

ATTACHMENT B

SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. INTRODUCTION

This Tisamale Mabuku “Let us take care of books” Project will support the Government of Malawi’s (GoM) Ministry of Education’s (MoE) implementation of the USAID/Malawi supported National Reading Program (NRP) by improving the capacity of school communities to ensure that intended NRP teaching and learning materials (TLMs) are available in their school and community, and are managed and used appropriately. NRP TLMs include English and Chichewa learner’s books and teacher’s guides in Standards 1-8; decodable, leveled, and supplementary readers; resources developed to support literacy development of learners with special educational needs; and any other related materials. Where they are present, this includes technology used to support children’s literacy acquisition, such as MSL video lessons or assistive devices for learners with disabilities (Brillers, Orbit readers, etc.) or tablets used to give children access to reading lessons and materials. The Government of Malawi struggles to allocate enough resources to supply sufficient TLMs, while issues with TLM management and utilization, such as premature wear, tear, and loss, mean that books need to be replaced more frequently than schools and the Ministry can currently manage. Other books are kept locked away from children and teachers. Improved management and utilization of TLMs in schools and communities will increase children’s access to TLMs and thereby contribute to improved literacy outcomes.

This project is aligned with, and will be guided by, key GoM policies and priorities, including Vision: Malawi 2063 and its 2021-2030 Malawi 2063 first 10-Year Implementation Plan (MIP-1), which lays out specific interventions that should be carried out by 2030. This includes equipping all schools with a minimum package and providing relevant TLMs (textbooks, teachers guides, lab equipment, desks), increasing citizen engagement and participation in governance and national development activities, and promoting openness and transparency through access to public information and promotion of accountability to and from the citizenry.

The MoE’s Foundational Education Strategy envisions that “79 percent of learners are literate and numerate by 2030”. The MoE’s National Education Sector Investment Plan (NESIP) 2020-2030 also includes ambitious learning goals, but these targets are in stark contrast to the 2019 NESIP English and Chichewa literacy baselines. The NESIP cites “low learning outcomes”, “inadequate textbooks and supporting teaching and learning materials”, and “low community participation in the critical school issues beyond bricks and sand” as priority issues in primary education. The NESIP states that by 2025 the MoE wants to achieve a 2:1 pupil to textbook ratio in English, Chichewa, and Mathematics, while the ultimate goal is to achieve a 1:1 ratio by 2030. Actions to address these issues and achieve the GoM’s improvement targets include resourcing schools with adequate TLMs and strengthening school governing bodies. The NESIP also sets the goal of providing TLMs and assistive devices for learners with diverse needs, and the need to equip teachers to maintain assistive devices. According to the Ministry’s 2022 Education Management Information System (EMIS) report, the target of a 2:1 ratio has not yet been achieved, as three to ten primary school learners share one English or Chichewa learner’s book. This project is also

aligned with Malawi's 2022 draft National Book and Reading Policy, which provides a framework for addressing book industry challenges and promoting a reading culture, recognizing the importance of books in the delivery of quality education.

At the school level, the MoE uses School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), and Mothers Groups (MGs) to support the management of schools and delivery of quality education services, and to facilitate the participation of communities in primary school management. The composition, roles, and responsibilities of these groups are outlined in various GoM and MoE documents, including the Primary School Improvement Program (PSIP) Guidelines, the National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary School Management, the Education Act, and the National Gender Policy. The PSIP Guidelines also elaborate the role of school community management groups in supporting school improvement grant (SIG) management, as SIGs are intended to decentralize some functions and (among other things) be used by schools to procure teaching and learning materials like textbooks, exercise books, chalk, and flip charts. These structures contribute to the implementation of Malawi's 1998 decentralization policy, which devolved responsibility for education services to the district assemblies and their education committees.

In addition to alignment with GoM priorities, the activity contributes to USAID and USAID/Malawi's priorities. USAID's 2018 Education Policy envisions a world "where partner country education systems enable all children and youth to acquire the education and skills needed to be productive members of society...". The Policy includes system strengthening and local capacity development, and sets foundational learning goals, while recognizing the lack of TLM as a barrier. This project contributes to USAID/Malawi's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Development Objective (DO) 1: Public Sector is more accountable and effective at national and decentralized levels, and to DO 2: Youth lead healthy, informed, and productive lives.

This project will build upon the investment that USAID/Malawi has made since 2015 in foundational literacy development; USAID has invested over \$196 million in support to the GoM's NRP. In addition to building on past investments, the activity complements several current USAID/Malawi activities, including the Next Generation Early Grade Reading (NextGen) Activity (2022-2027), the TLM Replenishment Activity (2022-2023), and the Upper Primary Reading Activity (2021-2026).

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM ANALYSIS

Malawi's primary education system faces many challenges in its efforts to provide all children with the foundational literacy skills that enable them to benefit from the quality education that is their human right and is enshrined in national and international priorities, including Malawi 2063, the NESIP, and the Foundational Education Strategy. Due to resource constraints, the GoM has not been able to maintain the target 1:1 learner to textbook ratio. This shortage of required TLMs for English and Chichewa has a direct link to poor literacy outcomes among learners and is a barrier to achieving the GoM's transformational foundational learning goals. Improved

community engagement can contribute to addressing Malawi's TLM shortage, which is caused by a combination of lack of funds to purchase new materials, and poor care, utilization, and management of the materials that are already in schools.

