



AMENDMENT ONE (1)

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number (NOFO): 72061223RFA00006

Tisamale Mabuku (*Let us take care of books*) Project.

NOFO Issuance Date: October 27, 2023

Amendment 01 Issue Date: November 17, 2023

Revised Application Submission Date: December 11, 2023 at 3:00 pm local time, Malawi.

The purpose of this amendment is to provide responses to the potential Applicants' questions raised in writing as outlined in Attachment A below and revise Section A- Program Description in response to the questions received.

Unless specifically stated herein, all other terms and conditions of the NOFO remain unchanged.

Sincerely,

Natalie J. Thunberg
Agreement Officer

Attachments: Attachment A - Answers to potential Applicant's Questions
Attachment B - Revised Section A of the NOFO.

Question 1

Given the upcoming Thanksgiving Holiday right before the submission deadline, can USAID/Malawi please grant an extension to December 4th?

USAID Response:

The submission deadline is hereby extended to **Monday, December 11, 2023 at 3:00 pm** local time, Malawi.

Question 2

Can USAID/Malawi confirm if there are application file size restrictions for electronic submissions?

USAID Response:

Each email has a limit of up to 25MB.

Question 3

Can USAID/Malawi elaborate on any file type (i.e. Microsoft Word, PDF), font, font size, printing restrictions, etc. for technical applications? What about boxes and tables (font size, etc.)?

USAID Response:

The Technical Application must be submitted in pdf format and in unlocked MS Word format. Tables, graphs, and charts may use smaller fonts, but not less than 8-point may be used for any text. The pages must be numbered, including numbered Annexes.

Question 4

Does CoP have to be located in Malawi?

USAID Response:

Yes, the COP must be a full time employee of the prime applicant and located in Malawi.

Question 5

Does the implementing agency need to be located/registered in Malawi itself (or can it work through existing local partners without said registration)?

USAID Response:

Local registration is not a requirement stated in the NOFO. However the applicant must ensure compliance to SAM registration and also business operations requirements in Malawi.

Question 6

How significant is the ‘development of NEW books in this Project?’ (e.g. CODE has 15 existing titles printed for Malawi which can be re-printed/for re-stocking)

USAID Response:

There is no development of new books (or procurement or printing) mentioned in the NOFO or envisioned in this project.

Question 7

Can USAID confirm the total funding amount for the activity? The summary info on grants.gov states a \$2 million award ceiling but the NOFO states \$4 million total.

USAID Response:

USAID intends to provide \$4,000,000 in total USAID funding over a two year period.

Question 8

Can USAID confirm font type, size, spacing, justification for body, annexes, graphics, tables, and footnotes?

USAID Response:

The application should be in Times New Romans font, single spaced and shall be written in English. Paper size shall be 8.5 x 11 inches or A4 size. Each page, including attachments, shall be numbered consecutively. As appropriate, fold out pages may be used sized up to 11 x 17 inches to present any graphs, charts, and/or tables larger than 8 1/2" x 11". Graphs, charts, and tables larger than 8 1/2" x 11" shall be included as an attachment. Text attachments shall adhere to the same formatting specifications given above. For visual clarity, graphs, charts and/or scanned documents must be readable.

Question 9

Can USAID confirm any additional submission instructions in terms of subject line heading, attachment instructions, etc?

USAID Response:

Multiple emails may be sent to accommodate the application attachments and content, but each email must contain a clear identification of the attachment and instructions for assembling the application. Zipped file attachments are not allowed.

Question 10

The NOFO states on page 33 that “the applicants must provide their established written policies on personnel compensation. If the applicant’s written policies do not address a specific element of

compensation that is being proposed, the Budget Narrative must describe the rationale used and supporting market research.” Personnel compensation policy is a business sensitive information. Can this requirement be waived/removed from the NOFO? If the requirement cannot be waived, approval from the policy holder is required before submitting the policy with the proposal.

USAID Response:

The NOFO requires applicants to submit established written policies on personnel compensation. This requirement can not be waived.

Question 11

Can USAID confirm the number of pages for each section of the Technical Application. Currently the NOFO states that the Technical Application can be up to 20 pages (Technical Approach - up to 8 pages, Management and Personnel Plan - plan up to 5 pages, and Overview of Institutional Experience and Capability - up to 2 pages). However, this does not total 20 pages.

USAID Response:

Applications are limited to 15 pages and not 20 pages. PLEASE NOTE: PAGES BEYOND 15 WILL NOT BE EVALUATED”. Sorry for the confusion.

Question 12

Can USAID provide links or supporting documents to make available a list of NRP TLMs that have been distributed since its roll out in 2016?

