, please clearly indicate the lead or primary Applicant followed by any proposed sub grantees and/or recipients (hereafter referred to as "subs"), including a single sentence narrative describing the unique capacities and skills being brought to the program by each institution.

In addition, the Cover Page should include information about a contact person for the prime applicant, including this individual's name (both typed and his/her signature), title or position with the organization/institution, address, e-mail address and telephone and fax numbers

b) SF 424 Form(s)

Applicant shall submit the application using the SF-424 series. Forms and instructions can be found at the following sites:

Instructions for SF-424 http://www.grants.gov/assets/SF424Instructions.pdf

SF 424 http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424_2_1-V2.1.pdf

Instructions for SF-424A http://www.grants.gov/assets/InstructionsSF424A.pdf

SF 424A http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424A-V1.0.pdf

Instructions for SF-424B http://www.grants.gov/assets/InstructionsSF424B.pdf

SF 424B http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/SF424B-V1.1.pdf

Failure to accurately complete these forms could result in a non-funded application.

c) Budget

The Budget must be submitted as one unprotected Excel file (MS Office 2000 or later versions) with visible formulas and references.

The budget shall consist of the following sections:

i. Summary Budget
ii. Detailed Budget
iii. Sub-partners' Detailed Budget
iv. Budget Narrative for Prime and Sub-Partners.

i. Summary Budget

The summary budget shall consist of two major cost categories: Administrative costs, as defined in Section II.C, and Programmatic costs. Programmatic costs are those costs that do not qualify as administrative costs. The summary budget should present a yearly break down of the two major cost categories described above and provide their yearly totals and overall total.

ii. Detailed Budget

It is up to the Applicant to determine what specific line items are needed to implement the program, but it is expected at a minimum, admin costs shall include those line items noted in Section II.C.

Indirect Costs – All indirect costs should be included under the Administrative Cost Category. The Applicant should support the proposed indirect cost rate with a letter from a Cognizant U.S. Government audit agency or with sufficient information for USAID to determine the reasonableness of the rates. (For example, a breakdown of labor bases and overhead pools, the method of determining the rate, etc.).

Local institutions usually do not have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) letter with the US Government. Therefore no indirect costs should be included in the cost/business application submitted by local NGOs. Local institutions submitting applications should treat all indirect costs as direct costs.

In addition, the following direct cost categories may be applicable:

1) **Salary and Wages** - Direct salaries and wages should be proposed in accordance with the Applicant's personnel policies. The applicant must differentiate these costs in accordance with Section II.C. of this RFA.

2) **Fringe Benefits** - If the Applicant has a fringe benefit rate that has been approved by an agency of the Government, such rate should be used and evidence of its approval should be provided. If a fringe benefit rate has not been so approved, the application should propose a rate and explain how the rate was determined. If the latter is used, the narrative should include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., unemployment insurance, workers compensation, health and life insurance, retirement, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in dollars and as a percentage of salaries. Please provide copies of the policies that define the fringe benefits and include them as an attachment to the cost proposal. The applicant must differentiate these costs in accordance with Section II.C. of this RFA.

3) **Travel and Transportation** - the application should indicate the number of trips, domestic and international, and the estimated costs. Specify the origin and destination for each proposed trip, duration of travel, and number of individuals traveling. Per Diem should be based on the Applicant's normal travel policies, but not exceed the current standard rate established by the US Department of State.

All travel and transportation and associated costs must be considered administrative.

4) **Other Direct Costs** - This includes, but is not limited to, communications, report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, insurance (other than insurance included in the Applicant's fringe benefits), equipment (procurement plan for commodities), office rent abroad, etc. The narrative should provide a breakdown and support for all and each other direct costs. All ODCs must be considered administrative and subject to the 25% limitation.

iii. Sub-partners' Detailed Budget

Sub-partners' Detailed Budget should be included as a separate Excel spread sheet following the same guidance as the Applicants cost application and respecting the same 25% limitation on administrative cost and should clearly tie into the corresponding line items on the applicant's budget.

iv. Budget Narrative

The Applicant must provide a detailed Budget Narrative that explains how the costs were estimated and the methodologies and assumptions used to define those costs. Each cost category and their respective line items should have a clearly labeled separate paragraph, or more, describing how that cost and line item were derived. Tables may be used to illustrate a single line item if needed. The Budget Narrative must provide detailed explanation of all costs and the reasoning behind any assumptions.

d) Certification, Assurances, and Representations

Please fill out the documents found in Annex A of this RFA.

e) Branding and Marking Plan

It is a federal statutory and regulatory requirement that all USAID programs, activities, public communications, and commodities that USAID partially or fully funds under a USAID grant or cooperative agreement or other assistance award or sub award, must be marked appropriately overseas with the USAID Identity. See Section 641, Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended; 2 CFR 700.16. Under the regulation, USAID requires the submission of a Branding Strategy and a Marking Plan, but only by the "Apparent Successful Applicant," as defined in the regulation. The Apparent Successful Applicant's proposed Branding and Marking Plan may include a request for approval of one or more exceptions to marking requirements established in 2 CFR 700.16. The Agreement Officer is responsible for evaluating and approving the Branding Strategy and a Marking Plan (including any request for exceptions) of the Apparently Successful Applicant, consistent with the provisions "Branding Strategy," "Marking Plan," and "Marking of USAID-funded Assistance Awards" contained in AAPD 05-11 and in 2

CFR 700.16. Please note that in contrast to "exceptions" to marking requirements, waivers based on circumstances in the host country must be approved by the Mission Director or other USAID Principal Officers, see 2 CFR 700.16.

f) Security Plan

The Applicant shall submit a Security Plan as Annex D that, at a minimum, contains the processes and procedures for insuring the safety of the staff and property involved in this project and what any sub-recipients envision will be necessary to secure the safety of their staff and property in performance of this requirement. See also Section V.D. of this RFA for additional guidance. Costs for the Security Plan must be reflected in the detailed budget as described in this Section.

g) Other Supporting Documentation (as applicable)

<u>Responsibility Determination</u>

Applicants should submit any additional evidence of responsibility deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility. The information submitted should substantiate that the applicant:

1. Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the award.
2. Has the ability to comply with the award conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the applicant, nongovernmental and governmental.
3. Has a satisfactory record of performance. Past relevant unsatisfactory performance is ordinary sufficient to justify a finding of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance.
4. Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics; and
5. Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a grant under applicable laws and regulations.

An award shall be made only when the Agreement Officer makes a positive determination that the applicant possesses, or has the ability to obtain, the necessary management competence in planning and carrying out assistance programs and it will practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided by USAID.

For organizations that are new to USAID or organizations with outstanding audit findings it may be necessary to perform a pre-award survey.

Waivers from or Approval under USAID Procurement Requirement: If the applicant foresees the need for waivers from, or approvals required under, USAID eligibility rules for goods and services requirements, the applicants must request and justify a waiver and the need for such waiver(s) must be noted in the Cost Application. All waivers must be approved by the USAID Afghanistan Mission Director.

G. Pre-Award Costs

The award will not allow the reimbursement of pre-award costs.