To address the TLM shortage, and complement the other investments made under the NRP to improve literacy outcomes, USAID has provided teacher's guides, learner's books, and supplemental readers for Standards 1-4 Chichewa and English subjects. From 2016 to 2019, USAID provided assistance to the MoE in procuring and distributing over 9 million copies of Chichewa and English textbooks for every Standard 1-4 public primary school learner in Malawi. With this support, a 1:1 ratio was first achieved in Malawi in 2017, but unfortunately has not been maintained due to wear and tear, loss, and damage. While USAID continues to contribute to TLM replenishment, currently through the Upper Primary Reading Activity and NextGen, and though NextGen supports the MoE's efforts to budget and plan for TLM replenishment, a 1:1 ratio won't be achieved or maintained without improved management and care of TLMs in schools and communities.

In addition to the NESIP and EMIS data cited above, other recent data show poor literacy learning outcomes and the shortage of necessary TLMs. The most recent early grade National Reading Assessment (NRA), conducted in 2021 with USAID support, shows that most learners are not gaining the desired levels of foundational literacy skills in English or Chichewa. The NRA also mirrored NESIP and EMIS findings about the learner to textbook ratio and access to reading material. The report also looked at the link between access to TLMs and literacy learning outcomes, and highlighted the important role of the community.

USAID's 2019 Global Book Alliance Malawi Supply Chain Analysis (SCA) Report gives more detailed insight into the book supply chain related issues that impede achieving the student-to-textbook ratio of 1:1 for all subjects across all grades. While a lack of data made it difficult to determine the exact numbers, according to 2018–2019 Ministry data, with donor support, significant progress had been made for Chichewa textbooks in the early grades. The much higher ratios reported in the 2021 NRA and the 2022 EMIS show that these 2019 ratios were not maintained; the COVID-19 related school closures likely contributed to books being damaged and lost. Through interviews and school visits, the SCA team sought to understand TLM management and utilization patterns and issues in schools. To improve the availability of TLMs in schools, the SCA emphasizes the role of school community management structures in working in partnership with schools, and the importance of data, and gives recommendations about parent and community engagement in TLM management.

The documents mentioned above also provide insight into the similar supply challenges and need to care for materials adapted for learners with disabilities, and for technology used to support children's literacy acquisition, such as assistive devices for learners with disabilities, or tablets. The SCA cites a lack of assistive devices and large-print textbooks. The USAID supported Reading for all Malawi's (REFAM) Activity's 2022 Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) for Learners with Disabilities in Malawi reported that more than 20 percent of schools did not have adapted materials for learners with disabilities. The EGRA report also recommended that the MoE should provide adapted TLMs, including assistive technology, for learners with disabilities, and should conduct a survey of existing assistive technology in public schools. The 2021 NRA

recommended expanding the use of electronic devices for reading at home, while the MoE, with support from various partners, has introduced tablet-based literacy activities for children in selected schools. Whether print-based or electronic, all devices to support children's literacy acquisition need to be safeguarded, and inclusion of care for electronic and assistive devices was also a request from several stakeholders consulted during activity design.

Knowing the importance of TLMs in foundational skill development, and the challenges in maintaining desired TLM:learner ratios, the MoE and other partners have implemented a variety of procedures and activities for TLMs procurement and distribution. With school leadership, SMCs and PTAs are involved in approving plans for the school improvement grants, which can be used for small-scale replacement of books at the school level. Where distribution of TLMs is done by the central MoE, new books (including those from USAID and other partners) are accompanied by circulars. Guidance in the August 2022 circular on the replenishment of Standard 1-4 learner's books and teacher's guides prescribed book care practices, emphasized that teacher's guides and learner's books should be used in all lessons, and that supplementary readers, but not learner's books, should be taken home. According to market research and field observations, some schools did not receive the circular, and although they were trying to engage the community and manage TLMs well, many schools were falling short.

While documents such as the PSIP Guidelines, the National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary School Management, and the Education Act specify the roles and responsibilities of SMCs, PTAs, and MGs in managing resources and ensuring quality teaching and learning in schools, in practice these groups need support to actively carry out their roles. The 2022 EMIS report, as well as the 2021 NRA, include information on levels of school community management structure involvement and use of SIG funds, and areas for improvement. According to EMIS the majority of schools have active SMCs, PTAs, and MGs. However, according to the NRA, most involvement was through passive meeting attendance, rather than being actively involved in activities or advocacy.

USAID/Malawi's investment in the NRP since 2015 has sought to improve literacy outcomes and to address the challenges outlined above by improving children's access to TLMs, as well as strengthening the education system and literacy instruction. To continue to improve English and Chichewa literacy learning outcomes, the current USAID/Malawi NextGen Activity builds on previous USAID/Malawi's NRP support activities. Previous USAID funded NRP activities such as the Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity (MERIT), Yesani Ophunzira "Assess the Learner" Activity (YESA) and REFAM have engaged parents and communities in enhancing the reading culture among children, and also developed training manuals and guides for parents and community members on how to support children's reading at school and home as well as on effective care and use of books. The school governing structures were oriented and trained on how they support and enhance children's reading development by establishing reading centers or camps in the communities. Experience from MERIT and YESA points to the need for clear structures for working with school community management members and engaging the various communities linked to each school. Other recent or current USAID/Malawi activities also support the NRP. The NextGen project focuses on Standards 1 and 2, and is intended to "solidify and build on the contributions made to date as part of the implementation of Malawi's National Reading Program (NRP) towards improving the delivery of high-quality early primary reading

instruction in all Malawian primary schools”. Several aspects of the NextGen activity seek to increase the number of TLMs in schools, the community, and homes, and to increase community engagement in literacy instruction. The NextGen project will:

- Support implementation of the SCA book chain recommendations [and policy], which may include promotion of private book markets. These recommendations include book tracking and tracing, data collection systems, and use of technology in data collection
- Support the provision and use of Standard 1 and 2 teacher’s and learner’s books, with the aim that by the final two years of the project the Government will provide 50 percent of books needed to maintain a 1:1 ratio
- Involve citizens and civil society organizations in data collection and support SMCs to track data on learners’ and teachers’ use of textbooks
- Promote youth-led reading camps and other community engagement activities and mobilize communities to bring reading materials to reading camps and establish community reading activities
- Find innovative solutions to ensure there are adequate reading materials (which could include digital formats) in homes and communities
- Train 100 percent of SMCs and PTAs

In addition to NextGen, USAID/Malawi’s other NRP-related activities include:

- **Upper Primary Reading Activity** (UPRead, 2021-2026) - Providing technical support for the revision of teacher’s guides and learner’s books for English and Chichewa for Standards 5 through 8; distribution will be done in 2023 and 2024 at a 1:1 ratio through another TLM Replenishment Activity to all public primary schools.
- **TLM Replenishment Activity** (2022-2023) - Intended to help schools maintain a 1:1 ratio where previously provided books had been lost or damaged due to wear and tear; in 2022 USAID provided 4,713,077 English and Chichewa books to Standard 1-4 learners in 5,546 schools, which allowed approximately 90 percent of Standard 1 and 2 learners to benefit from a 1:1 ratio, while the replenishment was at 30 percent for Standards 3 and 4.
- **Global Book Alliance in Action** (GBAIA, 2021-January 2023) - Developed, printed and distributed five hundred thousand children's books for use at home by children in Standards 1-4 distributed in 246 schools in Salima, Dowa, and Ntchisi. The books were distributed through SMCs and PTAs, and parents received demonstrations on best practices for caring for books and reading with their children. Messages were delivered through a social behavior change campaign (SBCC) focused on creating demand, and on improving care, maintenance, and storage of books. SBCC messages were delivered directly in community meetings, and through radio public service announcements, radio role plays or dramas, and print ads in newspapers. GBAIA also supported private publishers to create sale versions of readers for purchase and supported the MoE to develop a National Book and Reading Policy, building on the SCA recommendations.
- **Reading for All Malawi** (REFAM, 2019-2022) - Adapted materials for learners with disabilities and distributed them to schools and to parents, along with training in their use.

These activities/projects among other impacts, will increase the number of TLMs in schools and the community, and will improve teachers' methods and increase the ability of parents and community members to support literacy acquisition, but do not engage school communities in safeguarding TLM through improved management and utilization. The NRP requires additional support to strengthen the MoE TLM-related structures by engaging the community. To contribute to achieving Malawi's literacy and foundational learning targets the Tisamale Mabuku Activity will engage communities, with leadership from school community management members (SMCs, PTAs, and MGs), to take an active role in ensuring oversight, transparency, and accountability in the management and utilization of NRP TLMs in public primary schools and communities.

Along with school community management members, this activity will engage an inclusive group of community stakeholders including, but not limited to, parents, civil society organizations (CSOs), community based organizations (CBOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs) and churches, organizations for persons with disabilities, youth, area and village development committee (ADC and VDC) members, Chiefs, traditional leaders, and any other appropriate local government members or structures. Participation of youth, women, and persons with disabilities should be prioritized. To build and strengthen connections between the MoE and community-based structures, MoE and other GoM officials at the school, zone, district, division, and national levels should be engaged and informed as appropriate. This includes, but is not limited to, Head Teachers, Primary Education Advisors, District Education Managers, District Education Committees, Education Division Managers, and representatives from relevant Directorates. Civil society organizations should also be involved at the local and national level, as they can play an important role in supporting local communities. Many schools have a large number of feeder communities and unique stakeholder compositions, which will require the involvement of community stakeholders to vary across participating schools.

2.2. TARGET POPULATION

The primary target beneficiaries of this project are primary school children from Standards 1-8 who will have better access to the TLMs that are necessary to enable them to master foundational literacy skills and to proceed through primary school. Other beneficiaries include the parents and caregivers, school community management members and other community stakeholders, and youth who will be engaged to help better manage TLMs in the school and community. Ministry of Education stakeholders, as well as CSOs and disabled persons' organizations, at the community, district, and national levels will also benefit. Inclusion and active participation of youth, women, and persons with disabilities will be prioritized.

2.3. GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

This project will be at a national scale and will include at least 200 selected schools and their communities from all six education divisions. Depending on media used, some nationwide public awareness activities may be included. Although the project may not be in all schools, the nationwide distribution enables a multiplier effect where additional schools and communities benefit as the system is strengthened and SBCC messages reach those outside of the specific target communities. A scalable technical approach is preferred over a more intensive intervention at each participating school. The IP should propose the selection criteria, and ultimately the

selected communities, however community selection will take into consideration the list of communities included in related education sector activities including GBAIA, 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), the National Numeracy Programme, and School for All. Overlap with the districts where USAID/Malawi's OVC/Dreams Activity and Governance for Solutions Activity are active should also be considered, as well as districts included in any other relevant US Government interventions. Communities with an active SMC, PTA, and MG should be preferred, and the selection should include at least some schools with inclusive education resource centers and/or specialist teachers. Selection should also include a cross section of urban, peri-urban, rural, and hard to reach schools, and should take into consideration current learner to TLM ratios.

