



USAID | JORDAN

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

March 24, 2010

Subject: USAID-Jordan-10-02-RFA
USAID Monitoring and Evaluation Partnership Program
Amendment #1

The purpose of this Amendment is to respond to questions received from potential applicants.

Question No. 1: I am unclear whether the program implementation will include development of an information system (i.e. software implementation) at any stage.

I would appreciate your clarification regarding components of the upcoming program, as to whether they will include an information system or are going to be purely consultancy.

Answer No. 1: The implementation does not include the development of an information system.

Question No. 2: As mentioned, in the "Cost Application Format 2-C" in Section IV- Application and Submission Information of the Request for Application document. All applicants are requested to provide, "Copies of the applicant's financial reports for the previous 3-year period, which have been audited by a certified public accountant or other auditor satisfactory to USAID"

Our query is that, can we provide financial report audited by any recognized public accountant or auditing firm in Bangladesh, or do we have to get our financial information verified by an audit firm that will be recommended by USAID. If it is to be audited by a referred firm of USAID here in Bangladesh, would it be possible for you to send me a list or contact details of the firms preferred by USAID.

Answer No. 2: You can provide financial reports audited by recognized public accountants in Bangladesh.

Question No. 3: How many persons are on the NCHRD M&E team and at what levels? The RFA states that on p. I-5 that four will be enrolled in the Master Evaluator Certificate program. But it is not clear if these four constitute all those working on M&E, including mid-level staff, research assistants, data management specialists, and statisticians.

Answer No. 3: While NCHRD has a larger number of staff, the team that is assigned for the ERfKE M&E activities includes the four individuals mentioned in the RFA.

Question No. 4: Objective 2 of Component 2 calls for the funding of certain large international comparison studies and possibly additional studies developed by NCHRD. For the international comparative studies, is it envisioned that the Agreement holder would transfer funds to NCHRD for disbursement to participants or would the Agreement holder do this?

Answer No. 4: The Agreement holder would directly disburse payments to participants and would not transfer funds to NCHRD.

Question No. 5: The RFA in Section 4, p.3 states that the PPRs should be for “3 USAID contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements awarded to the applicant in the past three years that required placement of long-term personnel.” Two questions about this requirement:

- a) Why is USAID requesting PPRs that demonstrate the placement of long-term personnel, as we did not see this as an explicit requirement of the RFA? The RFA states on page III-1 that “USAID encourages applications from potential new partners.” The requirement for three PPRs for past USAID projects seems at odds with this statement. May we assume that PPRs for relevant projects funded by other sponsors will be acceptable in light of USAID statement about new partners?
- b) May we include PPRs for sub-applicants who are proposed to do a significant share of the work?

Answer No. 5: a) While the solicitation does not require the placement of long-term personnel, however, USAID still needs to evaluate the applicants’ past performance in proposing personnel who were able to achieve program objectives.

If the applicant has PPRs for past USAID projects, please submit those. If the applicant has PPRs for relevant projects funded by other sponsors, please submit those.

- b) You need to include PPRs only for major sub-applicants (a major sub-applicant is an organization anticipated to receive 20% or more of the award from the prime).

Question No. 6: If electronic copies are received via email and grants.gov by April 18, would the Mission allow hard copies to arrive by a later date, if they are postmarked April 18?