[END OF SECTION IV]

SECTION VI – APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

The criteria listed below are presented by major category in order of descending importance. This presentation is to enable Applicants to know which areas require emphasis in the preparation of application. Applicants should note that these criteria serve as the standard against which all technical information will be evaluated. Past Performance alone will be evaluated on an acceptable/neutral/non-acceptable basis.

Technical Approach
The degree to which the proposed technical approach is evidence-based, logical, conflict and gender sensitive and likely to accomplish the activity's topline objectives in early grade reading; the degree to which the proposed approach presents an internationally evidence-based model that could be implemented nationwide by the Ministry of Education; the degree to which the proposed technical approach leverages the participation and human and financial resources of the target provinces; the integration of ICT and other innovations appropriate for early grade reading, monitoring, Early Grade Reading Assessments, or other elements of the technical approach.

Personnel and Staffing
Extent to which this section discusses how key personnel meet the qualifications in section C; the degree to which it presents an effective organizational structure that describes coordination and responsibilities (home/field/sub-awardees, MoE counterparts), maximizes in-country resources and Afghan expertise, especially placement and mentoring of Afghan staff and use of Afghan organizations or businesses (following USAID Forward and Afghan First principles), and US or local small or disadvantaged businesses; describes the management structure, including an organizational chart. Personnel's expertise in addressing gender gaps will be considered.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan
Extent to which the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan is feasible, with appropriate deliverables and indicators that demonstrate how M&E data will be applied and used to quickly adapt to changes. See Annex 9 for Indicators to be considered. Utilization of ICT in M&E will be considered.

Institutional Capacity
The extent to which the proposal demonstrates the Applicant's experience in implementing projects of similar size and complexity, specifically in evidence-based early grade reading programs and capacity building of government officials at all levels. Experience in countries affected by insecurity and conflict will be given preference. Experience in addressing gender imbalance in education will be reviewed.

Past Performance
Extent to which the Applicant’s reputation with former or current partners demonstrates the Applicant's past performance in terms of adhering to the terms and conditions of its contracts, or grants, including the technical, business and administrative aspects of performance; demonstrating a commitment to partner satisfaction; demonstrated experience in carrying out education development programs; proven track-record in grants administration; demonstrated programmatic experience in and understanding of related activities such as improving early grade reading through teacher training, curriculum development, reading materials, and policy development; and pursuing excellence in all aspects of its business and successful financial performance and maintaining good working relationships with USAID and governments.

Past performance will be evaluated on an acceptable/neutral/unacceptable basis. Applicants with no history of past performance will receive a neutral rating. All other applicants will receive an acceptable or unacceptable rating. Only those applicants with acceptable past performance will be considered for award.

[END OF SECTION V]

SECTION VII – FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

Award of the agreement contemplated by this RFA cannot be made until funds have been appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed Agreement or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

A notice of award signed by the AO is the authorizing document, and it will be provided electronically to the points of contact listed in the applications of the successful applicant(s).

2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

For U.S. organizations, 2 CFR 700, 2 CFR 200, and ADS 303maa, Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental Organizations are applicable.

For non-U.S. organizations, ADS 303mab, Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations will apply.

3. Reporting Requirements.

Financial Reporting:

Reporting of Expenditures

Financial reporting requirements shall be in accordance with 2 CFR 700 and 2 CRF 200 requirements. Either paper copies or electronic copies (scanned PDF document) may be submitted, but not both.

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.327, the SF 425 is used to report actual expenditures and is required on a quarterly basis. The Recipient shall submit these forms in the following manner:

One copy of the SF 425 (as appropriate) must be submitted within 45 calendar days following the end of each quarter to the Agreement Officer Representative, to the Agreement Officer (AO) and to the USAD/Afghanistan Office of Financial Management at kabulfinancialreport@usaid.gov. These reports shall be submitted within 30 calendar days from the end of each quarter, except that the final report shall be submitted within 90 calendar days from the estimated completion date of this Award.

Performance Reporting

The successful Applicant will use the standard form Performance Progress Report (SF-PPR) to report performance progress for the program under the award when the program exceeds

$100,000 or more per project/grant period.

Annual Work Plans

Annual work plans will be submitted in accordance with Section II Provision (E)(a) of this RFA.

Progress reports

To assist with the performance report content and format, USAID issued IP Notice OAA-IP-2014-005 on April 21, 2014. The following reports are the minimum that will be required by the AOR.

Quarterly: The recipient will submit concise quarterly project performance reports to the AOR. Reports shall be submitted via email. The quarterly reports also will include progress based on indicators and targets established in the Monitoring & Evaluation Plan. The due date for the quarterly report will be no later than 30 days after the end of the calendar quarter reporting period. For the fourth quarter of each year, the quarterly report can be included in the annual report.

Annual: The recipient will submit one copy of detailed annual performance reports to the AOR. Reports shall be submitted via email. The due date for the annual report will be no later than 30 days after the end of the reporting period. At a minimum, the report will include the following:

- A comparison of actual accomplishments, both for the reporting period and cumulatively, with established goals/objectives and expected results;
- Data (both qualitative and quantitative) using established baseline data and indicators, and supported by a narrative;
- Any adjustments made in the course of implementation;
- A description of key lessons learned; and
- Adjustments proposed to future activities.

Final: The recipient will submit one copy of the final report to the AOR. Reports shall be submitted via email. . The results will cover the entire period of performance. The final report will be submitted no later than 45 days after the completion date. At a minimum, the report will include the following:

- Overall impact achieved and a discussion of the overall performance of the project, including details of any discrepancies between the intended and actual impacts and impact affecting women, disadvantaged groups, and minorities;
- Specific results with related quantitative and qualitative data supporting the description;
- Reasons why established objectives/targets were not met, if applicable;
- A description of assessments and data used to measure results;
- Success stories and an explanation of successes achieved, constraints encountered, and lessons learned;
- Other pertinent information including, when appropriate, the extent to which the original assumptions changed over the course of implementation, how activities were accordingly adjusted or re-adjusted.

Closeout Plan

Ninety days prior to the completion date of the Cooperative Agreement, the recipient will submit a Closeout Plan to the Agreement Officer (AO) and AOR. The Closeout Plan will include, at a minimum, an illustrative property Disposition Plan; a delivery schedule for all reports or other deliverables required under the Cooperative Agreement; and a timeline for completing all required actions in the Closeout Plan, including the submission date of the final Property Disposition plan to the AOR. The AO must approve the Closeout Plan in writing.

Audit

The recipient will commission annual audit reports from an independent, non-Federal auditor or audit organization which meets the general standards specified in generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS) to fulfill these requirements.

USAID/Afghanistan Database Reporting Requirement

USAID/Afghanistan uses a web-based system to collect and organize information critical to program management, oversight, and reporting. This system is USAID Info. USAID Info supports a number of exercises including: Mission-wide Portfolio Reviews, the Performance Plan and Report, the Multi-Tiered Monitoring Approach, and coordination efforts. Reported information may impact policy formulation and project design stakeholders including USAID/Afghanistan, USAID/Washington, the United States Congress, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), and other donors.