2.4. USG AND DONOR ACTIVITY

In addition to the Education Office activities/projects described above, this activity complements a variety of activities implemented by other USAID offices and other donors in Malawi, as well as by the GoM. The activity will require coordination with existing activities, and should build on past initiatives. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **USAID's Governance for Solutions (GfS, 2022-2027)** - The GfS activity in the Democracy, Rights and Governance Office works to "strengthen public sector performance in service delivery". It uses a problem-solving approach that identifies key constraints to service delivery in natural resource management, agriculture, education, and health sectors. This activity seeks to enable local communities to identify and address their own challenges. Among other challenges, communities have identified lack of training and accountability for SMCs and PTAs in financial management, gaps in local ownership of schools, and unavailability of learning materials, as some of the education sector governance issues.
- **USAID's OVC/Dreams Ana patsogolo (APA, 2020 to 2025) and Lilongwe OVC Activity (LLOVC, 2019-2024)** - The APA activity in the Health, Population, and Nutrition Office is implemented in Blantyre, Chikwawa, Machinga, Mangochi, Mulanje, Phalombe, Thyolo, and Zomba. APA delivers health and social protection services to prevent new HIV infections and reduce vulnerability to HIV among orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) 117 clinics across 8 high HIV burden southern districts. APA includes work with parents and school community management members to promote community engagement, which provides an opportunity for collaboration with the Tisamale Mabuku Activity. With a similar approach to reaching OVCs, the LLOVC activity in Lilongwe district aims to mitigate the impact of HIV and prevent new infections among priority populations.
- **The Global Partnership for Education (GPE)'s Malawi Education Reform Programme (MERP, 2022-2025)** - Implemented by the MoE, with support from the grant agent, the World Bank, MERP is a \$210 million sector-wide national reform activity "to improve learning environments for students in lower primary". The first of the program's six components focuses on expanding and reforming SIGs with a needs-based component to enable schools with very low resources to provide TLM, and specifies the role of SMCs

in overseeing their use, and incentivizes the MoE to improve SIG administration. Additionally, MERP head teacher leadership training includes improved record keeping and “management and utilization of textbooks across all classes”.

- **Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)’s National Numeracy Program** (NNP, 2018-2024) - Includes the revision of the Standard 1-4 mathematics curriculum, production of related learner workbooks and teacher books, and training of teachers. The activity, which takes lessons from the NRP, includes an SBCC aspect to help parents and the community understand the intended use of learner workbooks and to challenge misconceptions about the ability of early-primary children to learn.
- **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)’s School for All initiative** (2023-2027) - Works with grassroots structures at school level to support the implementation of the Decentralization Policy by training PTAs to hold democratic elections, and providing remedial math support to Standard 5-8 learners through homework workbooks. While the activity is currently in a limited number of schools, it may be expanded, and may eventually include literacy activities.

2.5. PURPOSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS

2.5.1. PROJECT PURPOSE

This project contributes to USAID/Malawi’s CDCS DO 1: Public sector is more accountable and effective at national and decentralized levels, specifically under IR 1.1: Citizen Rights and Responsibilities Actively Exercised. IR 1.1 includes engagement with PTAs to improve education quality, and civil society organization advocacy for improved accountability of public resource expenditures. The activity also contributes to DO 2: Youth lead healthy, informed, and productive lives, specifically under IR 2.1 as it strengthens youth agency and 2.2 as it increases public sector capacity to deliver services to youth. Other USAID/Malawi Education Office activities supporting the NRP are situated under DO 2. To reinforce the DOs, USAID/Malawi is also pursuing a localization agenda; with a strong focus on strengthening local partners and enabling local communities to identify and carry out solutions to their own TLM management related challenges, this activity furthers the localization agenda.

2.5.2. DEVELOPMENT HYPOTHESIS

This TLM monitoring project is premised on the hypothesis that **if** school community management members and the wider community are informed about the importance and care of TLM; **if** the community monitors TLM management and utilization in their local schools and identifies issues and solutions; **if** the community implements the solutions identified and sustainably monitors, supports, and advocates for the management and use of TLM, as well as the exchange of accurate TLM-related data; **then** primary school children will use TLMs in their schools and communities and develop the foundational literacy skills that will enable them to succeed in education.

Goal: Communities and civil society contribute to management and utilization of National Reading Program (NRP) teaching and learning materials (TLMs) in Malawian public primary schools and communities by taking an active and sustainable role in ensuring oversight, transparency, and accountability		
Purpose: All children in Malawian public primary schools have access to the NRP TLMs in their schools and communities that are necessary for their development of foundational literacy skills		
IR 1: Communities and civil society monitor, report on, provide support for, and advocate for effective management, replenishment, utilization, and accountability for TLMs in public primary schools and community	IR 2: Communities and civil society contribute to improved management, accessibility, and utilization of TLM data for public primary schools and their communities	IR 3: Public awareness of intended utilization and management of TLMs in public primary schools and their communities, and the role of the community, is enhanced

2.5.3. EXPECTED RESULTS

This project will support the MoE's NRP by improving the capacity of school communities to make sure that intended NRP TLMs are available in their school and community and are managed and used appropriately. While the project will not directly provide additional TLMs, it will safeguard investments already made in the NRP by the MoE, USAID, and others by enabling communities to fulfill their roles and identify their own issues and solutions to improve TLM management and utilization in their schools and communities. Communities and civil society will support, monitor, and advocate for effective TLM management, and will contribute to improving the production and use of data related to TLMs and to improving public awareness of TLM management and use. As the community contributes to improved TLM management and utilization in the community, children's access to TLM, and therefore literacy outcomes, will improve. As an indirect benefit of this project the lifespan of TLMs for other primary school subjects may also be improved, although the focus is on NRP TLM¹. This two year activity is intended to provide at least one full school year of implementation in each participating school.

2.5.3.1 Intermediate Result 1: Communities and civil society monitor, report on, provide support for, and advocate for effective management, replenishment, utilization, and accountability for TLMs in public primary schools and community

¹ A list of illustrative indicators is provided in the M&E section below for reference. Applicants should not be restricted by the list but propose most appropriate indicators to sufficiently measure each proposed result for the activity.

