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Deadline for Questions: January 03, 2018 – 15:00 Beirut Time

Clarifications: January 12, 2018

Closing Date: February 02, 2018

Closing Time: 15:00 Beirut Time

Subject: **USAID/Lebanon Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) Number: 72026818RFA00003**

Program Title: **Higher Education Scholarships (HES) Program**

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications for a cooperative agreement from qualified U.S. and Non-U.S. organizations to fund a program entitled Higher Education Scholarships (HES) Program. Eligibility for this award is not restricted; see Section C of this NFO for eligibility requirements.

Subject to the availability of funds, an award will be made to that responsible applicant(s) whose application(s) best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity and the selection criteria contained herein. While **two** awards are anticipated as a result of this notice of funding opportunity (NFO), USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

For the purposes of this NFO the term "Grant" is synonymous with "Cooperative Agreement"; "Grantee" is synonymous with "Recipient"; and "Grant Officer" is synonymous with "Agreement Officer". Eligible organizations interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this funding opportunity thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and evaluation process.

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

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

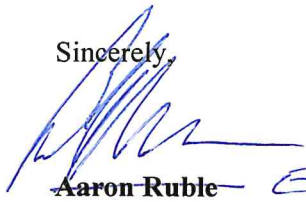
NFO no. 72026818RFA00003
Higher Education Scholarships Program (HES)

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

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

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,


Aaron Ruble
Agreement Officer


Erik Mackovs

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCROYNMS USED IN THIS NFO

ADS	Automated Directives System
AO	Agreement Officer
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
BACC	Baccalaureate
BSMP	Branding Strategy & Marking Plan
CA	Cooperative Agreement
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CPA	Certified Public Account
CSP	Community Service Project
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DUNS	Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System
GAAS	Generally Accepted Auditing Standards
GMAT	Graduate Management Admission Test
GPA	Grade Point Average
GRE	Graduate Record Examinations
GOL	Government of Lebanon
HES	Higher Education Scholarships Program
ID	Identification
IDP	Individual Development Plan
LOE	Level of Effort
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
ME&L	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSCHE	Middle States Council for Higher Education
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
NFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NICRA	Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
ODC	Other Direct Cost
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PD	Program Description
PIRS	Performance Indicators Reference Sheets
POC	Point of contact
SAM	System for Award Management
SF	Standard Form
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TD	Teaching Diploma
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US	United States
USG	United States Government
USP	University Scholarship Program
VAT	Value-Added Tax
YES	Youth Exchange & Study Program

SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking applications to implement a nine-year activity entitled Higher Education Scholarships in Lebanon.

The overarching goal of the Higher Education Scholarships (HES) is to increase the private sector competitiveness through increased workforce readiness linked to job opportunities. The project aims specifically at increasing access to quality education, and equipping the beneficiary scholars with the necessary technical, soft and leadership skills needed to excel in the labor market.

Since 2010, USAID provided approximately \$99.5 million to fund full undergraduate scholarships for approximately 890 Lebanese public school graduates. These scholarships typically cover full educational costs including a housing/transportation allowance, when needed, and stipends to attend high quality universities that promote critical thinking, freedom, diversity and respect.

The HES consists of two components:

Component 1: The University Scholarship Program

The University Scholarship Program – Phase Eight (USP8) which aims at enabling meritorious and financially disadvantaged Lebanese public and private school graduates to access quality higher education to increase their job readiness and maximize their potential in supporting Lebanon’s democratic and economic development. This support’s USAID’s objective to increase the private sector competitiveness through increased workforce readiness linked to job opportunities. This scholarship program will offer full scholarship coverage to assist male and female school graduates to pursue undergraduate studies at local universities that have requirements similar to American accreditation as defined under the eligibility section.

Component 2: Refugee Scholarship Support

HES will offer scholarships to non-Lebanese, having refugee status and are legally residing in Lebanon, to complete undergraduate studies or post-secondary certificate programs at universities that have requirements similar to American accreditation as defined later.

The NFO provides a comprehensive and detailed technical approach based on lessons learned from previous iterations of the University Scholarship Program since 2010, proven best practices, demonstrated cost control measures, and students’ feedback. USAID’s substantial involvement throughout the program is intended to unify upfront all guiding parameters of the program amongst implementing partners such as selection criteria and conditions to maintain the scholarship, which will eventually enable the Mission to focus strategically its involvement, rather than micromanage the scholarships.

B. TECHNICAL APPROACH

1. Component 1: The University Scholarship Program – Phase Eight

The University Scholarship Program- Phase Eight, USP(8), is a nine-year program allowing the recruitment, selection and enrollment of up to four separate student cohorts, one cohort every year possibly during the first four years of implementation. The process that requires the recruitment, selection, enrollment and follow-up of every cohort is referred to as cycle; hence USP(8) will support up to four cycles subject to funding availability. Each cycle consists of a first year for recruitment, a second year for preparatory studies if needed, and up to four academic years depending on the major of enrollment.

The applicant should take into account the information below in the design of their application.

1.1 Eligibility, Recruitment and Selection Processes

1.1.a. Student Eligibility

USP(8) is considering the recruitment, selection and enrollment of four distinct student cohorts, one cohort per year over the first four years of implementation subject to funding availability. Accordingly, eligibility criteria reflected below apply to all four cohorts unless otherwise directed by USAID through substantial involvement during actual implementation. This should be factored in the application in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO).

Students recruited under the program should meet the minimum eligibility criteria as per following:

- o Lebanese or other nationality(ies) as determined officially by USAID in writing through substantial involvement during actual implementation. As per USAID Automated Directive (ADS) 253 (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/253.pdf>), Citizens who are holders of both Lebanese and American citizenship are not eligible for this program. Similarly, asylum seekers in the USA and green card holders are not eligible.
- o Graduates must be from in-country Lebanese schools only, including public and private secondary schools, who will earn their BACC-II during the year of recruitment under the program. Graduates who earned their degree earlier will not be eligible to the scholarship. The final type of schools will be determined by USAID through substantial involvement.
- o Graduates must demonstrate academic merit; i.e., have at least a cumulative combined average of 13.5/20 in their first two years of secondary schooling, and at least an average of 13.5/20 on their national Baccalaureate (Bacc-II);
- o Candidates must have been enrolled at a secondary school in Lebanon for their last three years of secondary education (*seconde, premiere and terminale*), including at private or public schools. An exception is made to students who participated in a U.S. Government education exchange program during their secondary school years, such as YES students who spent a year in the U.S. The student must provide documentation that proves that their exchange program was supported by the U.S.

Government. Students who spent less than their last three years of schooling in Lebanon are not eligible unless their transfer to Lebanon was substantiated by death of the breadwinner, or official bankruptcy. Otherwise, the candidates must satisfy the three-year secondary schooling in Lebanon.