USAID requires a minimum of quarterly (United States Government Fiscal Quarters) data submissions throughout the entire life of the award. The partner must provide updates for all required data elements as specified in the reporting requirements of their award. As applicable, data to be reported into USAID Info may include:

- GPS (global positioning system) data and other supporting details on the specific implementation activities as detailed in the workplan.
- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan indicator reporting and aggregate and/or raw data.
- Attribution by provinces/districts of total quarterly costs/ vouchered expenses.
- Documents as required in the reporting requirements section of the award.

The AOR/COR responsible for the award will provide specific guidance on reporting, provide access to the system for the Implementing Partner (IP), and ensure that all applicable reporting requirements have been assigned to the award and as necessary, appropriately configured in the system. IPs must use the USAID Info interface for data entry.

Data entered into the system must adhere to USAID data quality standards (ADS 203.3.11.1).

Unless otherwise specified, USAID Info/Afghan Info can be accessed at:
USAIDInfo.USAID.gov

Submission Requirements for Development Experience Documents (Sept 2013)

(a) Contract Reports and Information/Intellectual Products.

(1) Within thirty (30) calendar days of obtaining the contracting officer representative's approval, the contractor must submit to USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) one copy each of reports and information products which describe, communicate or organize program/project development assistance activities, methods, technologies, management, research, results and experience. These reports include: Assessments, evaluations, studies, technical and periodic reports, annual and final reports, and development experience documents (defined as documents that:

(i) Describe the planning, design, implementation, evaluation, and results of development assistance; and

(ii) Are generated during the life cycle of development assistance programs or activities.) The contractor must also submit copies of information products including 03/16/2015 Full Revision 112 training materials, publications, videos and other intellectual deliverable materials required under the Contract Schedule. The following information is not to be submitted:

(A) Time-sensitive materials such as newsletters, brochures or bulletins.

(B) The contractor's information that is incidental to award administration, such as financial, administrative, cost or pricing, or management information.

(2) Within thirty (30) calendar days after completion of the contract, the contractor must submit to the DEC any reports that have not been previously submitted and an index of all reports and information/intellectual products referenced in paragraph (a)(1) of this clause.

(b) Submission requirements. The contractor must review the DEC Web site for the most up-to-date submission instructions, including the DEC address for paper submissions, the document formatting and the types of documents to be submitted. The submission instructions can be found at: https://dec.usaid.gov.

(1) Standards.

(i) Material must not include financially sensitive information or personally identifiable information (PII) such as social security numbers, home addresses and dates of birth. Such information must be removed prior to submission.

(ii) All submissions must conform to current USAID branding requirements.

(iii) Contract reports and information/intellectual products can be submitted in either electronic (preferred) or paper form. Electronic documentation must comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. (iv) The electronic submissions must consist of only one electronic file, which comprises the complete and final equivalent of the paper copy. (v) Electronic documents must be in one of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)-approved formats as described in NARA guidelines related to the transfer of permanent E-records. (See http://www.archives.gov/recordsmgmt/initiatives/transfer-to-nara.html).

(2) Essential bibliographic information. Descriptive information is required for all contractor products submitted. The title page of all reports and information products must include the contract number(s), contractor name(s), name of the USAID contracting officer's representative, the publication or issuance date of the document, document title, (if non-

English, provide an English translation of the title), author name(s), and development objective or activity title (if non-English, provide a translation) and associated number, and language of the document (if non-English). In addition, all hard copy materials submitted in accordance with this clause must have, attached as a separate cover sheet, the name, organization, address, telephone number, fax number, and internet address of the submitting party.

Attachment A

Certifications, Assurances, Other Statements of the Recipient and Solicitation Standard Provisions

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Certifications, Assurances, Other Statements of the Recipient and Solicitation Standard Provisions

NOTE: When these Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of Recipient are used for cooperative agreements, the term “Grant” means “Cooperative Agreement.”

Part I – Certifications and Assurances

1. Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Non-Discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs

Note: This certification applies to Non-U.S. organizations if any part of the program will be undertaken in the United States.

(a) The recipient hereby assures that no person in the United States will, on the bases set forth below, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity receiving financial assistance from USAID, and that with respect to the Cooperative Agreement for which application is being made, it will comply with the requirements of:

(1) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Pub. L. 88-352, 42 U.S.C. 2000-d), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance;

(2) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance;

(3) The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (Pub. L. 95-478), which prohibits discrimination based on age in the delivery of services and benefits supported with Federal funds;

(4) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance (whether or not the programs or activities are offered or sponsored by an educational institution); and

(5) USAID regulations implementing the above nondiscrimination laws, set forth in Chapter II of Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

(b) If the recipient is an institution of higher education, the Assurances given herein extend to admission practices and to all other practices relating to the treatment of students or clients of the institution, or relating to the opportunity to participate in the provision of services or other benefits to such individuals, and must be applicable to the entire institution unless the recipient establishes to the satisfaction of the USAID Administrator that the institution's practices in designated parts or programs of the institution will in no way affect its practices in the program of the institution for which financial assistance is sought, or the beneficiaries of, or participants in, such programs.

2. Certification Regarding Lobbying

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal Cooperative Agreement, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned must complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,” in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned must require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients must certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, United States Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification will be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

“The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that: If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of

Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned must complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, “Disclosure

Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement will be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure."

3. Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals (ADS 206)

USAID reserves the right to terminate this Agreement, to demand a refund or take other appropriate measures if the Grantee is found to have been convicted of a narcotics offense or to have been engaged in drug trafficking as defined in 22 CFR Part 140. The undersigned must review USAID ADS 206 to determine if any certifications are required for Key Individuals or Covered Participants.

If there are COVERED PARTICIPANTS: USAID reserves the right to terminate assistance to or take other appropriate measures with respect to, any participant approved by USAID who is found to have been convicted of a narcotics offense or to have been engaged in drug trafficking as defined in 22 CFR Part 140.

4. Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing, Implementing Executive Order 13224

By signing and submitting this application, the prospective recipient provides the certification set out below:

1. The Recipient, to the best of its current knowledge, did not provide, within the previous ten years, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it does not and will not knowingly provide, material support or resources to any individual or entity that commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated, or participated in terrorist acts, as that term is defined in paragraph 3.

2. The following steps may enable the Recipient to comply with its obligations under paragraph 1:

> a. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Recipient will verify that the individual or entity does not (i) appear on the master list of **Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons**, which is maintained by the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), or (ii) is not included in any supplementary information concerning prohibited individuals or entities that may be provided by USAID to the Recipient.
>
> b. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Recipient also will verify that the individual or entity has not been designated by the United Nations Security (UNSC) sanctions committee established under UNSC Resolution 1267 (1999) (the "1267 Committee") [individuals and entities linked to the Taliban, Usama bin Laden, or the Al-Qaida Organization]. To determine whether there

has been a published designation of an individual or entity by the 1267 Committee, the Recipient should refer to the consolidated list available online at the Committee's Web site: **http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1267/1267ListEng.htm**.

c. Before providing any material support or resources to an individual or entity, the Recipient will consider all information about that individual or entity of which it is aware and all public information that is reasonably available to it or of which it should be aware.

d. The Recipient also will implement reasonable monitoring and oversight procedures to safeguard against assistance being diverted to support terrorist activity.