USAID Response:

The NRP TLMs provided since 2016 include more than 16 million Standard 1-4 English and Chichewa learners books and more than 430 thousand corresponding teachers guides, with books going to all public schools. Additionally more than 90 different supplementary reader stories were developed, with more than 12 million copies printed. Specific supplementary reader titles can be shared after award. These resources include those mentioned on page 7 under the TLM Replenishment Activity, Reading for All Malawi, and the Global Book Alliance in Action, but do not include the Upper Primary Reading Activity distribution which is still upcoming. To understand the current landscape of what books are in schools, NextGen will also collect information on book availability and will also, in partnership with the MoE, support replenishment.

Question 13

Should Tisamale Mabuku plan to purchase assistive devices or other TLMs to support Children with Disabilities with literacy acquisition?

USAID Response:

No. The activity should not provide new assistive devices or other TLMs but should contribute to safeguarding the materials that are found in schools and communities or are available to

communities using their own resources. As stated in the NOFO, “Where they are present, this [NRP TLMs] includes technology used to support children’s literacy acquisition, such as MSL video lessons or assistive devices for learners with disabilities (Brailers, Orbit readers, etc.) or tablets used to give children access to reading lessons and materials.” The NOFO also includes an illustrative activity where “School community management members make sure that TLMs are appropriately included in the PSIP and purchased [by the schools] using SIG funds”

Question 14

Does USAID anticipate a small sub-granting component to local organizations through this award to support at least 200 selected schools?

USAID Response:

Tisamale Mabuku does not include any specifications related to sub-grants. However, we encourage innovation and therefore applicants are free to include small sub-grants to communities, or to include local organizations as sub-partners in their applications. Please provide sufficient explanation.

Question 15

On p. 8 of the NOFO USAID states, “A scalable technical approach is preferred over a more intensive intervention at each participating school.” Is Tisamale Mabuku expected to design a scalable approach that reaches at least 200 schools over 2 years, to position the MoE to scale up nationwide to all schools once the project ends? Is the measure for this the potential of MoE to scale once the project ends?

USAID Response:

Tisamale Mabuku is intended to design a scalable approach and to facilitate activities that could be replicated or scaled up later by communities with minimal outside support (both financial and technical) from the Government of Malawi or other partners. See also the response to question 44.

Question 16

The NOFO has indicated that of the Key Personnel only the Chief of party needs to be named in the proposal: including a description of the position, Resume/CVC and a non-exclusive letter of commitment in Annex 3. May applicants include and name other key personnel, including adding their position descriptions, Resume/CVC and a non-exclusive letter of commitment in Annex 3 as well?

USAID Response:

The applicant may propose other key personnel in addition to the required Key Personnel mentioned in the NOFO and include names, CVs and positions for the proposed positions. The applicants are **not** required to submit exclusive letters of commitment; the Mission prefers to allow individuals to be proposed on multiple applications as they wish, however should any proposed Key Personnel become unavailable at any time during the evaluation process, applicants are requested to immediately advise the AO.

Question 17

Under IR 2, the NOFO indicates that a “nationally representative baseline and endline data on management of MoE TLMs will be collected.” A mid-line “snap-shot” is also required. What is meant by “nationally representative” in this instance? Will USAID accept data collection in the TMP target school as nationally representative?

USAID Response:

The requirement for nationally representative baseline and endline data has been removed from IR 2 in the NOFO. Related changes have also been made to the “Communities monitor and compile standardized quarterly reports” IR 1 illustrative activity. The IP will be expected to support communities to track relevant data. Please see the revised Section A-Program Description in Attachment B. below.

Question 18

Please provide information on NextGen’s plan for tablets or other devices in schools?

USAID Response:

Each school will receive at least one tablet for use by teachers and administrators for data and training related purposes.

Question 19

Please verify if NextGen will be working in all Malawi Public Primary Schools. If not please share what districts and zones have been selected to participate in the NextGen Activity.

USAID Response:

Yes, as stated about NextGen, “the overall activity is in all primary schools nationwide, however specific aspects, such as the pre-primary pilot and some community engagement activities, will be in selected schools”. Districts where specific aspects are implemented will be shared after award.

Question 20

Are the school community management members referred throughout the NOFO the same as school management committees or is this a different structure that USAID is referring to? If so please define who school community management member is.

USAID Response:

“School community management member” is intended to refer to a wider group than the School Management Committee (SMC), so includes the SMC members, as well as members of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and Mothers’ Groups (MGs). These three groups are existing structures that enable community members to support their schools in a structured way.

Question 21

On page 28 the NOFO states, “The cover page, table of contents, acronym list, executive summary, and documents included in the annexes are NOT included in the page limitation. Applications are limited to 20 pages” The NOFO then goes on to state that the three sections in the technical application and their page maximums that equal 15 pages: Technical Approach (up to 8 pages), Management and Personnel Plan (maximum 5 pages) and Overview of Institutional Experience and Capability (maximum 2 pages). Please update the maximum pages per section to equal the 20 page maximum for the technical application.