Financial Need - Candidates must demonstrate high financial need as follows:

- ~~o Parents must not earn any substantial subsidy to cover for educational cost. For purposes of the USP, parents must not earn an educational subsidy that covers at least 15% of the annual university tuition fee at the cheapest partner university. The tuition basis will be determined, similarly amongst implementing partners, in coordination with USAID through substantial involvement.~~
- ~~o Parents must not earn any substantial subsidy to cover for educational cost. For purposes of the USP, parents must not earn an educational subsidy that covers illustratively approximately 15% of the annual university tuition fee at the cheapest partner university. The tuition basis and the final subsidy percentage will be determined, similarly amongst implementing partners, in coordination with USAID through substantial involvement.~~
- o Financial need shall be determined based on a detailed financial aid application that weigh family revenues versus expenditures, number of family dependents and school/university age children, and ownership of hard assets. The applicant must detail the criteria, their weights, justification and illustrative supportive documentation required that will be utilized to assess financial need of all students, in particular those enrolled in private schools. The applicant should elaborate any approaches, based on school tuition, or other objective criteria, that may help in further determining financial need of private school students. The final set of required documentation will be unified and approved by USAID through substantial involvement for all implementing partners.
- o Applicants must provide illustratively a clear total combined income threshold of both parents that USP students must fall under to be eligible for USP as well as a strong rationale justifying this threshold based on prevailing economic indicators in the country. The implementing partner, post-award, must provide a brief economic analysis conducted by an expert consultant to justify the threshold. The final threshold will be unified amongst all implementing partners and will be subject to USAID approval post-award through substantial involvement.
- o Applicants and their parents must sit for separate interviews to determine financial need, validate information and complete additional due diligence to ensure funding is not channeled to ineligible candidates.
- o Applicants must not have a sibling who was/is enrolled under USP or any other U.S. funded undergraduate scholarship. Exceptions may be made when a sibling dropped or was dismissed from USP within one year of enrollment only.
- o Students must demonstrate the potential for leadership and civic engagement through means identified by the applicant and provided in the application including at least an essay in the admission application and an interview before a qualified panel. The applicant must reflect illustratively in their application or its annexes how the

leadership potential will be assessed, which tools will be used, the sort of questions that may be asked, and the weights and criteria that will be used to assess leadership potential. Finally, USAID, through substantial involvement during implementation, will unify and approve the leadership assessment tools and methodology amongst implementing partners, which should be reflected in the application.

1.1.b. Vetting and Due Diligence

To qualify for the scholarship, all students and, as applicable, their parents/ legal guardians must be properly vetted against all publicly and internally available databases and other resources as determined by USAID through substantial involvement. The applicant must provide its illustrative vetting strategy to ensure that the project benefits are not being provided, even inadvertently, to sanctioned individuals, including people or organizations who are not specifically designated by the U.S. Government but who may nevertheless be linked to sanctioned activities. The applicant must detail how vetting will be done and when, how due diligence will be completed and using what tools, what certifications will be in place post-enrollment, and how vetting and due diligence will continue post-enrollment until graduation. The Mission, through substantial involvement, will approve and unify the vetting and due diligence approach proposed through a vetting and due diligence guideline (refer to Section F – reporting requirements, Technical Deliverables), which should be initially reflected in the application.

1.1.c. Program Dissemination, Shortlisting Procedures and Selection

Engagement - The applicant must present a detailed account of how they intend to disseminate the scholarship opportunity in the targeted schools including at least the following:

- (1) approach to seek official approvals including the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and school principals,
- (2) the approach to visit schools including selection criteria to select schools to be visited, and ensuring consistency of messaging amongst the various university recruiters, and between the implementing partners,
- (3) outreach to schools and/or students that are not visited,
- (4) tools to leverage already enrolled USP scholars if any are actually enrolled,
- (5) publication of promotional material and other innovative tools that will maximize outreach through cost-effective approaches, and
- (6) if other resources will be utilized such as sub-awards to local organizations that may assist in dissemination or participation in fairs, or online application platforms...

Guiding Principles - The applicant should take into consideration the following:

- There will be up to four consecutive annual rounds of program dissemination and recruitment, subject to USAID approval through substantial involvement based on funding availability. Each round targets one student cohort for enrollment by the beginning of the next academic year.
- All public secondary schools in Lebanon, including regular and technical students, must be duly informed of the program under each dissemination round.

- School visits are the most favored approach for public schools. Therefore, the applicant must reach at least 240 regular public schools per recruitment year through direct visits, and at least 30 technical public schools. The applicant must detail its approach to reach out to private schools including selection criteria to choose schools to avoid receiving hundreds of ineligible applications submitted by ineligible students who are not financially needy;
- The applicant must define targets for each recruitment phase, i.e. how many schools will be reached, how many students, how many schools visited...
- During the USP(8) recruitments visits, the applicant must explicitly reflect in its application that recruiters must fulfill the sole task of promoting USP and USAID funding. Recruiters must not engage at any point during these visits, and/or through USAID funding, to promote the university, its programs, regular financial aid offered to students, or regular programs. USP(8) is not a platform to enable the host university to bolster its image, visibility or outreach. Recruitment serves the purpose of promoting USAID funding solely in support of the USP. All non-USP related questions must be deferred to the implementing partner/host university and must not be addressed during the school visits. USAID will also unify and approve through substantial involvement a guideline to ensure consistency of messaging amongst recruiters. All terms of substantial involvement must be acknowledged by the applicant in the application.

Application Package - A specific USP(8) application package, including admission and financial components, must be developed for the program. All students applying to the program will have to write at least three essays in the application that facilitate the review and determination of qualifications as following:

- (1) reflection on their leadership qualities and why the student qualifies for the scholarship,
- (2) rationale justifying the choice of major and career ambitions, and
- (3) Arabic narrative overview of the household financial situation, written by the parents, which should be part of the financial aid application.

The applicant must reflect how the application package will be made available to students physically and electronically, including how the potential of online application platforms or other tools that maximize outreach will be explored. USAID, through substantial involvement, will approve and unify the final USP(8) application package amongst all implementing partners, and the direction to setup platforms for online application submission. The applicant must also reflect how the three essays will be reviewed, weighed and used during the selection process. This will be finalized through substantial involvement during implementation.

Risk Mitigation Plan - The applicant must also provide a risk mitigation plan, in a tabular format that will develop alternative approaches to dissemination as means to mitigate challenges and risks. The applicant must weigh all potential risks and propose alternative means addressing at least the inability to visit schools due to (1) weather conditions, (2) localized and temporary security incidents, (3) chronic security situation, (4) uncooperative school principals, (5) teachers' strikes, and (6) absence of MEHE approval...

Shortlisting - The applicant must detail its procedures, steps, timeframe, methodology, key responsible units at the implementing partners, targets in numbers, and criteria under each step to shortlist students and make a final selection addressing at least the following:

- 1- How preliminary shortlisting based on the initial admission and financial application review including review of the three essays is completed;
- 2- What university tests are administered, why and what the cut-off scores are;
- 3- Interview procedures, panel selection and composition,
- 4- Mitigation of conflict of interest and nepotism during the selection process;
- 5- How scores are generated under each step while avoiding duplication;
- 6- At least 40% of the total applicants per cycle should sit for initial university testing (subject matter and/or language). The 40% must not be considered a target but rather a minimum number that is encouraged to be exceeded to enhance the competitive and transparent selection process;
- 7- At least 20% of the total initial applicants per cycle, who have taken successfully the university tests, must be invited for interviews. The 20% is not a cap but rather a minimal number that must be achieved and exceeded when possible. Illustratively, if 1,200 students applied to USP(8)'s cycle one, at least 480 must sit for testing, of which at least 240 must sit for interviews after completing the testing and being ranked.