3. For purposes of this Certification -

a. "Material support and resources" means currency or monetary instruments or financial securities, financial services, lodging, training, expert advice or assistance, safehouses, false documentation or identification, communications equipment, facilities, weapons, lethal substances, explosives, personnel, transportation, and other physical assets, except medicine or religious materials."

b. "Terrorist act" means -

(i) an act prohibited pursuant to one of the 12 United Nations Conventions and Protocols related to terrorism (see UN terrorism conventions Internet site: **http://untreaty.un.org/English/Terrorism.asp**); or

(ii) an act of premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents; or

(iii) any other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.

c. "Entity" means a partnership, association, corporation, or other organization, group or subgroup.

d. References in this Certification to the provision of material support and resources must not be deemed to include the furnishing of USAID funds or USAID-financed commodities to the ultimate beneficiaries of USAID assistance, such as recipients of food, medical care, micro-enterprise loans, shelter, etc., unless the Recipient has reason to believe that one or more of these beneficiaries commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated or participated in terrorist acts.

e. The Recipient's obligations under paragraph 1 are not applicable to the procurement of goods and/or services by the Recipient that are acquired in the ordinary course of business through contract or purchase, e.g., utilities, rents, office supplies, gasoline, etc., unless the Recipient has reason to believe that a vendor or supplier of such goods and services commits, attempts to commit, advocates, facilitates, or participates in terrorist acts, or has committed, attempted to commit, facilitated or participated in terrorist acts.

This Certification is an express term and condition of any agreement issued as a result of this application, and any violation of it will be grounds for unilateral termination of the agreement by USAID prior to the end of its term.

5. Certification of Recipient

By signing below the recipient provides certifications and assurances for (1) the Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Non-Discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs, (2) the Certification Regarding Lobbying, (3) the Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals (ADS 206) and (4) the Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing Implementing Executive Order 13224 above.

These certifications and assurances are given in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all Federal grants, loans, contracts, property, discounts, or other Federal financial assistance extended after the date hereof to the recipient by the Agency, including installment payments after such date on account of applications for Federal financial assistance which was approved before such date. The recipient recognizes and agrees that such Federal financial assistance will be extended in reliance on the representations and agreements made in these assurances, and that the United States will have the right to seek judicial enforcement of these assurances. These assurances are

binding on the recipient, its successors, transferees, and assignees, and the person or persons whose signatures appear below are authorized to sign these assurances on behalf of the recipient.

Request for Application or
Annual Program Statement No. ____________________________

Application No. ________________________________

Date of Application ________________________________

Name of Recipient ________________________________

Typed Name and Title ________________________________

Signature ________________________________

Date ________________________________

Part II – Key Individual Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking

I hereby certify that within the last ten years:

1. I have not been convicted of a violation of, or a conspiracy to violate, any law or regulation of the United States or any other country concerning narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances.

2. I am not and have not been an illicit trafficker in any such drug or controlled substance.

3. I am not and have not been a knowing assistor, abettor, conspirator, or colluder with others in the illicit trafficking in any such drug or substance.

Signature: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

Name: ______________________________

Title/Position: ______________________________

Organization: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________

____

Date of Birth: ______________________________

NOTICE:

1. You are required to sign this Certification under the provisions of 22 CFR Part 140, Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers. These regulations were issued by the Department of State and require that certain key individuals of organizations must sign this Certification.

2. If you make a false Certification you are subject to U.S. criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1001.

Part III – Participant Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking

1. I hereby certify that within the last ten years:

a. I have not been convicted of a violation of, or a conspiracy to violate, any law or regulation of the United States or any other country concerning narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances.

b. I am not and have not been an illicit trafficker in any such drug or controlled substance.

c. I am not or have not been a knowing assistor, abettor, conspirator, or colluder with others in the illicit trafficking in any such drug or substance.

2. I understand that USAID may terminate my training if it is determined that I engaged in the above conduct during the last ten years or during my USAID training.

Signature: ___________________________________

Name: ___________________________________

Date: ___________________________________

Address: ___________________________________

____

Date of Birth: ___________________________________

NOTICE:

1. You are required to sign this Certification under the provisions of 22 CFR Part 140, Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers. These regulations were issued by the Department of State and require that certain participants must sign this Certification.

2. If you make a false Certification you are subject to U.S. criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 1001.

Part IV – Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants

Applicability: All Requests forApplication (RFAs) must include the attached Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants as an attachment to the RFA package. Applicants under unsolicited applications are also to be provided the survey. (While inclusion of the survey by Agreement Officers in RFA packages is required, the applicant's completion of the survey is voluntary, and must not be a requirement of the RFA. The absence of a completed survey in an application may not be a basis upon which the application is determined incomplete or non-responsive. Applicants who volunteer to complete and submit the survey under a competitive or non-competitive action are instructed within the text of the survey to submit it as part of the application process.)

Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants

Part V – Other Statements of Recipient

1. Authorized Individuals

The recipient represents that the following persons are authorized to negotiate on its behalf with the Government and to bind the recipient in connection with this application or grant:

Name	Title	Telephone No.	Facsimile No.

2. Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)

If the recipient is a U.S. organization, or a foreign organization which has income effectively connected with the conduct of activities in the U.S. or has an office or a place of business or a fiscal paying agent in the U.S., please indicate the recipient's TIN:

TIN: ______________________________

3. Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number

(a) Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation using an applicable exemption, in the space provided at the end of this provision, the recipient should supply the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number applicable to that name and address. Recipients should take care to report the number that identifies the recipient's name and address exactly as stated in the proposal.

(b) The DUNS is a 9-digit number assigned by Dun and Bradstreet Information Services. If the recipient does not have a DUNS number, the recipient should call Dun and Bradstreet directly at 1-800-333-0505. A DUNS number will be provided immediately by telephone at no charge to the recipient. The recipient should be prepared to provide the following information:

(1) Recipient’s name.
(2) Recipient’s address.
(3) Recipient's telephone number.
(4) Line of business.
(5) Chief executive officer/key manager.
(6) Date the organization was started.
(7) Number of people employed by the recipient.
(8) Company affiliation.

(c) Recipients located outside the United States may e-mail Dun and Bradstreet at globalinfo@dbisma.com to obtain the location and phone number of the local Dun and Bradstreet Information Services office.

The DUNS system is distinct from the Federal Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) system.

DUNS: ____

4. Letter of Credit (LOC) Number

If the recipient has an existing Letter of Credit (LOC) with USAID, please indicate the LOC number:

LOC: ____

5. Procurement Information

(a) Applicability. This applies to the procurement of goods and services planned by the recipient (i.e., contracts, purchase orders, etc.) from a supplier of goods or services for the direct use or benefit of the recipient in conducting the program supported by the grant, and not to assistance provided by the recipient (i.e., a subgrant or subagreement) to a subgrantee or subrecipient in support of the subgrantee's or subrecipient's program. Provision by the recipient of the requested information does not, in and of itself, constitute USAID approval.