USAID Response:

See response to question 11.

Question 22

Page 11 of the NOFO states that, “this two-year activity is intended to provide at least one full school year of implementation in each participating school.” Does the one full year need to be consecutive terms 1-3 or can there be overlap between school years if each participating school receives 3 terms of activity implementation (e.g., start in the activity in a school in term 3 and finalize the activity in terms 1 and 2 of the following school year)?

USAID Response:

This is flexible, but the implementation approach in the communities should follow a logical progression that allows the communities to fully benefit from the intervention, and should use the two year project timeline efficiently.

Question 23

On page 37 the NOFO states that the applicant must “Provide a valid UEI for the applicant and all proposed sub-recipients.” Please consider if subrecipients can be in the process of securing a UEI at the time of application submission with the understanding that all subrecipients will have an active UEI at the time of award.

USAID Response:

Applicants and proposed sub-recipients are encouraged to begin the registration process early. An applicant can provide proof that they are in the process of complying with UEI/SAM registration requirements during application submission. However, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements above by the time USAID is ready to make an award, USAID may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Question 24

Can USAID kindly share the current local compensation plan (LCP)?

USAID Response:

While we can't share the LCP, we can provide salary ranges as follows:

USAID/Malawi Local Compensation Plan (LCP) Guide- Effective November 07, 2021

Job Category	Hrs/Week	Grade Range	Basic Salary Range	Allowances Range
Senior professionals	40	FSN 13	\$52,714 - \$81,708	\$10,536 - \$15,301
Senior professionals	40	FSN 12	\$37,650 - \$58,530	\$10,536 - \$15,301
Senior professionals	40	FSN 11	\$30,074 - \$46,622	\$8,793 - \$12,599
Middle professionals	40	FSN 10	\$26,226 - \$40,646	\$7,908 - \$11,225
Middle professionals	40	FSN 09	\$19,532 - \$30,270	\$5,454 - \$7,924

Notes on table

- i. Basic Salary above is set in US Dollars.
- ii. Offeror must develop a local policy to deal with significant exchange movements that might adversely affect local salaries that are paid in local currency in accordance with the host country laws.

Question 25

Can USAID provide the exchange rate (MWK/USD) that applicants should use for the cost application?

USAID Response:

Applicants should use the official prevailing market exchange rate when developing the cost application.

Question 26

Crisis Modifier – included only in summary budget format (page 50).

- a. Please provide clarity and guidance on what this is for and the amount envisioned.
- b. Also, please advise what category this should fall under in both the summary budget and SF 424a.

USAID Response:

Item 1 “Crisis Modifier” under ANNEX 1 - SUMMARY BUDGET TEMPLATE is not required and therefore deleted from the template.

Question 27

Can USAID kindly provide the envisioned start date?

USAID Response:

USAID plan is to award this project in Quarter 3 of FY24

Question 28

In addition to the budget and budget narrative, the cost proposal requires many other cost documents such as NICRA, Reps and Certs, etc. Please confirm which are required from the prime offeror only and which are required from all subcontractors.

USAID Response:

The applicants should provide requirements for the prime and for the sub-recipients as stated and requested in the NOFO document.

Question 29

Section D.6.4.a on page 34 of the NOFO notes “Salaries and allowances”, while the summary budget format includes “Personnel” section. Can USAID confirm that the Personnel category should only include salaries and that Allowances can be included as part of the Other Direct Costs (ODCs)?

USAID Response:

Allowances can be included as part of other direct costs.

Question 30

Schools’ selection: we would like to seek clarity on identifying the schools. Have the 200 schools been identified already? Or where are they in the process? Is this entire to the IP to make proposals on the selection criteria

USAID Response:

The schools have not been selected yet. To improve clarity of what applicants are required to provide, the related language (bullet point 3) under Technical Approach, in Section D of the NOFO, should read that applicants are required to “Propose draft site selection criteria, district list, and number of schools (which will be updated and finalized after project initiation, with final approval from USAID)” instead of the previous request to “Propose and provide rationale for the number and geographic distribution of schools”. Please also note that the “Geographic Focus” section mentions factors that should be considered in the development of selection criteria and the selection of schools.

Question 31

At what point should schools be selected? At proposal stage or this should come out during the project after mapping has taken place?

USAID Response:

The specific schools will be identified and agreed on after project initiation. See also the response to question 30.

Question 32

Annex 3: There is a mention of the COPs CV only as key personnel, can you confirm this is only CV to submit? If not, who else?