Through substantial involvement, the applicant should reflect in its application that USAID will:

- o Provide specific guidance concerning gender, geographic considerations and other relevant eligibility criteria as deemed necessary by the Mission after award;
- o Review and determine the draft proposed selection based on a recommended selection made by the implementing partner that includes a proposed list of finalists and a waiting list of qualified and eligible students
- o Review, approve and unify the weights of the selection process including weights allocated to the academic merit, financial situation, and leadership potential.

1.1.d. Selection Contingency Plan:

The applicant must provide an illustrative contingency plan including a description of triggering events, alternate approaches and potential impact on the selection process in case of at least the following:

- 1- Plans to accommodate students, if any at all, who were not able to make it for the interviews or university tests for valid reasons specifically prevailing security situation, family death or documented incapacitation only, and how the fairness of the competition will be maintained if such accommodation is offered;
- 2- Delays in publishing the Bacc-II exam results and how the final selection will be made;
- 3- Cancellation of Bacc-II exams and how the final selection will be made;

The applicant must note that the selection contingency plan cannot be exercised without USAID approval during actual implementation. Through substantial involvement, USAID

will approve and unify the contingency plans pertaining to the above, particularly those related to cancellation of Bacc-II exams.

1.2 Gender and Diversity Considerations

Applicants must provide a detailed methodology of how they will address gender and diversity matters during implementation, namely:

- How dissemination, selection and enrollment will be done to reflect the diversity in the country;
- How the selection will be made to ensure that public school students are not under-represented in the final proposed selection?
- How gender balance will be achieved including during (1) selection, (2) enrollment through leadership and extra-curricular activities;
- How gender stereotypes will be addressed during the program dissemination and orientation phases to overcome existing perceptions that certain majors are reserved for a particular sex;
- How gender stereotypes and cultural norms will be mitigated to ensure scholars select diverse majors not just ones that are culturally acceptable such as engineering for males, or education for females,
- What sort of messaging during the recruitment phase and support services post-enrollment will be provided to mitigate gender sensitivities and help accommodate men and women who might face stress and disorientation due to moving to the big city;
- What sort of messaging will be provided to help secure parental consent and mitigate cultural norms when recruiting students, particularly women, from conservative areas, especially addressing matters of safety, security and harassment;
- How people with disability will be provided a fair opportunity not only to compete for the scholarship, but to actually engage in all its aspects post-enrollment

1.3 Enrollment Approach

The applicants must reflect in their own terms all considerations below in their application; omission of any section will be negatively evaluated:

1.3.a. Proposed Majors

Applicants must provide in their application a detailed account of the majors that will be offered under the program along with a rationale for their choice including relevant statistics to the proposed major such as market survey or alumni survey. The proposed majors will constitute the initial list of allowable academic disciplines that will be further revised during implementation through USAID's substantial involvement. Applicants must take into consideration the following:

- Scholarships will be offered at the undergraduate level only. Graduate studies for degree or for auditing purposes are not allowed under USP.
- Offered majors must have prospects for meaningful employment, i.e. should enable students to acquire a job quickly upon graduation.
- Undergraduate degrees offered as mandatory prerequisites for graduate studies such as biology being a prerequisite for medicine are not allowed.

- Academic degrees that require a further internship post-graduation, additional studies for completion post the initial degree, or additional requirements post-graduation to be licensed such as nutrition may not be allowed under USP, unless clear management and financial plan is presented by the applicant detailing how the cost of such additional studies will be covered beyond USP and from non-USAID sources.
- Any proposed major must have at least one functional current class that is not predominantly populated by currently enrolled USP scholars.
- Teaching diplomas may be offered as additional coursework and duration subject to student graduation happening during the same cycle.
- Majors newly offered at the university will not be allowed and must not be offered under USP. To qualify as an allowable major under USP, at least five annual classes must have graduated from the specific proposed major and concrete employment data must be made available.
- All proposed majors should ensure that the student graduates at least three months prior to the cycle completion.
- Only STEM majors, business and its various emphases, education and nursing are allowed under USP. To ensure that the STEM definition is consistent amongst all applicants, a list of STEM majors may be found at the Department of Homeland Security's site: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/stemlist.htm> . Based on relevant statistics provided by the applicant, STEM majors that have low prospects of employment must not be offered under USP.

Additionally, the applicant must update its list of majors, within the first eighteen months of implementation, through a labor market survey that may be supported administratively and financially by USP(8). The mandatory survey may be completed within the first eighteen months, however, the applicant is encouraged to complete the study earlier within the first six months to update its list of majors as of the first cycle of recruitment. The applicant must propose its methodology to conducting the labor market survey taking in consideration the following:

- How employers, stakeholders and private/public sector key informants will be engaged including professional orders, chambers of commerce, relevant unions and syndicates, and major employers in the country;
- USAID will not cover the cost of alumni studies and surveys that are regularly updated by the universities' development and alumni relations offices. As such, the survey cannot be an alumni survey.
- USAID will not cover the cost to update existing prior surveys, more recent data is required to reflect current labor market patterns;
- Commissioning of such surveys may be undertaken through sub-awards subject to USAID approval, or to specialized consultants working in the field.

Any newly proposed major must satisfy the USP(8) requirements with regard to prospects of employment, requirement to graduate prior to project expiry, must not require additional studies or internships. The applicant must present also the approach to inform students, update their applications and advise after the study results are out leading to changes/edits in the proposed list of majors. The applicant must note that USAID, through substantial involvement, will review and make a final determination of suggested changes to the list of majors based on the recommendations of the labor market survey. The results of the labor market survey will impact the list of majors as of cycle two, unless the report is completed prior to the enrollment of cycle one.

The applicant must explain in details what safeguards will be in place to ensure that the university is not channeling scholarships to under-populated majors or majors that the University is trying to promote, including safeguards to ensure that students are not requested to change majors during the selection process to meet university internal needs.

The applicant must provide the following tabular information when making their proposed list of majors:

Major and date the University started offering the major	Total Number of Credits required for Graduation as per course catalogue	Normal Program Duration as per University Catalogue in years	Expected Number of Semesters based on normal progress as per university catalogue	Does the major require a mandatory internship?	Are summer semesters mandatory for this major?	Justification	Are students eligible to enroll in a TD (Teaching Diploma) under this field, if yes how many additional credits and semesters?	Current Gender Breakdown at the University (% Females)	Proposed means to address gender gap or stereotyping under USP when applying to this major
Major A	X credits	X years	Total of X semesters including X summer semesters	No	Yes	Provide rationale for including Major A under USP	No		
Major B	X credits	X years	Total of X semesters including 0 summer semesters	No	No	Provide rationale for including Major B under USP	Yes, 30 credits, 2 full semesters		
...									

The program duration will be up to nine years to allow the recruitment of up to four student cohorts, i.e. the implementation of up to four cycles subject to funding availability. Each cycle consists of the following:

- One year of recruitment, selection and enrollment. It is estimated that the first four years of the program are dedicated to outreach, dissemination, selection and enrollment, whereby each year targets one distinct cycle.
- Up to one preparatory year if needed,
- Up to four academic years per cycle only depending on the major of enrollment, accordingly five year majors may not be proposed such as architecture;

1.3.b. Admissions

The applicant must note the following USP(8) conditions:

- Acceptance must be offered during the same year of recruitment. Illustratively, students who applied under cycle one may only be admitted during the same year of cycle one recruitment; students may not be considered for cycle two as the implementing partner is expected to undertake program dissemination and seek new applications for cycle two.
- Admission into any major will take into consideration the academic requirements of the university, the program eligibility, and the justification provided by the student

behind their choice.