The community will be enabled to identify their own challenges and solutions, and to plan activities to support improved TLM management and utilization in their school and community. These solutions should build on existing community structures, stakeholders, and systems, such as those supported by NextGen and MERP. This includes strengthening the ability of school community management members, and members of any other official community structures linked to the school, to fulfill their intended responsibilities and should integrate monitoring, reporting, and advocacy, and provision of related support.

Monitoring and reporting will allow the community to understand the situation in their school and community, and to identify and record relevant issues and data. Insight gained through monitoring, and compiled into reports, will inform advocacy and cooperation with the school and community to address issues identified and improve the accountability of the school and MoE. This includes advocacy to the MoE for TLM replenishment where learner to TLM ratios fall short, as well as support to identify additional resources for TLM replenishment. Where issues cannot be addressed at the school level, they can be consolidated with issues from other communities and elevated, with the support of CSOs, to higher levels. Monitoring and reporting will also inform community level plans for support to TLM management and utilization that address issues identified. Where appropriate, activities (particularly monitoring and reporting) should integrate innovative, low cost technology solutions, with a focus on using devices present in the schools.

While strengthening existing structures, the activity should be inclusive of all relevant stakeholders and prioritize innovative, replicable, locally owned, sustainable, and flexible solutions. To ensure sustainability beyond the activity, plans should be realistic, where possible using existing financial and material resources, and not placing an undue burden on individual community members. While community structures should hold schools accountable where necessary, the activity should seek to promote cooperation between the school and community as they work together to address issues at the local level, with the shared goal of improving learners' literacy outcomes. School community management members will likely play a leadership role in bridging the gap and improving engagement between the school and the wider community. Before planning or carrying out any activities, participating community members should understand desired TLM utilization and management as prescribed by the MoE, including the Ministry's plans for allocating resources for TLM procurement and replenishment, and their advice (through circulars and other materials) regarding intended TLM management and utilization.

Expected results:

- School community management members sustainably carry out their monitoring, reporting, advocacy, and support roles, aligned with official systems, procedures, and stakeholders, to improve TLM management, replenishment, utilization, and accountability, in their school and community
- Improved community engagement and cooperation between education system stakeholders and the community to sustainably support intended TLM management and utilization. Inclusion and active participation of youth, women, and adults with disabilities is prioritized

- Sustainable approaches for community support to TLM management and utilization, complementing official MoE systems, are identified, documented, and available to stakeholders and to the MoE to inform decisions about national policy
- Community and civil society organization advocacy strengthens TLM management, replenishment, utilization, accountability, and related systems, at the community, school, district, and national levels

Illustrative activities:

- Identify and map existing community engagement, and CSOs with relevant competencies, experience, and relationships based in the participating schools' communities. Also identify MoE, CSO, USAID, or other development partner activities with potential for coordination and sharing of lessons learned
- Define the roles and responsibilities of school and community stakeholders, as well as district and national stakeholders such as civil society organizations
- Hold knowledge sharing and ToT workshop to share best practices and prepare school community management members and CSOs to facilitate community training, identification of community-based solutions, and planning
- Community training(s) and solution generation facilitated by school community management and local CSO members
- The community develops and implements action plans with a focus on sustainable, low or no-cost solutions to problems, and plans for monitoring, reporting, advocacy, and provision of community support. Through this process schools might identify:
 - Solutions to specific TLM management and utilization issues faced by the school and their communities
 - Plans for engagement of necessary community stakeholders in the activities
 - Processes for sustainably carrying out monitoring, reporting, advocacy, and data management activities
 - Ways to use community resources to support:
 - Improved storage of TLMs in classrooms or homes
 - Acquisition and use of electronic books and adapted materials for learners with disabilities, as well as locally produced materials, to complement core curricula TLMs
 - Purchase of TLMs on the market or from MIE
 - Development of a library or system for sharing supplementary readers
 - Plans for community level SBCCs and activities
 - Ways to prevent loss of TLMs through "not for sale" books being on the market or sold to private schools
 - Plans to work with the Mobilization Corps of Malawi youth members (where available), building on their activities to support improved Standard 1 and 2 reading outcomes

- School community management members make sure that TLMs are appropriately included in the PSIP and purchased using SIG funds, also that the PSIP includes cost-free TLM care activities
- Communities monitor and compile standardized quarterly reports on TLM management and utilization in public primary schools and the community, including:
 - Issues identified and activities carried out
 - Whether the TLMs are in the right hands and used as intended by children, teachers, and parents
 - Prevalence and condition of books in the community
 - Analysis of the accuracy of school data on learner to TLM ratios
 - Use of school improvement grants or other community resources to increase or maintain the number of TLMs in schools or communities
 - Sustainable approaches
 - Challenges
 - Number of TLMs missing from the system due to factors including loss, resale, theft, and damage
 - Any “Not for sale” books identified on the open market or in private schools
 - Does the school have a system for tracking the location of the TLM
 - Instances of community libraries, reading camps, or other activities to promote literacy, and how they manage the TLM
- Using monitoring results, communities advocate at the appropriate level
- CSOs consolidate community reports, identify and prioritize issues, and advocate at the national level
- Hold best practices and knowledge sharing events among key stakeholders during and at the end of the activity, where success stories, lessons learned, and policy recommendations are collected, consolidated, and recorded
- The implementing partner provides monitoring and support to participating schools and their communities throughout the life of the activity, including through periodic site visits

2.5.3.2 Intermediate Result 2: Communities and civil society contribute to improved management, accessibility, and utilization of TLM data for public primary schools and their communities

Improving data practices is a key part of strengthening the management and use of TLMs, and the community and CSOs can support the MoE to produce, share, and use accurate TLM-related data. For example, schools need to supply the MoE with accurate data on TLMs and learners; when the Ministry distributes TLM, schools and communities need to be informed about the number and type of TLMs distributed; when TLMs are distributed, schools need to provide information about the number and condition of TLMs received. In addition, complementary data collected through community monitoring efforts should be documented, shared, and used to inform decision making

and to support the functioning of MoE data collection and book tracking and tracing systems. Activities should complement related MoE activities, tools, and systems, including those implemented with support from NextGen.