USAID Response:

The applicant must submit a resume or CV(s) for proposed key personnel only.

Question 33

Scope of TLMs – How “TLMs” defined in this NOFO? Is it just hard copy books and the electronic materials in schools as well (being mentioned), we would like to seek clarification if this includes other teaching resources in schools – such as boards (mobile or stationery), TALULAR, teaching aids etc.?

USAID Response:

The activity should focus on the NRP TLMs as described, but may also consider other TLMs, including boards, TALULAR, teaching aids, etc., as it promotes an overall culture of care and accountability for educational resources in schools and communities.

Question 34

Can you confirm that the IP will not procure any new TLMs.

USAID Response:

See response to question 6.

Question 35

Provision of additional materials: There is a mention that a USAID project implemented and provided textbooks. Will details and information be provided about these procurements, or its up to the IP to collect latest details on this?

USAID Response:

See response to question 12.

Question 36

Forms and Annexes: Most of the forms are in PDF format, is it possible to resend links for editable versions for use.

USAID Response:

Standard Forms mentioned in the NOFO can be accessed electronically at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>

Question 37

Could USAID kindly confirm that the total technical page is 20 pages and that the section page limit as outlined in the NOFO are suggested page limit?

USAID Response:

See response to question 11.

Question 38

Are applicants at liberty to pick any education zones in the country?

USAID Response:

Yes, applicants are at liberty to pick the zones (and districts), keeping in mind the parameters described in section 2.3, including the need to include schools in all six Education Divisions. As described in Section B under substantial involvement, USAID is responsible for “Approval of site selection criteria and sites.”

Question 39

Per both pages 28 and 29 of the NOFO, the Technical Application’s 20-page limit includes the (1) technical approach, (2) management and personnel plan, and (3) an overview of institutional experience and capability. Pages 29-30, outlining each of those three sections allocate 8, 5 and 2 pages respectively to each subsection, totalling 15 pages. Can USAID please confirm that applicants may redistribute the additional 5 pages as they see fit across the technical approach, management and personnel plan and overview of institutional experience and capability so that those three sections, constituting the technical approach, equal 20 pages?

USAID Response:

See response to question 11.

Question 40

The technical application requires that applications “propose key performance indicators and associated life of activity targets that will measure and report progress in achievement of expected

results of the activity. Also mention how these indicators will be measured. Targets should be ambitious, as well as feasible given the context and implementation approach.” Can USAID please confirm that this information may be included in an additional annex that will be reviewed under the review criteria?

USAID Response:

No, the indicators should not be listed in a separate annex. Proposed key performance indicators and associated life of activity targets are expected to be included in the technical approach section as described. No annex related to monitoring and evaluation is requested.

Question 41

Can USAID kindly confirm that applications can be submitted with 11 point Times New Roman font with standard 1 inch margins, not including charts, tables and graphics?

USAID Response:

Yes, the applications can be submitted with 11 point Times New Roman.

Question 42

On page 15, the NOFO indicates that a nationally representative baseline and endline data on management of MOE TLMs will be collected and aggregated using standardized tools, including qualitative interviews. Is this activity to be undertaken by the Recipient under the award, or is another entity carrying out the data collection?

USAID Response:

See response to question 17.

Question 43

Page 19 of the NOFO states that participating communities may receive some extra resources during the activity. What entity and mechanism would be used to provide extra resources?

USAID Response:

The statement on page 19 (under 3.5, Locally Led Development), is “Participating communities may receive some extra resources during the activity; however the activity will focus on supporting communities to identify sustainable plans and solutions that use available resources.” This is intended to indicate that the implementing partner may decide to provide some limited resources to communities to support activity implementation, however for sustainability low cost solutions and identification and use of existing community and government resources should be preferred.

Question 44

Does USAID anticipate that the MOE would potentially scale up the approach at the national, district, district and local levels to achieve the desired results described in the Program Description? Is supporting MOE capacity to potentially scale up the approach a priority under the program description?

USAID Response:

The results described in the Program Description are intended to be achieved within the scope of the Tisamale Mabuku activity, led by the implementing partner and in conjunction with the relevant partners. USAID would like for the experience from Tisamale Mabuku to be available to inform potential future development partner and Government of Malawi (including Ministry of Education at the central and decentralized levels) activities to promote community and civil society engagement in managing national reading program TLMs and other educational resources. As is specified in the Technical Approach, the application should describe an approach which will “lead to the development of collaborative relationships with the Government of Malawi to foster sustainability and potential scale up at national and local levels to achieve the desired results described in the Program Description.” Depending on the results, there may be potential for related procedures to be integrated into guidelines on the roles of School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Associations. See also the response to question 15.

[END OF AMENDMENT ONE]