- Candidates may not be offered a scholarship for a major they did not explicitly select in their admission application, even if they qualify academically for it, unless proper career guidance and academic advising is done and properly internally documented during the selection process.
- Students must be enrolled as full-time students at all times. Part-time enrollment is not allowed.
- Students must make normal progress towards their graduation as per course plans set in the university catalogue. Delays are not allowable and will not be paid for under USP, except as detailed in the conditions to maintain the scholarship.

Applicants must clearly reflect in their application in a tabular format the total number of scholars expected to enroll under USP(8) including the expected number of scholars who will enroll under specific academic programs as per below. The breakdown per academic program is illustrative for budgetary purposes; final adjustments to the number of students under each program category may be made during actual implementation depending on the number of qualified students in the recruitment/selection phase, subject that at least the total number of expected students per cycle is met. As part of substantial involvement, USAID will review the final selection to ensure that cost-effective approaches were adopted to maximize to the greatest possible extent the number of accepted scholars.

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4	Total
Minimum number of expected students, at least: (must be at least met at all times)					
Total number of students in three-year academic programs:					
Total number of students in four-year academic programs, excluding the intensive year (must not exceed 25% of the total number of students for budgeting purposes):					
Total number of students enrolled in teaching diplomas (must not exceed 10% of the total number of students for budgeting purposes):					
Total number of students enrolled in a full-year university preparation, including intensive and remedial students (must not exceed 50% of the total number of students at all times):					

The applicant must also provide in the application its methodology, eligibility criteria and any cost implication on USAID for the following:

- Major and minor option taking in consideration that USAID will not cover the cost of additional semesters. The applicant must present as well if there are any cost implications on USAID for additional courses taken without extending the graduation date;
- Teaching diploma,
- Double majors,

The applicant must note that USAID will not cover the cost of any course that will not count towards the degree, such as, but not limited to pre-medical courses or the cost of any post-graduation academic such as internships, further studies, specific additional professional programs, graduate studies, colloquium preparation, registration in syndicates and orders.

1.3.c. Change of Major

The applicant must propose its methodology to advising and helping students to change their majors in cases when (1) the students explicitly request so, or (2) in case of poor performance when a change of major may help the student salvage its enrollment and continue its studies until graduation subject that the conditions to maintain the scholarship are respected. The applicant must take into consideration the following:

- Academic justification must be provided;
- The change of major can take place at any time during enrollment, within the limits of the university academic policies, subject that the change of major will not result in more than two wasted courses/academic year at the expense of USAID; the applicant must detail how the costs of additional wasted courses beyond the two per academic year will be covered. No other costs are charged to USAID for changing majors;
- The change of major is allowed between academic programs of similar or less duration of study; i.e., a three-year program student such as business cannot change its major to a four-year program duration like engineering; change of major from a shorter duration to a longer one is not allowable;
- The initial expected graduation date of the student must remain the same as it was initially set upon acceptance under USP and cannot be extended or delayed. If the student is changing from a four-year program to a three-year major, then this is allowable and therefore the revised expected graduation will be earlier than initially set;
- Students may only change majors to disciplines already approved by USAID

1.3.d. Memoranda of Understanding

Scholars must sign memoranda of understanding (MOU) with the university, including USAID's required certifications as directed by the Mission, that define fully and clearly their rights and their responsibilities under this program, including the detailed conditions to maintain the scholarship and management controls highlighted in sections henceforth. The applicant must present its methodology to disseminate the terms of the MOU to students, explain the conditions, secure students' signature and regularly remind the students on a yearly basis of applicable terms.

1.3.e. Exchange Semesters:

Exchange semesters or cross-registration among local host universities of USP will be discussed and explored through direct facilitation by USAID/Lebanon, through substantial involvement, based on prior experience and lessons learned. The applicable tuition must be the lowest one of either the cross-registration tuition rate or the upfront reduced rate to USAID USP. Students may benefit from a semester abroad during the

course of their studies only when they competitively secure such opportunity subject to the semester abroad not delaying their graduation. The students may receive USP financial support covering only tuition up to the level that would have been paid at the local host university under USP, housing and stipend up to the approved USP levels, and only in cases when travel happens during a mandated USP semester as per graduation plan. Other expenses associated with travel itself such as tickets, visas, travel insurance will not be paid out of USP. In case of travel, the student will not be allowed to seek employment irrespective of the number of hours of work per week. Only internships that are academically required may be allowed.

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Students may benefit from study abroad scholarships opportunities offered by the potential host university as long as students are not restricted or directed to these opportunities, the host university ensures that USAID funds will not be used to pay for such opportunity to the extent it is already paid for by another program, institution, donor or other entity, and the opportunity complies with all applicable terms and conditions of the USAID award. For example, the study abroad scholarship opportunity may be provided by sources in countries covered by Geographic Code 937 (refer to Geographic Code on page 37). Other sources may be considered on a case by case basis upon request and with appropriate justification by the implementing partner.

1.3.f. Preparatory Year

Under each cycle, USP offers the opportunity to scholars to enroll in preparatory language training that covers intensive language training and/or remedial classes to improve students' academic preparation prior to enrolling in their actual field of study.

The applicant must present in their applications their plans to test, assess and enable scholars to enroll in intensive language/remedial classes as per following; all below conditions should be considered as USP specific conditions:

- At least 17% tuition reduction must apply to all preparatory studies;
- Intensive language and remedial classes may be offered to scholars only when needed for up to the first two semesters of enrollment at University; the applicant may consider exceptions that must be clearly explained in the application while reflecting how exceptions will still uphold the fair and competitive process to all. USAID

reserves the right, through substantial involvement, to approve or reject any exceptions in the interest of USP.

- Scholars who fail to successfully complete the requirements of the intensive language/remedial classes within their set duration, i.e. one or two semesters, will be dismissed from the program;
- No additional remedial classes will be offered beyond this first preparatory year at the expense of USAID. Remedial classes may be offered as no-credit course with no associated tuition fees;
- Language placement exams to determine the language level of scholars in need of such preparation must be clearly delineated in the application along with the placement methodology. The applicant must present in a tabular format each preparatory level along with the corresponding number of required semesters for completion of this level and the basis for qualifying under each level such as test grades. The table must reflect also the applicable scores for USP(8) on English tests to qualify for each level, and what the scores are usually for regular non-USP scholars. Finally, the table must reflect also any exceptions or deviations for USAID's review and determination.
- For budgetary purposes only, the number of scholars who may be considered for the full preparatory year, irrespective of the duration of enrollment whether one semester or two or remedial, must not exceed 50% of the total number of proposed students per cycle. Applicants might budget for a higher percentage than 50% when they offer an upfront tuition reduction of at least 25%, subject that the total proposed percentage of students does not exceed 60% of the total expected to be enrolled. During actual implementation, the implementing partner(s) may offer the preparatory year to any percentage of students subject that the planned funds do not exceed those allocated to the preparatory budget, and left-over balances are coordinated with the AOR through substantial involvement.
- The applicant must delineate the support mechanisms that will be offered to potentially struggling scholars who may be at risk of failing their language preparation and eventually being dismissed from the program.