(b) Amount of Procurement. Please indicate the total estimated dollar amount of goods and services which the recipient plans to purchase under the grant:

$___________________________

(c) Nonexpendable Property. If the recipient plans to purchase nonexpendable equipment which would require the approval of the Agreement Officer, indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types, quantities of each, and estimated unit costs. Nonexpendable equipment for which the Agreement Officer's approval to purchase is required is any article of nonexpendable tangible personal property charged directly to the grant, having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION (Generic) _____________________________
QUANTITY _____________________________
ESTIMATED UNIT COST _____________________________

(d) Source If the recipient plans to purchase any goods/commodities which are not in accordance with the Standard Provision "USAID Eligibility Rules for Procurement of Commodities and Services," indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types and quantities of each, estimated unit costs of each, and probable source. "Source" means the country from which a commodity is shipped to the cooperating country or the cooperating country itself if the commodity is located in the cooperating country at the time of purchase. However, where a commodity is shipped from a free port or bonded warehouse in the form in which received, "source" means the country from which the commodity was shipped to the free port or bonded warehouse. Additionally, "available for purchase" includes "offered for sale at the time of purchase" if the commodity is listed in a vendor's catalog or other statement of inventory, kept as part of the vendor's customary business practices and regularly offered for sale, even if the commodities are not physically on the vendors' shelves or even in the source country at the time of the order. In such cases, the recipient must document that the commodity was listed in the vendor's catalog or other statement of inventory; that the vendor has a regular and customary business practice of selling the commodity through "just in time" or other similar inventory practices; and the recipient did not engage the vendor to list the commodity in its catalog or other statement of inventory just to fulfill the recipient's request for the commodity.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION _____________________________
QUANTITY _____________________________

ESTIMATED GOODS ______________________________
PROBABLE GOODS ______________________________
PROBABLE (Generic) ______________________________
UNIT COST ______________________________
SOURCE ______________________________

(e) Restricted Goods. If the recipient plans to purchase any restricted goods, indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types and quantities of each, estimated unit costs of each, intended use, and probable source. Restricted goods are Agricultural Commodities, Motor Vehicles, Pharmaceuticals, Pesticides, Used Equipment, U.S. Government-Owned Excess Property, and Fertilizer.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION ______________________________
QUANTITY ______________________________
ESTIMATED ______________________________
PROBABLE ______________________________
INTENDED USE (Generic) ______________________________
UNIT COST ______________________________
SOURCE ______________________________

(f) Supplier Nationality. If the recipient plans to purchase any goods or services from suppliers of goods and services whose nationality is not in accordance with the Standard Provision "USAID Eligibility Rules for Procurement of Commodities and Services," indicate below (using a continuation page, as necessary) the types and quantities of each good or service, estimated costs of each, probable nationality of each non-U.S. supplier of each good or service, and the rationale for purchasing from a non-U.S. supplier.

TYPE/DESCRIPTION ______________________________
QUANTITY ______________________________
ESTIMATED ______________________________
PROBABLE SUPPLIER ______________________________
NATIONALITY ______________________________
RATIONALE (Generic) ______________________________
UNIT COST (Non-US Only) ______________________________
FOR NON-US ______________________________

6. Past Performance References

On a continuation page, please provide past performance information requested in the RFA.

7. Type of Organization

The recipient, by checking the applicable box, represents that -

(a) If the recipient is a U.S. entity, it operates as [ ] a corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of, [ ] an individual, [ ] a partnership, [ ] a nongovernmental nonprofit organization, [ ] a state or local governmental organization, [ ] a private college or university, [ ] a public college or university,
[ ] an international organization, or [ ] a joint venture; or

(b) If the recipient is a non-U.S. entity, it operates as [ ] a corporation organized under the laws of ______________________________ (country), [ ] an individual, [ ] a partnership, [ ] a nongovernmental nonprofit organization, [ ] a nongovernmental educational institution, [ ] a governmental organization, [ ] an international organization, or [ ] a joint venture.

8. Estimated Costs of Communications Products

The following are the estimate(s) of the cost of each separate communications product (i.e., any printed material [other than non-color photocopy material], photographic services, or video production services) which is anticipated under the grant. Each estimate must include all the costs associated with preparation and execution of the product. Use a continuation page as necessary.

Part VI – Standard Provisions for Solicitations

1. Branding Strategy - Assistance (June 2012)

a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Branding Strategy," describing how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, and how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and host country citizens.

b. The request for a Branding Strategy, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.

c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Branding Strategy within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.

d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.

e. The Branding Strategy must include, at a minimum, all of the following:

   (1) All estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth.

(2) The intended name of the program, project, or activity.

(i) USAID prefers to have the "USAID Identity," comprised of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline "from the American people" as found on the USAID Web site at transition.usaid.gov/branding, included as part of the program or project name.

(ii) USAID prefers local language translations of the phrase "made possible by (or with) the generous support of the American People" next to the USAID Identity when acknowledging contributions.

(iii) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.

(iv) If branding in the above manner is inappropriate or not possible, the applicant must explain how USAID's involvement will be showcased during publicity for the program or project.

(v) USAID prefers to fund projects that do not have a separate logo or identity that competes with the USAID Identity. If there is a plan to develop a separate logo to consistently identify this program, the applicant must attach a copy of the proposed logos.

(3) The intended primary and secondary audiences for this project or program, including direct beneficiaries and any special target segments.

(4) Planned communication or program materials used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries.

(i) Describe the main program message.

(ii) Provide plans for training materials, posters, pamphlets, public service announcement, billboards, Web sites, and so forth, as appropriate.

(iii) Provide any plans to announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens, such as media releases, press conferences, public events, and so forth. Applicant must incorporate the USAID Identity and the message, "USAID is from the American People."

(iv) Provide any additional ideas to increase awareness that the American people support this project or program.

(5) Information on any direct involvement from host-country government or ministry, including any planned acknowledgement of the host-country government.

(6) Any other groups whose logo or identity the applicant will use on program materials and related materials. Indicate if they are a donor or why they will be visibly acknowledged, and if they will receive the same prominence as USAID.

e. The Agreement Officer will consider the Branding Strategy's adequacy in the award criteria. The Branding Strategy will be reviewed to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.

f. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Branding Strategy will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement

(END OF PROVISION)

2. Marking Plan – Assistance (June 2012)

a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Marking Plan," detailing the public communications, commodities, and program materials, and other items that will visibly bear the "USAID Identity," which comprises of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline "from the American people." The USAID Identity is the official marking for the Agency, and is found on the USAID Web site at http://transition.usaid.gov/branding.

b. The request for a Marking Plan, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.

c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Marking Plan within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.

d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.

e. The Marking Plan must include all of the following:

(1) A description of the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the applicant plans to produce and which will bear the USAID Identity as part of the award, including:

(i) Program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other sites physical in nature;

(ii) Technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audio-visual productions, public service announcements, Web sites/Internet activities, promotional, informational, media, or communications products funded by USAID;

(iii) Commodities, equipment, supplies, and other materials funded by USAID, including commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs; and

(iv) It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.

(v) Events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences and other public activities. If the USAID Identity cannot be displayed, the recipient is encouraged to otherwise acknowledge USAID and the support of the American people.

