

Syria Education NOFO Questions

Supporting Moderate Education in Syria Opportunity Number: NEAAC-ACSYPRIA-18-001

RMP

- The RMP template instructions request limiting program objectives to three; however, the NOFO identified six; can NEA please confirm that it is acceptable to exceed the limit requested in the RMP template? (Page 1)

Answer: Applicants do not need to limit program objectives to three. The six identified were potential options for objectives to be included in applications. Additionally, it is not required that all six are utilized. Note that the RMP will be subject to change during the negotiation process.

Project Synopsis

- The NOFO notes that the project should “provide stipends and salaries for education staff to deliver a critical public service, thereby minimizing the opportunity for armed or violent extremist groups to co-opt or exert influence over education.” Could NEA answer the following questions about stipends and salaries: (Page 2)
 - a) What categories of school personnel should receive stipends in addition to teachers? (For example, principals, school guards, custodians, MoE personnel at the provincial and district levels).
Answer: School personnel should include but not be limited to headmasters, assembly/directorate managers, directorate employees, and teachers.
 - b) Is there is a percentage attribution expected for each category?
Answer: There is no specific percentage attribution expected. Stipend categories and percentages will be established in close coordination with NEA/AC during the award negotiation process.
 - c) What are the target stipend amounts?
Answer: There is a current set rate for stipends; however, this can fluctuate given operating environment and other education actors trying to unify stipends throughout the country.
 - d) How many people are targeted at each amount for each year?
Answer: The number of people targeted depends on the population size of the province and locality. The people targeted and the amount each year will be established in close coordination with NEA/AC.

- The NOFO notes that “Other critical interventions in education include teacher training, provide light refurbishment of damaged schools, and psychosocial support and training to children, teachers, and community members.” Could NEA clarify if there are specific targets for number and/or percentage of teachers/school personnel to be reached with training under this project? (Page 2)

Answer: Targets are dependent on the population in the area, USG objectives in the area, availability of other donor resources, and the presence of designated terrorist organizations. Due to these variables, targets for size and scope of education interventions will need to be flexible and responsive.

- The NOFO notes that “this announcement seeks to continue the support and development of the Syrian Interim Government (SIG) aligned Provincial Education Directorates and other education actors to better manage education in non-Regime controlled communities.” The NOFO names areas such as Raqqa and Deir Ezzor, where SIG is not operating. Could NEA confirm that the timeline for targeting non-SIG controlled areas such as Raqqa and Deir Ezzor should be phased in later in the life of the project? (Page 2 & Page 7)

Answer: NEA is currently operating with other education actors in non-SIG areas.

- The NOFO suggests that we target “areas hit hardest by violence, such as Aleppo, Idlib, Deir Ezzor, Raqqa and Rif Damascus.” Would NEA be open to suggestions of program locations in moderate opposition-controlled areas other than those listed in the announcement, based on current investments by partners, so as to leverage their presence in other locations? (Page 7)

Answers: NEA is open to proposals for education interventions in other areas controlled by the moderate opposition. All new areas will be vetted through the Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (START) to ensure they support the START strategy.

- Does the project allow for capacity building of local CSOs/ CBOs particularly in SDF controlled areas?

Answer: Yes, as long as the work conducted through these CSOs/CBOs is consistent with the objectives of the NOFO.

- Will the project be implemented in SDF controlled territories or will other Arab groups control the area?

Answer: Parts of the project will be implemented in SDF controlled areas and other aspects in Arab controlled areas.

- Within the East, what level of governance institutions would NEA expect the implementer to work with?

Answer: NEA currently works with and through the Raqqa Civilian Council education committee, smaller district governance bodies and community based organizations.

- To what extent will NEA be looking for communities to drive and determine the share of the programming between the different types of services being suggested in Scope of Work?

Answer: Community buy-in for all educational activities, formal and non-formal, is key to the success of the program.

Funding Opportunity

- The NOFO notes that “Proposals should outline approaches to continue to support and develop the capacity of the Syrian Interim Government (SIG) aligned Provincial Education Directorates and other local education providers to ... support summer exams to ensure students are recognized for their learning gains.” Could NEA clarify if the referenced summer exam certifications for grades 9 to 12 are those provided by the SIG? (Page 6)

Answer: Yes, summer exams for grades 9 and 12 provided by the SIG.

Opportunity Objective 1

- Will the project fund activities that include accelerated learning (covering curriculum B) or self-learning to then facilitate and support the reintegration of children in the school systems? (Page 8)

Answer: NEA is open to exploring additional education opportunities for children given the limited schooling opportunities throughout Syria during the war.