1.4 Comprehensive Scholarships

The USP(8) will offer the following scholarship package: a full undergraduate scholarship including, for each scholar for the entire expected duration of studies as per university course catalogue, housing or a lump-sum transportation allowance, a book allowance, a monthly stipend, medical insurance similar to regular students enrolled at the university, a laptop, and up to one preparatory year as needed. Scholars who do not receive housing must receive a transportation allowance.

1.4.a. Tuition

The actual tuition during implementation must be as follows:

- Tuition based on the 2017-2018 rates will be applicable for the duration of the program for all cycles;
- Annual tuition increases are not allowable on the Federal share and hence may be counted solely towards the cost-share;
- An upfront tuition reduction of 17% is required. Applicants to this NFO may apply

for Federal funds up to the set ceiling when they offer a 17% upfront reduction. For every additional 10% tuition reduction, other than the freeze of annual tuition increases, the applicant may apply for an additional one million US Dollar in Federal funding above the NFO ceiling. Illustratively, if the applicant offers an upfront tuition reduction of 27%, then the applicant may apply to the NFO award ceiling of \$23,000,000 + \$1,000,000. Applicants may not apply for more than \$2million above the NFO award ceiling. The final negotiated budget of successful applicants will depend on funding availability, after calculating the Federal share of the applicant that has the highest upfront tuition reduction. In all cases, USAID reserves the right to allocate the largest portion of funding during negotiation to the applicant that proposes the lowest average cost per student. The average cost per student is determined based on the total requested Federal funds divided on the expected number of students.

- Students and their parents must contribute yearly towards the tuition in a proportional amount to the average school tuition in grades ten, eleven and twelve, irrespective of what the source of payment was. Illustratively, if a student was enrolled at a private school in grades ten and eleven with an annual tuition of \$3,800, and then at a public school in grade twelve for a tuition of \$130, then the required parents' contribution to the tuition under USP will be $(\$3,800 + \$3,800 + 133)/3 = \$2,578$ per year. This contribution should be provided yearly for all academic programs including the preparatory year.
- ~~Students' whose school tuition exceeds 35% of the applicable tuition at the cheapest partner university are not eligible to benefit from USP, unless they were officially supported by a scholarship. Tuition subsidies made available to the children of teachers and administrators at schools are not considered scholarships.~~
- Students' whose school tuition exceeds approximately 35 to 40% of the applicable tuition at the cheapest partner university are not eligible to benefit from USP, unless they were officially supported by a scholarship. Tuition subsidies made available to the children of teachers and administrators at schools are not considered scholarships.

1.4.b. Housing and Transportation Allowance

As means of cost containment, only up to 80% of the proposed students per cycle will be eligible for university housing; the remaining 20% will be eligible for a lump-sum transportation allowance. The 80% should be considered as a cap not as a target and therefore accommodation will only be offered when needed.

The university housing must be offered in gender-segregated shared double rooms at university sponsored housing only, whether on-campus or off-campus, subject to university supervision, policies and security control. Housing in private apartments is not allowed. Housing will be offered during semesters of actual enrollment only and during the USP mandatory internship month(s). The university must offer housing that has the lowest rental rates. Discounts on housing will be favorably considered during the application financial evaluation and will count towards cost-effectiveness; a discount of at least 10% on housing is mandatory; the students must be allocated to the cheapest, decent dormitories at the university.

Housing priority will be given to scholars living far from campus. Therefore, scholars living in the same district as the university campus will have minimal priority for housing and will be considered first for transportation allowance.

The applicant must reflect in their application the following:

- The above conditions in their application, highlighting the expected number of scholars who benefit from university housing and those who will receive transportation allowance.
- The housing arrangement to accommodate USP scholars by presenting a detailed account of maximum capacity available on campus, current occupancy and expected vacancy. The applicant must demonstrate that their dorms can actually absorb the USP scholars without disruption to existing arrangements for any donor-funded scholarship programs;
- How the applicant will mitigate any parental concerns related to their children, particularly females, moving to the dorms, including measures during the recruitment campaign and pre-enrollment.
- Innovative approaches to calculating the transportation allowance. The allowance is suggested to be as per applicable Government of Lebanon (GOL) rates. Nonetheless, the applicant may propose an alternate path where pro-rated allowances are paid based on the commute distance thus making it fair to students who live far from campus and are not eligible for dorms. The rates must not deviate substantially from the GOL rates, and may not exceed twice the GOL rates per month at all times. The applicant may not propose a transportation allowance amount without due justification and analysis.

1.4.c. Stipends and Book Allowances

Stipends may be paid to USP scholars as following:

- Stipends must be paid only during semesters when scholars are actually taking classes;
- Stipends during the preparatory year may not exceed nine months per scholar irrespective of any exceptions or deviations that may be approved by USAID;
- Stipends must not exceed \$400 per month per scholar and will not be subject to any annual increase. If the applicant is proposing \$400, then they must provide in the application reasons justifying this request.
- All regular programs that do not require mandatory summers will be offered a nine-month stipend only, irrespective of enrollment during summers;
- Scholars who are required to complete an internship mandated by USP (e.g. for computer science students), rather than an internship required academically (e.g. for engineering or nursing students), are eligible to receive an additional one-month stipend during the month of this internship. This additional stipend is only allowable when the student fulfills the following combined requirements: is actually enrolled in an internship; the internship takes place prior to graduation, the internship is approved by the project management, and the internship takes place at a time when no other regular stipends are otherwise provided, such as during an unscheduled summer semester;
- Majors that require mandatory summers will be offered up to an eleven-month stipend only.
- Book allowances are offered twice per year for all programs that do not require mandatory summers; and up to three times per year for programs that require

mandatory summers. The book allowance provided for summer semesters must not exceed \$150. The book allowance may not exceed \$325 per regular semester (Fall or Spring).

1.4.d. Orientation and Integration

The applicant is expected to present their detailed approach to orient selected accepted students, prior to enrollment, to university life, city life and scholarship requirements, and provide adequate career guidance. The orientation may include crash technical workshops such as computer literacy, and should be a venue where students will explore options to change their majors within the USP allowable limits. The orientation must engage parents through a campus and dorms visit and other means to help parents understand the scholarship requirements, the source of funding from the American people, and mitigate student drop-out related to family reasons. This must be a standalone USP activity different from the usual orientation conducted for regular students, and other venues where parents may be invited to the campus such as the parents' financial aid interviews. The applicant must provide a detailed annex to the application presenting the various orientation sessions/workshops that will be offered defining the objective, approach and target audience.

In addition to the orientation session, the applicant must present its methodology to ensure that students' are well integrated at the university to avoid discrimination, against their socio-economic status or prevent being negatively labeled for the duration of their studies. The applicant is expected to present tools, resources and interventions that will help in integration, including tools to help struggling students adapt to campus life to prevent drop-out. Therefore, it is not enough to reference that students will be part of the clubs and campus life based on students' volition, a structured approach, including means to regularly monitor adaptation/integration issues is required.