Data from MoE and community sources should be used to guide evidence-based decision making at all levels of the education system and to track the implementation of TLM management-related policies. At the school level, community and CSOs can work with school leadership to use collected data to identify and follow through on actions to correct any identified issues. At the district and national level, CSOs can support the use of aggregated data to inform book procurement and distribution plans, or to update policies and procedures where needed. Where data is not shared as expected, or does not give the whole picture, community and civil society data and/or advocacy can contribute to improving data flows. CSOs should support communities in consolidating their data and advocating for improved TLM services at the district and national level.

~~To further improve the availability of data related to TLM, to complement the community efforts described here, and to inform the implementation of this and other NRP-related activities, nationally representative baseline and endline data on management of MoE TLMs will be collected and aggregated using standardized tools, including qualitative interviews, compared to that from other sources, and made available to all stakeholders. A midline “snapshot” should also be included. This will include data related to:~~

- ~~● Behaviors and procedures promoted in TLM-related MoE policies and circulars, including policies about bringing learner books home versus keeping them at school~~
- ~~● Relevant school and community characteristics such as distance to trading center, number of teachers and learners in each class, and whether the community has benefited from an SBCC campaign~~
- ~~● Number and condition of TLMs in classrooms compared to number of learners and recent distributions~~
- ~~● Number and condition of supplementary readers in learners’ homes and communities~~
- ~~● Number of TLMs missing from the system due to factors including loss, resale, theft, and damage~~
- ~~● “Not for sale” books on the open market or in private schools~~
- ~~● Lifespan of TLM~~
- ~~● How TLMs are distributed, used, and cared for in the school, classroom, and community~~
- ~~● Instances of community libraries, reading camps, or other activities to promote literacy, and how they manage the TLM~~
- ~~● Does the school have a system for tracking the location of the TLM~~
- ~~● Instances of TLM replenishment through SIGs or other funds~~

Expected results:

- Accountability and functioning of Ministry systems to produce, share, and use TLM-related data strengthened through community and civil society organization support. This includes:

- Accurate school level data about the availability and condition of TLMs is submitted by schools to the MoE and is available to community stakeholders and civil society
 - Central MoE data, such as aggregated data and data related to planned TLM distributions, is shared with schools and is available to community stakeholders and CSOs
- Consolidated community monitoring data is available to the MoE and other stakeholders at the local and central levels, to complement MoE data
- TLM data is cited in TLM policy and procurement decisions

Illustrative activities:

- School community management members and CSOs (at the local and national level) review data submitted by their school to the MoE, data received by the school from the MoE, and aggregated national data, and advocate where data is inaccurate or unavailable
- Data from community engagement and monitoring of TLM management and utilization is collected by communities and civil society, consolidated, and shared at the school, district, and national levels

2.5.3.3 Intermediate Result 3: Public awareness of intended utilization and management of TLMs in public primary schools and their communities, and the role of the community, is enhanced

Social and behavior change and community outreach campaigns and interactive community activities will be used to increase public awareness and engage the wider community in efforts to improve the ability of schools and communities to manage and use TLMs. SBCCs will include socializing community members on the appropriate care of TLMs and their contribution to literacy development, on their own roles and responsibilities for keeping and caring for the supplementary readers that they receive, and on how teachers and learners should use TLMs in the classroom and the community. Communities should also be informed about national supply-chain procedures related to procurement and distribution, how schools label and track TLM, that TLMs in the school and community should be wrapped in plastic and kept clean and dry, and that “not for sale” books should not be sold in markets. Messages should not only promote awareness, but also a sense of community ownership and stewardship of TLMs. SBCCs should be specific and targeted, using tested messages to support desired behavior change, with monitoring of their effectiveness included. To reach as many people as possible, campaigns will be disseminated through local media and community forums, with innovative use of low-cost technology where appropriate.

Interactive community activities to complement SBCCs will give community members the opportunity to practice desired behaviors and to receive mentorship and modeling. Activities should be innovative and engaging, for example, integrating drama, dance, or song.

While there may be some standardized, national aspects, SBCCs and interactive community activities should, where possible, be planned by the communities themselves. Activities should support implementation of behaviors specified in Ministry of Education policies and circulars, and be built on lessons learned and on tested messages and materials, such as those produced with support from GBAIA. They should also complement, and where appropriate be integrated with, NextGen's SBCC and community engagement activities.