(2) A table on the program deliverables with the following details:

(i) The program deliverables that the applicant plans to mark with the USAID Identity;

(ii) The type of marking and what materials the applicant will use to mark the program deliverables;

(iii) When in the performance period the applicant will mark the program deliverables, and where the applicant will place the marking;

(iv) What program deliverables the applicant does not plan to mark with the USAID Identity , and

(v) The rationale for not marking program deliverables.

(3) Any requests for an exemption from USAID marking requirements, and an explanation of why the exemption would apply. The applicant may request an exemption if USAID marking requirements would:

(i) Compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials. The applicant must identify the USAID Strategic Objective, Interim Result, or program goal furthered by an appearance of neutrality, or state why an aspect of the award is presumptively neutral. Identify by category or deliverable item, examples of material for which an exemption is sought.

(ii) Diminish the credibility of audits, reports, analyses, studies, or policy recommendations whose data or findings must be seen as independent.

The applicant must explain why each particular deliverable must be seen as credible.

(iii) Undercut host-country government “ownership” of constitutions, laws, regulations, policies, studies, assessments, reports, publications, surveys or audits, public service announcements, or other communications. The applicant must explain why each particular item or product is better positioned as host-country government item or product.

(iv) Impair the functionality of an item. The applicant must explain how marking the item or commodity would impair its functionality.

(v) Incur substantial costs or be impractical. The applicant must explain why marking would not be cost beneficial or practical.

(vi) Offend local cultural or social norms, or be considered inappropriate. The applicant must identify the relevant norm, and explain why marking would violate that norm or otherwise be inappropriate.

(vii) Conflict with international law. The applicant must identify the applicable international law violated by the marking.

f. The Agreement Officer will consider the Marking Plan's adequacy and reasonableness in the award criteria, and will approve and disapprove any exemption requests. The Marking Plan will be reviewed to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.

g. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Marking Plan, including any approved exemptions, will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement, and will apply for the term of the award unless provided otherwise.

(END OF PROVISION)

a. 3. Conscience Clause Implementation (Assistance) – Solicitation Provision (February 2012)

APPLICABILITY: This provision must be included in any APS or RFA anticipated to use FY04 – FY13 funds available for HIV/AIDS activities.

CONSCIENCE CLAUSE IMPLEMENTATION (ASSISTANCE) – SOLICITATION PROVISION (FEBRUARY 2012)

b. An organization, including a faith-based organization, that is otherwise eligible to receive funds under this agreement for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, or care—

(1) Must not be required, as a condition of receiving such assistance—

(i) to endorse or utilize a multisectoral or comprehensive approach to combating HIV/AIDS; or

(ii) to endorse, utilize, make a referral to, become integrated with, or otherwise participate in any program or activity to which the organization has a religious or moral objection; and

(2) Must not be discriminated against in the solicitation or issuance of grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements for refusing to meet any requirement described in paragraph (a)(1) above.

b. An applicant who believes that this solicitation contains provisions or requirements that would require it to endorse or use an approach or participate in an activity to which it has a religious or moral objection must so notify the cognizant Agreement Officer in accordance with the Standard Provision “Notices” as soon as possible, and in any event not later than 15 calendar days before the deadline for submission of applications under this solicitation. The applicant must advise which activity(ies) it could not implement and the nature of the religious or moral objection.

c. In responding to the solicitation, an applicant with a religious or moral objection may compete for any funding opportunity as a prime partner, or as a leader or member of a consortium that comes together to compete for an award. Alternatively, such applicant may limit its application to those activities it can undertake and must indicate in its submission the activity (ies) it has excluded based on religious or moral objection. The offeror’s proposal will be evaluated based on the activities for which a proposal is submitted, and will not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably due to the absence of a proposal addressing the activity (ies) to which it objected and which it thus omitted. In addition to the notification in paragraph (b) above, the applicant must meet the submission date provided for in the solicitation.

(END OF PROVISION)

Attachment B

EGR Annexes

ANNEX 1: Content of the USAID/Afghanistan Survey of Resources, Skills, and Capacities in Early Grade Reading

The USAID/Afghanistan Survey of Resources, Skills, and Capacities in Early Grade Reading will provide the following information: Preliminary results from the EGR Survey are expected in March 2016.

1. Inventory of all early grade reading materials available in Afghanistan in each of the 10 languages in which the Ministry of Education (MoE) has authorized instruction.
2. National assessment of 2nd and 4th grade students on reading and understanding of letters, familiar words, and connected text, disaggregated by region, by type of school (public or CBE), by language (Dari and Pashto) and by sex.
3. Conduct study of school management effectiveness and safety (SMES).
4. Needs assessment of the Ministry of Education (MoE) capacity to implement early grade reading.
5. Assessment of the potential for Public/Private Partnerships, including cost-effective and feasible mobile technology, in support of improved EGR.

<u>ANNEX 2</u>: Ministry of Education departments involved in reform to improve early grade reading

The Ministry of Education departments involved in reform to improve early grade reading include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Department of Curriculum;
- Department of General Education, which oversees the operations of all schools providing instruction in grades one to six;
- Department of Teacher Education, responsible for all in-service teacher training and also with creating linkages with the country's Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs);
- Department of Academic Supervision, responsible for overseeing teachers' performance;
- Learning Achievement Unit, responsible for assessment and testing;
- Department of Planning, which oversees the use of human and financial resources in pursuit of the goals included in the NESP III;
- Department of Social and Community Mobilization, responsible for strengthening the capacity of community and school shuras;
- The Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) and District Education Departments (DEDs); and
- Gender Unit.

ANNEX 3: Alignment with USAID Investments, Ministry Priorities, and Donor Investment

List of Related Activities

USAID Development Objectives and Education Investments

The Model EGR (MEGR) Program, funding for which is approved under the mission's Basic Education, Learning, and Training (BELT) Project Appraisal Document, is focused on strengthening Afghan government systems for the delivery of high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction that yields measurable student outcomes. As such, the activity will contribute directly to the accomplishment of the first goal of the agency's worldwide education strategy: the improvement of reading skills for 100 million children. MEGR Program also aligns with USAID/Afghanistan's sector strategies, supporting the Mission's overall education goal of "increasing equitable access to quality education for learners in Afghanistan," and contributing to the Mission's Ten Year Transformation Strategy Development Objective 2: "Gains in Health, Education, and the Empowerment of Women Maintained and Enhanced."

USAID is a major donor to basic education in Afghanistan. In conformity with the stipulations and agreements of the Tokyo Conference on Afghan Reconstruction in July of 2012[9], USAID provides both "off-budget" and "on-budget" support to the MoE's NESP III implementation. "Off-budget" support is financing given to a third party or programmed into a project implemented by USAID partners. "On-budget" support is financing provided either: 1) directly to the MoE, through a government-to-government relationship; or 2) to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), managed by the World Bank. In the case of the ARTF, the World Bank and the GIRoA establish protocols for the use of Afghan government systems in the planning and delivery of projects. As such, GIRoA considers funds programmed through the ARTF to be 'on-budget' financing provided directly to the MoE.