1.4.e. Summer Semesters

Scholars must make normal progress towards graduation, within the regular Fall and Spring semesters. Enrollment in summer semesters is restricted as follows:

- Enrollment in summer semester to complete the preparatory year is not allowed.
- Tuition, housing, stipend and book allowances for all mandatory summer semesters required under any major provided that the applicant submits upon request academic justification that the summer semesters are mandatory as per university catalogue. Majors that have mandatory summers will not benefit from the additional summer semesters stipulated below. Mandatory summers mean that the course curriculum includes obligatory enrollment during a number of summer semesters such as engineering;
- Tuition and housing may be paid for one summer semester only, only when needed, for majors that (1) require less than 95 credits and (2) do not require mandatory summers (not counting the preparatory year credits) as per the university course catalogue. This must not be a blanket approval to allow all students to enroll in at least one summer semester. This is an optional leeway to enable potentially struggling students to complete their degree on time. Stipends and book allowances during this summer semester are not paid.

- Tuition and housing may be paid for up to a two semester maximum for majors that (1) do not require mandatory summers and (2) require more than 95 credits (not counting the preparatory year credits). Similar to the above, this is not a blanket approval; i.e. students must not enroll in two additional semesters automatically unless they have justified reason for that.
- If students elect or need to enroll in a summer semester beyond the ones offered above, then costs of such semester must be covered by the student.

1.4.f. Remaining Balances, Drop-outs and Replacements

The applicant must describe how remaining balances (cost-savings on both the Federal share and cost-share) will be regularly identified and communicated to USAID on a periodic basis, at least every six months as per reporting requirements. USAID will require the following order of priority to manage and efficiently utilize remaining balances which needs to be reflected in the application:

- 1- Enroll additional students during the same cycle, or in a subsequent cycle. Specific restrictions may not apply such as housing caps, geographic or gender restrictions; however, USAID reserves the right, through substantial involvement, to direct the selection of students through these savings. Remaining balances in the last cycle of enrollment must be identified and used in that last cycle only.
- 2- If funds are not sufficient to enroll additional students, the applicant must consider first if additional students may be enrolled by providing additional upfront tuition reduction that may count towards the cost-share, within the total expected cost-share level.
- 3- If funds are not sufficient to enroll additional students even post reasonable tuition reduction, then funding may be used to provide increased support to community service projects. Alternatively, funding may be used to support seed funding for entrepreneurial projects that will enable academically meritorious students who have at least a business plan and a feasibility study to open their business.
- 4- The last priority is providing housing to a limited number of students who are struggling with their daily commute.

The applicant is expected to present its approach to offer housing, additional funding to community service projects, or seed funding for entrepreneurship projects based on the above.

Remaining balances on the cost-share must be closely monitored at all times during implementation and should be used effectively towards advancing the program objectives.

Applicants must present their approach to mitigate drop-out and help students facing academic problems or students having non-academic issues including conduct on campus, psychosocial issues, adaptation and integration. The applicant must delineate its plan for replacing students who drop-out, taking into consideration that all eligibility criteria of the program must apply. Taking into consideration that this is a multi-cycle scholarship program, drop-outs must be replaced in the subsequent cycle of enrollment. After the last cycle of enrollment is completed, drop-outs may be replaced from the established waiting list for this last cycle, such as cycle four, allowing only students who may have been

enrolled at the Lebanese University to join USP, subject that they sit for a second round of interviews and financial aid assessment.

1.4.g. Student Employment

Students are allowed to seek part-time employment of their choice at any time during the project's lifetime subject that the conditions to maintain the scholarship are met. The implementing partner reserves the right to revoke this right of employment when the student performance, academically and in extra-curricular activities, is affected. Employment may be on campus or outside, with a duly vetted organization, and must not exceed 15 hours per week.

As means to reduce costs on the Federal Government, the applicant may consider requiring USP scholars to pursue employment as means to reduce the tuition on the Federal share, subject that students maintain their ability to actively participate in leadership trainings and civic engagement activities. In these cases, the applicant must present its approach to minimizing the requirements of leadership training and civic engagement, such as internships and certain trainings, to minimize the burden on students.

1.5 Leadership Training and Civic Engagement

The applicant must present its approach to implement, evaluate, collaborate with other partners, learn and adapt, to helping students develop their citizenship, become active members of their community and law abiding taxpayers, nurture their leadership, and improve their interpersonal skills. The applicant is expected to present its approach to offer at least the following:

1. Interpersonal skills training including illustratively team building, communication skills, public speaking, negotiation and networking, time management, stress management...
2. A structured approach to ensure that students are enrolled in university clubs, and in governance bodies as appropriate...
3. Civic engagement and advocacy workshops including at least workshops on: citizen duties and rights, taxation in Lebanon in general (income, building, VAT, inheritance...), income tax requirements, principles of transparency, accountability and governance, and essentials of the Lebanese public administration structure, and universal human rights... Workshops should include trainings that will build the students' ability to advocate, voice their concerns publicly, and join interest groups or NGOs.
4. Community service projects including project design and management workshops covering proposal writing, budgeting, and community assessment approaches. USP may offer at least \$1,000 per scholar to help students implement off-campus community service projects subject that these funds are not used to transfer commodities, procure restricted goods, or complete construction works. The projects must be implemented in the students' hometown in partnership with a civil society organization. When students are teaming up with another student and implementing together a joint community service project, then at least one student's community must be targeted. For budgeting purposes at this stage, the applicant is expected to account for \$1,000 per scholar. During actual implementation, this amount may be

increased subject to funding availability and management of remaining balances. Project income generated under community service projects, if any, must be recycled back into the project to expand its outreach. USAID will be substantially involved with the implementing partner during implementation to develop the required guidelines and applicable procedures to implement community service projects. CSPs will not be subject to USAID approval prior to implementation but must comply with the applicable guidelines.

5. ~~Voluntarism activities with the expectations that students complete at least sixteen hours of documented and approved voluntarism activities per month during semesters of enrollment.~~ Voluntarism activities with the expectations that students complete at least eight hours of documented and approved voluntarism activities per month of enrollment during the preparatory year and the first year, and at least twelve hours during subsequent years until graduation. These hours exclude training and workshop; only actual voluntarism activities must be counted.
6. Roundtables and seminars, offered outside of regular courses and usual seminars organized by the university, to help students interact with community and business leaders.

Collaboration - The applicant must present its approach also to collaborate with implementing partner(s) of the USP program, including means and approaches to engage currently enrolled USP scholars with the expected USP(8) students in a meaningful interaction.

Personal Growth - The applicant must delineate its approach to measuring the students' personal growth and development including potentially annual aptitude tests or standardized university tests, longitudinal studies comparing students' performance to other scholarships and regular students at the university, individual student development plans (IDP) that are regularly updated from the date of enrollment through graduation. The methodology must include also how individual trainings will be monitored and evaluated including pre and post-training tests illustratively.

USP Competition - The applicant must present its approach also to launch and manage a USP Competition for Excellence. The competition will be offered on an annual basis starting year two of implementation, and will be open to all USP enrolled scholars irrespective of their phases and cycles of enrollment. In-kind prizes are allowable only within the limits of offered in-country trainings to the competition winners, graduate studies preparation such as the cost of one round of test preparation (GMAT, GRE...), or job-hunting services. USAID will be substantially involved during implementation to develop the required guidelines and applicable procedures and unify the approach amongst all implementing partners.