Project Design

- Please clarify if “education staff” should include both teachers as well as administrative school (non-teaching) staff? (Page 8)

Answer: Yes.

- Can support under this project be extended to cover salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff of teacher training institutes run by the education directorates and other intermediate institutes under the Syrian Interim Government? (Page 8)

Answer: Yes, if the training institutes directly feed into the education directorate and other intermediate education institutions.

- Will provision of support in terms of learning material for teacher training institutes be covered under this project? (Page 8)

Answer: Historically, other donors have supported this activity and it is unlikely that NEA provide support in this area.

- Will the project support salaries and stipends for teachers involved in the preparation of students for K9 and K12 exams in the summer? (Page 8)

Answer: Yes.

- What salary scale would NEA like adopted for salaries and stipends to education staff and teachers supported under this project? (Page 8)

Answer: There is a current set rate for stipends; however, this can fluctuate given operating environment and other education actors trying to unify stipends throughout the country.

- Will the project support access to post-secondary learning opportunities (post high school, Grade 12) such as teacher training institutes and intermediate institutes through covering enrollment fees? (Page 8)

Answer: No

- Does the Syrian Ministry of Education refer to the regime's ministry of education, or that of the Syrian Interim Government? (Page 8)

Answer: The Syrian Ministry of Education refers to that of the Syrian Interim Government.

Substantial Involvement

- The NOFO notes on Page 11 that substantial involvement includes “approval of key personnel and any subsequent changes in the positions during the life of the award.” Further, page 22 notes that the proposal must list “pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers... [and] the roles and qualifications of each key person.” Could you clarify the difference between designated key personnel, who will require specific approval by NEA, and other personnel named on the project who may be determined to be “key staff” but will not require specific approval? (Page 11 & Page 22)

Answer: Historically NEA has reviewed proposed consultants or technical experts to ensure they meet program goals and are best suited to conduct the necessary work. Other key staff do not necessarily need to be reviewed by NEA but must go through all required vetting procedures.

- Could NEA clarify if there is a target number of key personnel that should be designated for the project? (Page 11)

Answer: No, NEA does not have a target number.

Eligibility Requirements

- The NOFO notes that “To apply for NEA/AC (Federal) funding organizations, whether based in or outside the U.S., applicants must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, currently referred to as a DUNS number, and an active account with the System for Award Management (SAM).” Could NEA clarify if the requirement to have a DUNS number only applies to the prime applicant, or if all sub-awardees must also have a DUNS number? (Page 14)

Answer: All prime applicants AND all subgrantees identified in the application MUST meet all registration requirements described in the NOFO, including having an active SAM registration and DUNS number.

Budget & Budget Narrative

- Please clarify and elaborate on the requirement for applicants to submit a “notional budget” for years two and three. For example, does this notional budget requirement mean that the applicant should submit a summary budget by cost category for years two and three? (Page 16)

Answer: Applicants should submit full budget proposals for each option year. Additionally, a summary budget should be included which incorporates all option years. If option years are executed during the award the notional budget will be revisited at that time.

Application and Submission Information

- Please confirm that the following required sections do not fall within the 15-page limit specified for the project narrative (Page 16 - Page 18):
 - Results Monitoring Plan
 - Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent
 - Organizational Chart
 - Proof of legal registration in Turkey and/or Jordan
 - Theory of Change (or Program Logic)
 - Security Plan
 - Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
 - Professional bio for lead project personnel in applicant and partner organizations

Answer: This is correct. Other sections listed do not count toward the 15 page maximum for the Project Narrative.

Submitting an Application

- The NOFO notes that “Applicants must submit their application electronically using Grants.gov.” On December 7, 2017, we received an email notification stating the following: “In approximately two weeks, the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs will begin the transition from GrantSolutions to the new domestic State Assistance Management System (SAMS Domestic). As a reminder, you should continue to use GrantSolutions for awards with NEA until 5:00 pm EST Tuesday, December 19th, 2017. During the Bureau Transition period, all of your GrantSolutions data will be converted to SAMS Domestic. During this period of time, your funding opportunities, applications, awards, and associated documents with NEA will be unavailable. On Friday, January 19th, 2018, you will regain access to all activities with NEA in SAMS Domestic.” Could NEA confirm that during this transition period, Grants.gov will be unaffected and we should still submit this proposal on Grants.gov? (Page 19)

Answer: This is correct. DO NOT attempt to submit an application via any platform other than Grants.gov.

- The solicitation mentions that the expected notification date is 28 February 2018, when does NEA anticipate programming to commence under this award?

Answer: NEA anticipates on signing this award by March 1, 2018.