Alignment between MEGR Program, the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), and Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP)

The ARTF is a multi-donor fund administered by the World Bank, and activities under the Fund specific to education are executed through the EQUIP program. Currently, through ARTF funding, the MoE is implementing EQUIP II. The main programmatic components of EQUIP II are improved school infrastructure, data management – Education Management and Information System (EMIS), community and social mobilization, and teacher training. The Teacher Training component of EQUIP II provides pre-service and in-service teacher training and coaching to increase the level of professional knowledge and skills of educators throughout Afghanistan. With 58 percent of general education teachers still not meeting the minimum teaching qualifications, USAID's support to EQUIP II is consistent with the goals in the NESP II and III to further develop capacities of teachers to improve student learning achievements.

ARTF's EQUIP III will be the follow-on to EQUIP II. Preliminary discussions about EQUIP III have begun; however, the actual design has not begun. EQUIP III is expected to be designed and

[9]At the Tokyo Conference, the International Community reaffirmed a commitment to "channeling at least 50 percent of its development assistance through the national budget of the Afghan Government in accordance with the London and Kabul Communiqués."

implementation started in calendar year 2016. Under EQUIP III, USAID expects that the Model Early Grade Reading Program will work with MoE and EQUIP to further refine the in-service teacher training (INSET) package and ensure teacher professional development in reading instruction reflects international best practices and evidence-based approaches. USAID will be the largest (or one of the largest) donors to EQUIP III, hence USAID plans to stay highly involved in the design of EQUIP III in collaboration with the World Bank, other donors and the MoE.

The MEGR Program will be expected to work closely with the EQUIP III program, as the funds provided via the ARTF to EQUIP III represent a resource for the MoE to sustain the work demonstrated under the MEGR Program. Further details about expectations for the scale up, via ARTF/EQUIP, of work demonstrated under MEGR Program, can be found in other sections of this document.

Alignment between MEGR Program and USG G2G Assistance for Book Printing and Distribution

USAID/Afghanistan currently has a government-to-government (G2G) agreement with the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan for the distribution of books and materials. The standing agreement is flexible, and can be invoked either for a national distribution or for more targeted distributions to given regions.

The staff of the MEGR Program should work to include all future distribution of necessary reading materials, once MoE takes over implementation of EGR, as part of this government-to-government agreement in the out-years of the MEGR Program award. Thus, once MoE starts to implement, the Early Grade Reading model in selected districts, (planned to start in year 3 of the MEGR Program) with funding through EQUIP III or USAID G2G funding set aside for the printing and distribution of textbooks will be utilized (not MEGR Program funds).

Alignment between MEGR Program and Community-Based Education (CBE)

Several donors and implementing partners support the implementation of Community-Based Education (CBE) in Afghanistan. A CBE class is taught by a local, community teacher, often with support from a NGO, and where grouping by grade and/or pacing of curricular delivery may differ from that typically found in formal public schools with a government-assigned staff member. CBE generally covers grades 1 – 3, but can also cover up to grade 6. The MoE counts enrollment in CBE schools as official enrollment in the country's primary school system. The MEGR Program is expected to support improvements in early grade reading instruction in both public and CBE schools.

<u>ANNEX 4:</u> Data on Schools, Students, and Teachers by Province/District

This list presents MoE data on school numbers (public and CBE), students, and teachers by province and district. Not all provinces are listed, as it is recognized that implementation of the model will be in a limited number of provinces, and the provinces not listed currently are not candidates for the model due to native language of a majority of students being other than Dari or Pashto, or difficulties in accessing the areas due to distance/infrastructure or security challenges.

Note to Applicants: if you wish to receive an Excel version of this chart, please email the Point-of-Contact for this RFA as listed on the opening page.

CHART TO BE INSERTED

<u>ANNEX 5:</u> Anticipated phasing of related EGR programs

***Note -** this is in Word format to allow easy editing; will be formatted into graphic (using Excel) once all comments are received*

Several activities, of USAID, EQUIP III, and the MEGR Program, are related. This graphic illustrates the anticipated phasing of programs. (All timings are approximate dates and shifts will be made once activities are finalized by USAID or by the ARTF EQUIP program.)

USAID's Survey of Resources,
Skills, and Capacities in
Early Grade Reading in Afghanistan

Starts June/July 2015	Preliminary data available March 2016	EGRA report July 2016

Model Early Grade Reading Program

Starts Sept.-Nov. 2015	Year 3 Sept.-Nov. 2017	Ends Sept.-Nov. 2020

EQUIP III developed and starts

Consultations 2015	Drafting late 2015	Starts mid-2016	Ongoing through 2021

MoE implementation of EGR model in other provinces/districts (under EQUIP III)

Starts in limited number of districts Sept.-Nov. 2017	Expansion into other provinces starts Sept.-Nov. 2020

<u>ANNEX 6:</u> Illustrative Activities for IR 1

While these are potential activities that Applicants can consider, they are only meant to be illustrative. Applicants should propose activities based on their technical expertise and programs.

<u>Sub IR 1.1: Activities for Policies, Standards, and Benchmarks that Support Improved Early Grade Reading Instruction Developed and Adopted</u>

- Develop, validate, and apply standards frameworks for student performance in early grade reading, using an inclusive process involving a wide range of stakeholders, including the definition of words-per-minute/comprehension benchmarks for reading attainment that can be used to monitor progress in reading achievement for first language speakers of Dari and Pashto (national).
- Develop and validate standards for teacher performance in early grade reading based on the student standards framework (national).

<u>Sub IR 1.2: Activities for Limited Research to Inform Ongoing Policy Development in Early Grade Reading Conducted</u>

Limited research to be considered during the implementation the MEGR Program will include work that helps inform the MoE in development of policies and processes.

Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- For policy on language(s) for instruction of EGR: school-based mapping on use of minority languages, other than Dari and Pashto, in schools by students and teachers for consideration in future policies on teaching reading in students' native language
- For book procurement/distribution process: a management review of book procurement and distribution processes to improve the process for the future nationwide implementation of the EGR Model. Determine key areas that need to be strengthened in preparation for book distributions in early grade reading to be conducted as part of the implementation of a national early grade reading reform.
- For policy changes in pre-service training, to incorporate the EGR model implemented by the MEGR Program: a study on early grade reading in pre-service training; identify key changes that are required in the pre-service training curriculum, in teacher preparation, and in-service delivery to student teachers that would enhance their preparation to be successful early grade reading teachers.
- For use in demonstrating to MoE that students' EGR skills are improving through use of internationally accepted EGR techniques: a case study comparing data from a limited number of schools under the MEGR Program to data collected in a nearby district/province that is not teaching early grade reading under the MEGR Program.
- For use in addressing other challenges: case studies on sub-sets of challenges to the adoption of future nationwide implementation of the EGR model.
- For use in improving implementation: any self-evaluation(s) that helps MEGR Program management refine or improve implementation.