1.6 Job Readiness Training

Career Orientation - The applicant must present its approach to provide career guidance to shortlisted candidates during the recruitment phase to help them finalize their choice of major prior to the final USP selection. The applicant is expected also to develop a plan to provide career guidance during the orientation session to help admitted students understand the prospects of their majors, and make last minute changes prior to the university's drop and add.

Job Readiness - As for the post-enrollment phase, the applicant must present its approach to implement, evaluate, collaborate, learn and adapt, to improve the job readiness of USP students and help them acquire the necessary skills for employment. The applicant is expected to present its approach to undertake the following:

1. Participation in job fairs at the university and locally organized fairs in Lebanon;
2. Structured career guidance counseling, including possibly testing and personality profiling tests using Myers Brigs type tests or other tools, to help students refine their choice of major during their first year of enrollment.
3. Specific workshops including interview skills, resume writing, effective negotiation, employee rights in Lebanon, and job search techniques.
4. Internships of at least 120 hours. Mandatory academic internships under programs such as engineering or medical laboratory will count towards USP. The applicant must present its plans to engage students particularly those who do not have a mandatory academic one. Each USP scholar is required to complete at least a 120-hour internship.
5. Soft skills training tailored to the need of the students depending on their majors, and identified based on labor market needs. The applicant must present its approach to identify students' interest and determine labor market needs through surveys or other data collection tools.
6. Entrepreneurship training covering at least business planning, feasibility studies, cash flows, balance sheets, basics of accounting, basics of procurement, and marketing essentials. The applicant must present an approach also to link students to established vetted microfinance institutions and for purposes of expanding their resources when needed.

Tracking - Additionally, the applicant must present its approach to:

- 1- Tracking students' employment post-graduation for at least two years post-graduation;
- 2- Evaluating students' achievements in finding jobs and comparing these achievements to other scholarships at the university, and to regular students at large.

1.7 Alumni Chapters

The applicant must submit its approach to enhance the work of existing USP alumni chapters, and/or establish vital links to these chapters if the university does not already have an established chapter. The approach should present a detailed methodology to increase enrollment of alumni, prepare beneficiary scholars for enrollment upon graduation, and organize relevant activities that aim at maximizing the interaction of the USP alumni with their enrolled peers. USAID may provide minimal funding per year to help the implementing partner organize events aimed at maximized interaction of students and alumni. Such events must contribute to career guidance, helping enrolled students better understand the labor market, networking and media outreach to promote USP in the media. The applicant must demonstrate how it will leverage the alumni chapter, or other tools, to monitor the post-graduation status of all previous USP graduates across all phases and cohorts, for the duration of the award.

2. Component 2: Refugee Scholarship Support

The applicant must address this component two in the same application as the preceding USP(8), under a distinct section.

The applicant should present its detailed approach to solicit, disseminate, recruit, shortlist, select through a two-tiered approach, and enroll refugees in Lebanon through scholarship support. Consistent with the USP(8) component, scholarships shall be for refugees with high financial need and academic merit enrolled in schools in Lebanon, including public, private and UNRWA schools. The refugees receiving the scholarship should obtain their legal residency permit within the first semester of enrollment under the program as condition to maintain the scholarship. The Higher Education Scholarship project will offer degrees and/or certificates for refugees who have completed secondary education in Lebanon during the year of recruitment for this scholarship. During implementation, component two, the refugee scholarship support, must be branded, disseminated to the public, and discussed with applicants as a separate standalone mechanism different than USP(8). This component will have its separate application process than USP(8), but that follows a similar pattern and requirements, and has its separate selection process and review. USP(8) and refugees scholarship support must be presented to the public as two separate scholarship programs, although their internal management and oversight is one.

Funding is currently available for one cohort; nonetheless additional funding through prospective years may be made available. The applicant must present its application on the basis of recruiting/enrolling at least one cohort, with the possibility of enrolling up to an additional three successive annual cohorts subject to funding availability.

2.1 Eligibility, Recruitment and Selection Processes

2.1.a Student Eligibility

This NFO is considering the recruitment, selection and enrollment of one pilot cohort to be enrolled over the first five years of implementation. Additional cohorts may be enrolled subject to availability of funding. The applicant is expected to provide an application for one cohort, and making an explicit statement in the technical application, and calculation in the financial application, to support one cohort, and up to an additional three successive annual cohorts should funding become available. During implementation, the partner will be required to enroll at least one cohort, and as many cohorts as directed by USAID through substantial involvement. The partner must recognize that in the absence of funding; only one cohort will be enrolled, even if the partner budgeted for more than a cohort in its application.

The applicant is expected to define the eligibility criteria, including administrative criteria, academic and financial ones to be eligible for the scholarship, and the number of students expected at least in the first cohort. The applicant must define the selection criteria that will be adopted for undergraduate degrees and those for certificate programs and how students will be guided to formal degrees versus certificate programs. Through substantial involvement, USAID will unify eligibility criteria amongst partners during implementation. The applicant should delineate also its approach to vetting and due diligence, a matter that will be refined through substantial involvement during implementation.

The applicant must define how academic and financial need assessment of refugees, especially for those who may not have the necessary paperwork, will be evaluated. Consistent with USP(8), all refugees must follow a similar, yet distinctly implemented, selection process

as USP(8), including separate financial aid interviews for students and parents and any additional measures to validate financial need that the applicant must propose.

USAID will be substantially involved in the final selection of the refugee cohort to ensure a gender balanced selection if possible. Refugees of all nationalities are eligible, except asylum seekers to the United States of America. No quotas will be set to any particular nationality. Scholarships will be awarded on a competitive basis based on clear eligibility and selection criteria.

2.1.b Enrollment Approach

The applicant must briefly indicate which undergraduate majors and certificate programs are offered to refugees keeping in mind that USAID desires majors that may help refugees support the economic and political development of their home-country upon return. Not more than 25% of the students should be enrolled in four-year programs. Similar to the USP(8) requirements, majors must have been established, with at least five annual cohorts having graduated with at least one functional class enrolled. The list of proposed majors must be annexed to the application including undergraduate degrees and certificate programs.

The first enrolled cycle, and any subsequent cycle subject to funding availability, will have:

- One year of recruitment, selection and enrollment;
- Up to one preparatory year if needed;
- Up to four academic years per cycle only, depending on the major of enrollment. Accordingly, five year majors may not be proposed, such as architecture. All students must be enrolled on a full-time basis and make normal progress towards graduation. Delays are not allowable and will not be paid for under the program, except as detailed in the conditions to maintain the scholarship.

Similar to USP(8), the applicant must delineate any opportunities for major/minor, teaching diplomas, and double majors, or other opportunities under certificate programs, keeping in mind that USAID will not cover the cost of any additional semester or courses that do not count towards the degree or any post-graduation activities.

The applicant must note and reflect in the application that all conditions pertaining to change of major, memoranda of understanding, exchange semesters are similar to the ones applicable under USP(8).

2.1.c Preparatory Year

The applicant must present in their applications their plans to test, assess, and enroll students in intensive language/remedial classes as per following:

- At least 25% tuition reduction must apply to all preparatory studies; taking in consideration that the applicant may budget up for two semesters to up to 75% of the students.
- Intensive language and remedial classes may be offered to students only when needed for up to the first three semesters during the first year of enrollment at University including Fall, Spring and Summer.