Expected results:

- Improved public awareness in participating communities of TLMs, their importance in literacy development, their intended management and utilization in public primary schools and their communities, and the rights and responsibilities of the community in TLM management
- Communities linked to all participating schools reached by SBCC campaign(s) and interactive community activities

Illustrative activities:

- SBCC campaign(s) with targeted and tested communication/media messages on intended management and utilization of TLMs and the rights and responsibilities of the community is developed and disseminated to the public through local media and community forums. These activities can be a combination of central and community led efforts
- Interactive community activities, also building on NextGen and GBAIA, and including mentorship and modeling aspects, are carried out in participating communities to promote appropriate management and utilization of TLMs
- Document successes and best practices in community engagement, as well as the effectiveness of the SBCC campaign(s) and messages and interactive activities
- Monitor, document, and share lessons learned regarding effectiveness of the SBCC campaign messages and methods, and of the community activities

3. PROJECT PARAMETERS AND CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS

3.1. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE CONSIDERATIONS

The Tisamale Mabuku Project is among the Education activities that fall under the approved DO 2: Positive Youth Development Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) 2021-2026. This IEE is found in the environmental compliance [database](#). The IEE determined a categorical exclusion for activity interventions under this award. The activity interventions are expected to have no foreseeable direct or indirect impacts on the environment. However, monitoring of the activity interventions for changes or unforeseen impacts must be done.

The recipient of the award 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.

As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans, thereafter, the award recipient, in collaboration with the USAID A/COR and the Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer as appropriate, must review all ongoing and planned activities under this cooperative agreement to determine if they are within the scope of the approved IEE. If the award recipient plans any new activities outside the scope of the approved IEE, it must prepare an amendment to the IEE for USAID review and approval. No such new activities must be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval of environmental documentation amendments. Any ongoing activities found to be outside the scope of the approved IEE must be halted until an amendment is submitted and written approval is received from USAID.

As required by ADS 204.3.4, the USAID/Malawi team and the implementing partner will actively monitor and evaluate whether the conditions of the IEE are being implemented effectively, and whether there are new or unforeseen consequences arising during the activity implementation that were not identified and reviewed in the IEE. If new or unforeseen consequences arise during activity implementation, the team will suspend the activity and initiate further review in accordance with 22 CFR 216. USAID monitoring for environmental compliance will be included in regular site visits.

3.2. CLIMATE CHANGE INTEGRATION

The Tisamale Mabuku Project is in the category of activities related to provision of education, technical assistance, or training which are rated low risk on climate risk management. As indicated above, these activity interventions are expected to have no foreseeable both direct and indirect impacts on the environment.

3.3. PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

This project will promote private sector engagement in the education sector by, along with the NextGen Project, increasing demand for supplementary readers and other TLMs and awareness of what materials are available on the market. This will complement efforts to strengthen the book market, guided by the National Book and Reading Policy. While the private sector has an interest in increasing the number of TLMs in schools and communities, and may benefit from improved utilization, particularly of supplementary readers, the private sector is unlikely to benefit directly from engaging the community in TLM management that is intended to improve their lifespan. For this reason, and because the activity is intended to strengthen public systems, the private sector cannot solve the problem independently.

3.4. COORDINATION DURING IMPLEMENTATION

As this project is intended to complement ongoing NRP efforts, particularly those implemented under the USAID/Malawi NextGen project, as well as other activities/projects from the MoE,

USAID, and other development partners, coordination during work plan development and implementation is crucial. Coordination with the GoM, particularly the MoE at the central district, and school level, is a priority, as ultimately the activity should support the implementation of Ministry policies, the safeguarding of Ministry resources, and the engagement of community stakeholders to support the official primary education system. The implementing partner should have regular touch points with the school community management members in participating schools. As this project is intended to work closely with an inclusive group of community stakeholders, the IP can determine the exact modes of direct engagement with these stakeholders, and when engagement should be through the school community management members. Engagement with CSOs at the local, district, and national level will also be necessary.

The implementing partner should take part in calls between the Chief of Parties or Project Directors of USAID-supported NRP activities, which serve to ensure alignment. In addition to the NextGen project and other relevant NRP activities/projects, this project will be required to establish communication and coordination schedules with the USG and donor activities listed in section 2.4. The IP will also need to cooperate with any additional relevant initiatives that are active at the time of the award launch or in the course of activity implementation.

Regular exchange of information is necessary to enable collaboration and coordination, and it will be up to the implementing partner to establish procedures with the MoE and other relevant stakeholders. This will include regular meetings and email exchange, as well as joint site visits and activities where appropriate. At the beginning of the activity, the implementing partner should meet with relevant stakeholders to identify overlap and areas for collaboration, and to identify coordination processes.

3.5. LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT

This project is intended to enable local structures, including school community management members and the wider community, to identify and solve their own challenges using local resources, to better fulfill their roles. The activity will prioritize building local capacity, and giving local actors the opportunity to steer their own activities and capacity development, while facilitating local service delivery and advocacy where service delivery falls short. While the activity responds to lessons learned from past NRP activities, and to input from Ministry and community stakeholders, it will not dictate solutions to communities, but will give them the knowledge, structure, and support to develop locally owned plans that are tailored to their individual community context. 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.

As described in section 3.4, coordination with the MoE and civil society at all levels, as well as with diverse stakeholders in the participating communities, will be essential. Through this coordination structure the implementing partner will not only communicate with each entity individually, but will also use their convening power to bring together stakeholders and facilitate the conversations that are necessary to identify sustainable local solutions. To support this coordination, USAID will, in cooperation with the implementing partner, participate in key

strategic conversations, and where necessary elevate conversations to the Secretary for Education or the Minister.

3.6. SUSTAINABILITY

Malawi has depended in large part on USAID to supply NRP-related TLMs, with the GoM intended to gradually take over. While (unlike the NextGen project) this project does not directly contribute to this transition of responsibility, increased community engagement in the management and utilization of TLMs will safeguard the investment and decrease the burden on the system to replace books more often than necessary. By increasing visibility of what happens in individual communities, sharing information, and holding Ministry systems accountable, the activity promotes systemic change as it strengthens community support and the Ministry's capacity.