Sub IR 1.3: Activities for National and Provincial Early Grade Reading Data Collection and Analysis Systems Established

- Work with MoE's Assessment and Education Management Information System (EMIS) offices to develop EGR assessment tools and methodology, including aligning EGRA and ACER procedures [the Centre for Global Education Monitoring at the Australian Council for Educational Research, Monitoring Trends in Educational Growth (MTEG) in Afghanistan, "Class 6 proficiency in Afghanistan 2013: Outcomes of a learning assessment of mathematical, reading and writing literacy," http://research.acer.edu.au/mteg/1/ (ACER)].
- Support the MoE Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) unit to train provincial and district monitors and academic supervisors on EGR assessment tools and reporting.
- Work with at least one Provincial Education Department to utilize Early Grade Reading data, and other data within EMIS, to better develop provincial understanding of how to use data for decision making.

Sub IR 1.4: Activities for Capacity of MoE, targeted PED and DED, to plan/budget for, manage, and monitor an early grade reading program developed

- Provide training at national and provincial level to ensure MoE and PED understanding of EGR policies, standards, and benchmarks to measure student reading progress, as well as how a strong reading foundation in students' first language can position a student to be able to transfer those skills to Dari or Pashto.
- Develop a textbook and materials procurement and distribution plan including cost-effective technology that can be institutionalized for early grade reading across the country.
- Provide technical assistance to ensure that EGR instructional materials and supplemental reading materials are procured, printed, and distributed for the national early grade reading program.
- Design training manual and train national policy-makers and program managers to improve their ability to planning for and budget for EGRA programs.

ANNEX 7: List of Local Organizations Currently under Sub-contract to the MoE's Teacher Education Department to Conduct Teacher Training

1. Afghanistan Development Association (ADA)
Website: www.ada.org.af

Point of Contact:
Mohammad Hassan Akhundzada
Program Director
0093 (0) 799 330 035
Mohammad.hassan@ada.org.af

2. Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR)
Website: www.coar.org.af

Point of Contact:
Dr. Mohammad Naeem Salimee
Director General
Naeem_salimee@yahoo.com
Salimee_coarntw2009@yahoo.com
Coar_kbl@yahoo.com
0093 (0) 766 242 526

3. Just for Afghan Capacity and Knowledge (JACK)

Point of Contact in Afghanistan:
Eng. Noor Agha Umari Deputy Director
0093 (0) 78 764 888 0093 (0) 0752 044 359
Jack.afg2001@gmail.com
Kabul, Darullaman Road, North of Russian Embassy, House No, 7

4. Welfare Association for the Development of Afghanistan (WADAN)

Point of Contact:
1. Mohammad Nasib, Chairman Board of Director
2. Mohammad Alam, Deputy Director
   info@wadan.org
   0093 (0) 799 889 928
   House No. 10, Nahya Street, Dehbori, Kabul, Afghanistan

<u>ANNEX 8:</u> Illustrative Activities for IR 2

While these are potential activities that implementing partners can consider, they are only meant to be illustrative. Applicants should propose activities based on their technical expertise and programs.

<u>Sub IR 2.1: Activities for Evidence-based Early Grade Reading Instructional Materials Prepared</u>

- Develop and introduce sets of validated materials for early grade reading in Dari and Pashto to grade one and two teachers (building on validated student achievement benchmarks developed and on the inventory of early grade reading materials from the USAID EGR survey)
- Design materials and distribute for use in provinces where MEGR Program will be implement, including student books, teacher's guides, decodable readers and leveled texts (fiction and non-fiction) for reading instruction in Dari and Pashtu, including scripted lessons for reading instruction for teacher use.
- Develop materials (above) that include integrated priority messages related to gender equality, disability, health, nutrition, and social cohesion. Materials will be congruent with current primary school curricular topics mandated by the Ministry of Education.

<u>Sub IR 2.2: Activities for Evidence-based Early Grade Reading Instructional Materials</u> Printed/Duplicated, Distributed and In Use in Target Districts

- Produce materials developed in Sub IR 2.1 at price point that Ministry can afford in future nationwide program.

<u>Sub IR 2.3: Activities for In-service Training for Teachers on Reading Instruction and the Use of the Materials Provided</u>

- Collect baseline data on teacher attitudes, practices, and skills in early grade reading instruction, as well as linguistic capabilities, and use it to inform the development of responsive teacher professional development.
- Provide technical assistance to MoE to train all grade one and two teachers on the use of the early grade reading instructional materials for grade one and two in Dari and Pashto.

<u>Sub IR 2.4: Activities for Supervision and Coaching Systems/Procedures and Tools for Teachers in EGR Instruction Developed and Implemented in Targeted Areas</u>

- Develop monitoring, supervision and coaching guide or checklist to improve teacher practices and student learning in EGR instruction.

<u>Sub IR 2.5: Activities for Classroom-based and District-based Early Grade Reading Assessment Processes Improved</u>

- Support districts in generating simplified early grade reading assessment (EGRA), or ACER-type assessment, for regular assessment and reporting at district and provincial level.
- Improve the capacity of academic supervisors and district monitors to administer an early grade reading assessment (EGRA) or ACER-type tests in all languages used for early grade reading instruction.

Sub IR 2.6: Activities for Use of Mobile Phones and other Technologies to Support the Acquisition of Reading Skills Expanded

- Develop model videos, audio materials, and teacher guides on early grade reading.
- Document best practices, innovative approaches, lessons learned, and challenges for scaling up.

Sub IR 2.7: Activities for School Shuras and Families Support for Quality Reading Instruction Increased

- Develop approaches that non-literate parents and caregivers can use to support their children’s reading acquisition.
- Support school shuras to hold periodic community events focused on raising community appreciation of and engagement in early grade reading (after school tutoring, family reading time, etc.).

<u>ANNEX 9:</u> Illustrative Indicators for Model Early Grade Reading Program.

Disaggregate indicators by sex as applicable.

IR	ILLUSTRATIVE INDICATORS
1	# of new policies related to early grade reading developed per year # of districts using data on students' languages of instruction to organize the distribution of reading material and the assignment of early grade reading teachers # of districts able to procure and distribute evidence-based reading instructional materials without donor assistance # of districts for which the national MOE is able to collect and track data relevant to improving early grade reading
2	% of early grade students learning to read using student lesson books for reading instruction with a 1:1 student ratio % of early grade students practicing their reading skills using decodable and leveled texts # of districts using a criterion-referenced observation protocol to support and monitor early grade reading instruction for every teacher at least biweekly # of parents and/or caregivers supporting their young readers' progress in early grade reading through directly working with their students on oral language skills and/or reading acquisition
	<u>Required Standard Indicators</u> Number of laws, policies, regulations, or guidelines developed or modified to improve primary grade reading programs or increase equitable access (3.2.1-38) Number of standardized learning assessments supported by USG (3.2.1-34) # of teachers/educators who successfully completed in-service training or received intensive coaching or mentoring with USG support. (3.2.1-31) # of learners receiving reading interventions at primary level. (3.2.1-35) Proportion of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read & understand the meaning of grade level text. (3.2.1-27) # of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials provided with USG assistance (3.2.1-33) Number of PTAs or similar 'school' governance structures supported (3.2.1-18) Number of schools using Information and Communication Technology due to USG support (3.2.1-36)

<u>ANNEX 10:</u> List of Schools

See excel document located in posting on grants.gov.