- Answer No. 6:** Per the solicitation cover page, the closing date and time for electronic copies is April 18, 2010 at 11 pm Jordan time, and the closing date and time for hard copies is April 21, 2010 at 12 pm Jordan time.
- Per Section IV of the solicitation, applications, which are submitted late or incomplete, run the risk of not being considered in the review process.
- Question No. 7: Since the Awardee will not open an office in Jordan does the Awardee need to register as a business and/or employer if a CCN is employed by the Awardee?
- Answer No. 7:** Please consult with your legal counsel regarding this issue. It is the awardee's duty to conform to all Jordanian local laws.
- Question No. 8: Page I-6 – Component 2 – Objective 2: Does the \$1,050,000 plug include fees and operational costs associated with the TIMSS, PISA and NAFKE studies?
- Answer No. 8:** Yes.
- Question No. 9: Page I-4 - III. Program Description: The term “partnership” is used throughout the Program Description. Please clarify which organizations, in addition to the MoE, NCHRD, and the Awardee comprise this “partnership”?
- Answer No. 9:** The “partnership” is primarily between NCHRD and the Awardee, which will work in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education.
- Question No. 10: Page V-4 – Key Personnel: Does the term “Partnership Coordinator” refer more to a programmatic and technical, or to an administrative and logistical role? Also, will the position coordinate with partners beyond those defined by USAID’s response to the previous question?
- Answer No. 10:** This is left to the discretion of the applicant depending on the roles and responsibilities the other staff are envisioned to have and are qualified to assume.
- Question No. 11: On page V-6 of the RFA, USAID provides plug figures for two programmatic elements totaling \$1,550,000. Does USAID have additional guidance for how the remainder of the \$4,000,000 should be budgeted?
- Answer No. 11:** No.
- Question No. 12: Component 2, Objective 2 of the RFA requests that the implementing partner provides financial and technical support to specific studies, such as:

TIMMS, PISA, and NAFKE. It is our understanding from the M&E System attachment that these studies have been already conducted on regular basis and they are currently sponsored by several donors. To quote p. 5 of that document:

“Assessment Studies

Assessment studies undertaken by the M&E Unit in the NCHRD:

(i) Students performance assessment studies

Three such studies are regularly being implemented. Two of these studies are international and one is local. These are:

- TIMSS (Trends in Internal Mathematics and Science Study) which is sponsored by the International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).
- PISA (Programme for Internal Student Assessment), which is sponsored by the OECD countries.
- NAFKE (National Assessment for knowledge Economy), which is sponsored by NCHRD & MOE.”

What is the envisioned role of the M&E Partnership Program in relation to these studies?

Answer No. 12: The Partnership is to fund the future participation of the MoE in those studies, to fund the implementation costs, and to fund and assist in building the capacity of the NCHRD to better implement the studies and analyze the findings.

Question No. 13: Will the M&E Partnership Program be paying for these major studies or some part thereof, over the life of the project?

Answer No. 13: Yes the partnership program will be paying for the major studies mentioned in the RFA.

Question No. 14: Will the M&E Partnership Program be expected to hire the staff or supervise the management of the Jordanian participation in those studies?

Answer No. 14: The NCHRD will be responsible for the management of the studies and their implementation with the assistance and supervision of the Partnership Program.

Question No. 15: Could USAID provide a breakdown of the \$1,050,000 plug figure? How much of this amount is to be allocated to financing TIMMS, PISA and NAFKE and how much, in USAID’s estimation, is left for other studies?

**Answer No. 15: Estimated figures:
TIMMS: \$400,000.00
PISA: \$400,000.00**

NAfKE: \$250,000.00

These are the only major studies that the Partnership Program is expected to fund. The remainder should be budgeted for the capacity building activities (workshops, certification programs, etc...).

Question No. 16: This question pertains to the type of technical expertise required to support NCHRD. The M&E Framework attachment (p 24) indicates that the third party institution should be able to provide support on EMIS, the development of education indicators and leading large scale evaluations. Since the type of evaluations envisioned will shape the how we staff a projects, is it fair to assume that large scale evaluation will be a central focus of the work (in contrast to potentially smaller qualitative studies)?

Answer No. 16: Most of the studies that NCHRD is tasked with and requested to conduct are large scale rather than smaller qualitative studies.

Question No. 17: Please confirm that applicants are not required to submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan with their application.

Answer No. 17: Per ADS 303.3.6.3 (f), Applicants are not required to submit a Branding Strategy and marking Plan with their application. The apparently successful applicant will be requested to submit this plan prior to award.

Question No. 18: Please confirm that tracking by Congressional funding earmark will not required for the cooperative award issued as a result of this RFA.

Answer No. 18: We confirm that it will not be required.

Question No. 19 Does the Jordanian Government have a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) software in place?

Answer No. 19: The Ministry of Education has an EMIS system in place and multiple data bases that are all connected to the learning platform (Eduwave).

Question No. 20: Does the Jordanian Government have a project similar to this being run by a company?

Answer No. 20: No.