This project is intended to establish structures and procedures that complement official GoM policies and procedures, and continue far beyond the life of this activity. To ensure sustainability of activities, and sustainable improvement in TLM management and utilization, the project will focus on enabling communities to fulfill their TLM-related roles and to solve their own problems using locally available resources, and sensitizing all stakeholders about the importance of TLMs to children's development of foundational literacy skills. This includes several efforts to record and share best practices which can be used by the GoM and other stakeholders to inform future activities. With a focus on using existing resources and building on existing procedures, the MoE should be able to introduce the structures and solutions identified to more schools, and could even use them to update policies, including the PSIP guidelines.

4. MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

As per requirement, the successful applicant shall be expected to prepare and submit and have the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MELP) that has to be approved within 90 days after the activity award. The MELP shall provide a clear, detailed, credible and robust system to track, report and manage performance of the activity as well as details on how the system will be operationalized. The MELP shall also provide strategies on how the project will strengthen capacities of the relevant government, civil society and communities in TLM data management and utilization. The successful applicant shall work with the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) to ensure that the MELP meets USAID's minimum standards, leverage data efforts with other activities/players within the sector (where possible), and align to the Mission's PMP. Below are specific requirements the MELP should address on monitoring; evaluation; collaboration, learning and adapting (CLA); and geographic information system (GIS).

4.1. MONITORING

The MELP shall provide clear details on how this project performance will be monitored to inform evidence based decision making, learning and adapting. The successful applicant will propose (in consultation with the AOR) appropriate and sufficient performance indicators (standard and custom) to track and report activity performance in a precise and timely manner. At minimum, these indicators shall include output and outcome. For each activity performance

indicator, the MELP shall provide precise definition; realistic targets based USAID specified performance plan and on sound programmatic assumptions; clear and rigorous data collection and analysis method; and appropriate disaggregation. All indicators will need to have appropriate disaggregates taking in consideration gender, age, geographical, grade, location, and other factors specified by USAID. For standard indicators, make reference to USAID's sample Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRs) when coming up with the activity indicator definition, disaggregation and measurements, etc. Below are some illustrative indicators for consideration by applicants as they prepare MELP but applicants are at liberty to come up with list of indicators that would sufficiently measure each proposed result of the activity:

- Number of parent teacher associations (PTAs) or community-based school governance structures engaged in primary or secondary education supported with USG assistance (ES 1-13, output)
- Number of parents or community members trained to support children's education, with USG assistance (Supp-7, output)
- Percent of primary grade learners targeted for USG assistance who have the appropriate variety of reading materials in the language of instruction with inclusive representation of diverse populations (ES.1-55)
- Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance (CBLD-9, outcome)
- Proportion of NRP TLMs provided to schools that are in good condition
- Percent of schools with community governance structures and or parents that effectively play an active role in TLM management and utilization
- Percent schools that implement with fidelity TLM management, utilization and care interventions
- Number of civil society or community organizations members trained in their roles in TLM management, utilization and advocacy

The MELP shall also specify data quality assurance measures the offer will put in place to ensure that data collected/reported is credible and meet the five USAID's minimum data quality standards. The successful applicant will be expected to institute an internal data quality assurance plan besides supporting USAID in the conduction of the external data quality assessments as specified in the ADS Chapter 201.

To ensure performance data collected is well managed, the applicant shall be expected to set up a robust database that will allow the system to deal with issues of double counting, under and over reporting and report unique numbers for indicators with that requirement. Besides this, the applicants will be required to report data on selected indicators to USAID/Malawi through the Development Information System. USAID will provide the training to key staff from the successful applicant as soon as the MELP is approved.

4.2. EVALUATION

This project may be subjected to USAID funded external (third party) evaluation covering early grade interventions implemented under this activity and the Next Generation Early Grade Reading (NextGen Project). In this case, the applicant will be expected to coordinate closely with the third-party evaluator regarding data and observation needs and must budget for all other

program-related monitoring, evaluation and learning expenses. The Applicant must also design and implement effective data management systems that facilitate third-party evaluations and that lay a foundation for USAID and other parties to track project outcomes that extend beyond the life of the activity.

4.3. COLLABORATING, LEARNING AND ADAPTING (CLA)

The MELP shall also provide a detailed collaborating, learning and adapting (CLA) plan. The plan should elaborate how this project will collaborate with stakeholders to document lessons learned and best practices. The MELP should provide specific details on how the activity will facilitate collaboration internally and with external key stakeholders and will facilitate learning among activities and programs that are complementary to this project.

The MELP is also expected to provide succinct details on how the activity will generate and feed new learning, innovations, and performance information back into the system to inform program management, design, policy dialogue opportunities and advocate for government commitment for future replenishment (e.g. creating pauses for reflection within the activity implementation scheme, engaging stakeholders for shared ‘learning moments’, conducting analytical review of existing and/or new evidence that may support or contradict common understanding). The applicant should also clearly state in the MELP on how the project will translate learning (considering changing conditions, along the lines of the risks, assumptions and game changers) into strategic and programmatic adjustments.

4.4. USE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

As required by ADS 579, the successful applicant will be required to collect and submit Global Positioning System (GPS) data related to the activity to report data on selected indicators by geographical locations where appropriate. The success applicant will be requested to be reporting electronic primary data sets to the USAID/Malawi AOR at appropriate intervals. All locations where implementation is occurring must be geo-referenced (Education Division, Districts, Zones and Schools, etc.). At a minimum, data must be provided in an MS Excel sheet with latitude and longitude locations in decimal degree format and other attribute data that will be agreed upon in coordination between the AOR and the implementing partner. USAID/Malawi prefers the submission of data in the ESRI-shape file format with an associated meta-data file

(END OF SECTION A)