Question No. 21: Are we allowed any of the Jordanian Government facilities to conduct any training functions?

Answer No. 21: The NCHRD has its own facility which is suitable to conducting training functions. In cases where a large number is expected to attend, arrangements can be made with the Ministry of Education to use some

of its facility.

Question No. 22: When does the USAID expect to award the contract?

Answer No. 22: Per Section II of the solicitation, the estimated start date of the award is September 1, 2010.

Question No. 23: What incentives are there for Jordanian Government employees under this program for successful completion of the program?

Answer No. 23: NCHRD staff are not Jordanian Government employees.

Question No. 24: What are the payment terms for the successful applicant, how will the applicant be paid, what will the triggering events be, etc?

Answer No. 24: The payment method depends on the type of organization that receives the award. Payment is made by: a) Letter of Credit (if the recipient has one), b) Reimbursement, or c) Advances, with different terms governing each method.

Question No. 25: What is the current pool of trainees/participants in the effort, numbers of anticipated trainees/program participants, and education level of program participants?

Answer No. 25: The main participants are the four individuals that are assigned from NCHRD to carry-out the M&E functions under ERfKE. Some trainings could include more individuals (such as data collectors, statisticians, etc...) and that is determined based on the type and size of the specific study.

Question No. 26: Where are the participants located?

Answer No. 26: They are located at NCHRD. When more people are assigned to work on specific studies (data collectors, statisticians, etc...), they can also be requested to meet at NCHRD or the Ministry of Education in Amman.

Question No. 27: Please clarify if and how approval of the contractor's deliverables and payment to the contractor will be affected if delegates choose not to participate in trainings or complete plans or other documents.

Answer No. 27: There is a very high level of buy-in at NCHRD regarding this partnership and both NCHRD and the MoE realize the value of such a program, therefore, we do not envision this to be an issue.

Question No. 28: Page V-3, the Past Performance Report Short Form does not allow space for project descriptions. Therefore, is it possible to use the Long Forms?

Answer No. 28: No.

Question No. 29: On Page V-3, the RFA states that USAID encourages minimal field presence for this program and has deemed it unnecessary to set up a field office in Jordan but have 2-3 individuals dedicated to this program from the home office. If an organization already has a field office in Jordan can we assume that the staff can be based there rather than in the US?

Answer No. 29: It is left to the applicant to decide.

Question No. 30: We understand that there are plug figures for Component 1 and Component 2. Can you please confirm that the figures shown are for the entire proposal and not per year figures? Also, do we need to detail out these plug figures for proposal submission?

Answer No. 30: The plug figures are for the entire proposal and not per year figures. However, these plug figures need to be broken down in the detailed budget.

Question No. 31: In the Summary Budget template on page V-7 can we assume that the plug figures would be included in the “Other Direct Costs” cost element? If not, are the plug figures included in the \$4,000,000 budget ceiling or are they in addition to the ceiling?

Answer No. 31: Plug figures are included in the \$4 million budget ceiling and are not in addition to the total program budget. These figures should be reasonably broken down and not just indicated as a total under “Other Direct Costs”.

Question No. 32: Page V-4 indicates the qualifications of the 3 Key program staff. Could the candidates have relevant field experience rather than the required degrees and still be considered? For example, if the Program Director has been a COP or Program Director for similar projects for more than 12 years but only has a Masters degree could that person still be considered a viable candidate?

Answer No. 32: The proposed staff need to meet the required qualifications as stated in the solicitation.

Question No. 33: Component I:

- a) We are aware that you have suggested The Evaluator’s Institute certificate training program on evaluation. In addition to that course, are you also open to other training options/suggestions?

- b) The RFA states that four NCHRD staff will be certified through The Evaluator's Institute. Would Component 1 involve training and capacity building beyond these four staff?
- c) Who from NCHRD would be involved in the needs assessment requested in component one? How many NCHRD staff? Will it also involve MoE staff as well?

Answer No. 33:

- a) Yes, based on the training needs assessment findings.**
- b) Only for certain studies that require a larger number of people to complete the data collection, etc... These individuals will only then be included in in-country training.**
- c) Only four NCHRD staff will be included in the needs assessment and no MoE personnel will be involved.**

Question No. 34: Component II:

- a) Do you have a basic list of studies that you want to contractor to complete in ERfKE II?
- b) Should we actually include the costs of some of the studies in our budget and, if so, do we just finance them or are the studies done by the sub-contractors that we hire and pay?
- c) Objective 1: Will a proposed list of M&E studies and ERfKE II project documents be available to the contractors?
- d) Objective 2: Will the contractor be required to estimate costs, conduct hiring, paying salaries, and supervising sub-contractors to implement the studies including the mentioned TIMSS and PISA? What do you envision the contractor's role to be in the hiring and supervision of subcontractors?
- e) You indicate technical assistance AND financial support. What are the financial support components that the \$1,050,000 covers?

Answer No. 34:

- a) The plan is still under development.**
- b) The costs of other studies will not be covered under this partnership.**
- c) Yes, when they are developed and finalized by NCHRD and MoE.**
- d) The recipient will not be paying salaries but would cover the costs of the 3 major studies mentioned including data collection, logistics,**

analysis, etc... NCHRD will manage this process with the assistance and supervision of the awardee.

- e) Covering the costs of MoE participation in international studies, and the costs of carrying out the studies.**

Question No. 35: Component III:

- a) Objective 1: Would we be entitled to obtain the draft ideas for the MOE M&E restructuring which is supposed to be underway now?
- b) Objective 2: Could we also obtain the current TOR for the Advisory Committee and the Committee's responsibilities?

Answer No. 35:

- a) It is not envisioned to be completed prior to the award of this program**
- b) This committee is composed of representatives from the Ministry of Education, NCHRD, donor organizations and other stakeholders. Its functions include the following:**
 - Set the overall policy guidelines and directions of M&E for ERfKE.**
 - Discuss and approve annual workplans including functions and budgets and make modifications if deemed necessary.**
 - Review and make recommendations on the progress of M&E activities.**
 - Ensure the completion of reports and major evaluation steps.**
 - Harmonize internal evaluation activities in order to maximize benefits and avoid duplication.**
 - Review and provide feedback on study TORs and draft reports.**

Question No. 36: The inputs for the three consultants/personnel required for the project is not mentioned. Is it up to the consulting firm to assign the inputs for the experts, or all the inputs full time?

Answer No. 36: It is up to the applicant to assign the inputs.

Question No. 37: Is there any specific format for preparing the manning schedule of the experts, or can we follow our standard practice of putting the inputs in excel sheets?

Answer No. 37: No specific format is required.

Question No. 38: Besides the three nominated positions for the project, can the consulting firms propose any additional staff for the projects? If yes, will the additional consultants be evaluated as a part of the technical proposal?

Answer No. 38: Per Section IV, (1) Technical Application Format, item 8. Personnel, more staff can be included in the proposed program management plan and the overall structure will be evaluated based on the criteria specific to this requirement.

Question No. 39: All consulting firms applying for this project are requested to provide Past Performance Report of at least 3 USAID contracts, grants or co-operative agreements awarded to the applicant in the past three years. Does this experience necessarily has to shown as the lead firm's credential, or can be shown as part of the consortium's past experience record?

Answer No. 39: This experience can show as the lead firm's credential and as part of the consortium's past experience record as well. However, please note that this experience must be shown for the prime and each major sub (a major sub is defined as an organization that anticipates receiving 20% of the award from the prime).

Question No. 40: Please confirm that a Jordanian 'for profit' company that is based in Jordan is allowed to prime/lead this project. If the answer above is yes, then kindly note that we would like to request an extension for the time to ask questions, as well as an extension for bid submission for the following reasons:

1. As a prime we need sufficient time to address the FAR requirements that we have not addressed in a comprehensive manner before.
2. As a prime we need sufficient time to search for possible needed international companies/individual expertise to support our effort.

Answer No. 40: A Jordanian "for profit" company that is based in Jordan is eligible to lead this project. However, please note that based on regulations (22 CFR 226.81) "No funds shall be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization. Profit is any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs.", i.e. fee.

Please note that the FAR applies to acquisition, not assistance.

An extension for time to ask questions and an extension for bid submission is not granted.