- Scholars who fail to successfully complete the requirements of the intensive language/remedial classes within their set duration will be dismissed from the program;
- No additional remedial classes will be offered beyond this first preparatory year at the expense of USAID. Remedial classes may be offered as no-credit course with no associated tuition fees;
- The applicant must present its approach to test and place students in intensive English presenting information in a tabular format reflecting the various levels of intensive English, the required scores for refugees compared to those in regular programs and USP(8), and the number of needed semesters.

The applicant should note that support mechanisms available under USP(8) to enable students to complete their preparatory year successfully must be similarly available for refugees.

2.1.d Comprehensive Scholarships

~~The Refugee Scholarship Support will offer a scholarship package similar to USP(8) including: a full undergraduate or certificate program scholarship including, per scholar for the expected duration of studies as per university course catalogue, housing or a lump-sum transportation allowance, books, a monthly stipend, medical insurance similar to regular students enrolled at the university, a laptop, and up to one preparatory year as needed. Scholars who do not receive housing must receive a transportation allowance.~~

The applicant, under the Refugee Scholarship Support, must offer a scholarship package similar to USP(8) including: a full undergraduate and certificate program scholarship including, per scholar for the expected duration of studies as per university course catalogue, housing or a lump-sum transportation allowance, books, a monthly stipend, medical insurance similar to regular students enrolled at the university, a laptop, and up to one preparatory year as needed. Scholars who do not receive housing must receive a transportation allowance. The applicant must make the degree and certificate programs available to refugees so the latter may elect which academic program to apply for.

The applicant must note that all the USP(8) conditions governing tuition, housing and transportation allowance, stipends and book allowances, orientation and integration, student employment, and summer semesters are applicable and must be followed under the refugee scholarship support component, except for the following:

- The expected tuition reduction should be at least 40%, similar to current reductions offered to some long-term residents in the country. This is intended to maximize the number of beneficiary refugees taking in consideration the magnitude of the refugee crisis in Lebanon. Higher tuition reductions are encouraged but will not be matched by additional USAID funding.
- The applicant may budget for up to 95% of students to receive housing rather than 80% subject that refugees will be offered housing only when needed and not as a complementary, automatic benefit;
- Stipends for refugees who require a residency permit may be increased to \$500 to allow the refugees to cover the costs of renewing their permits annually and to compensate for the possible lost family income.
- The orientation must include introduction to securing the residency permit and renewing it, university support provided to facilitate the residency permit, available psychosocial support throughout the duration of studies, and facilitation of adaptation

to the local context. The applicant must provide its clear approach to providing psychosocial approach especially to refugees from war-torn countries, support to mitigate drop-outs, and means to facilitate the acquisition of residency permits.

Any remaining balances, drop-outs and replacements will be managed in a similar manner as USP(8) taking in consideration that any additional students must be identified and enrolled under the same cohort only.

2.1.e Enrichment Activities

The applicant must note that all enrichment activities, including evaluation and assessment tools, available under USP(8) must be made available under the refugee scholarship component, with the following exceptions:

- Civic engagement workshops should not address issues of citizenship building but rather address human rights and refugee rights in Lebanon;
- Community service projects may be implemented in the refugees area of residence rather than hometown;
- The USP(8) competition is not available to refugees;
- The career guidance must address opportunities and constraints of employment in Lebanon and possibly in the region;

The applicant should present its approach briefly reflecting how enrichment activities will be implemented.

Tracking - Taking in consideration that refugees may return to their home-countries after graduation, the applicant must present its innovative approach to track students' achievements for at least two-years post-graduation.

C. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

3.1.a. Key Personnel:

This section applies to components one and two. The applicant must submit a clear management structure of the program, overseeing its two components, detailing functions and duration of tenure for each position. Key positions should be supported with at least a resume. The management plan must not create parallel structures within the host-university for monitoring the scholars. The applicant must provide the following within the application and its annexes:

- A detailed list of staff with their level of efforts and duration to serve on the program with starting and ending years, including all staff whether on the cost-share or the Federal one. The list must include as well their proposed position and tasks under this project;
- If the applicant is already implementing any previous phase of USP, the list above must include as well detailed information related to the level of effort and duration of engagement under each USP, irrespective of whether the person is key personnel or not, or on the USAID or cost-share.
- A detailed organizational chart for the program reflecting reporting lines. The structure may include one full time dedicated position to the program once the

scholars are enrolled. This dedicated person may be overseeing earlier phases of this program concurrently. Accordingly, the proposed expenditures related to this position should be cost effective.

3.1.b. Specific Management Considerations:

The applicant must take into consideration the following while developing their program management plans:

- Overall management costs including direct and indirect costs may not exceed eleven percent of the total USAID share of the total program funding covering all components. This does not apply to cost-sharing;
- Two positions are identified as key personnel subject to USAID approval through substantial involvement, irrespective of their source of funding:
 - A project director, (chief of party...) overseeing overall program direction and performance, preferably a full timer and capable of coordinating across all units and departments at the host university; and,
 - A monitoring, evaluation and learning officer (associate director, project coordinator or equivalent) in charge of monitoring students' performance and tracking relevant data who must be a full-time staff on USP.
- All positions must be filled by Lebanese staff only. Key personnel must demonstrate a track record of at least seven to nine years of continuous work in a related field to scholarship management, grants management, or educational projects oversight. The applicant must identify in the application who will serve as key personnel including the corresponding names, positions and resumes in the annexes;
- Budgeting and subsequent evaluations of personnel costs will be according to the detailed salary history for the past three years. The salary history is required in the cost application submission.
- Staffing during the first year of implementation when scholars are not recruited yet should be maintained to the minimum and duly justified.
- USAID will not cover the costs of any position related to academic activities, tracking of academic progress or advising students for instance, counseling them or supporting them academically. Accordingly, USAID will not cover the cost of any university designated personnel to provide academic advising for instance and follow up to the students. The program must reflect clearly how it will strengthen communication and exchange of information within existing departments to track students' progress, along the same ways that the regular merit scholarships are offered by the university. This includes strengthening communication and coordination amongst the program management, financial aid office, admissions, and registrar and admissions. USAID may cover the cost of student tutoring as appropriate and when needed only.

3.1.c Management Controls:

The applicant must present a clear management plan to ensure that the scholarships under both components are provided transparently and fairly on the basis of established eligibility criteria only. The management plan must include the applicant's control plan to prevent deviations, and suggested remedies to mitigate any such occurrence under the program and every cycle. In all cases, the applicant must note that the scholarship ceases immediately in case a management control case is identified.

Management Control Case	Control measures to prevent occurrence	Remedies to mitigate an occurrence
Vetting and due diligence issues		
Student fraud about financial need		
Student misrepresentation of any information in the application, and this information contributed to actually accepting the student as a USP scholar		
Deviation from established USAID selection guidance		
Nepotism/favoritism in the selection process, including selection committee members' bias...		
Conflict of interest to ensure that no selection committee member is advocating for any particular student applicant,		
External pressure along the lines of nepotism, political leverage, or family networks, to promote/select a certain student applicant		
Division in decision making internally when applying the conditions for sponsorship		
Other (please specify...)		

3.2.a Program Duration

The program duration will be up to nine (9) years to allow the recruitment of up to four student cohorts under USP(8), and at least one refugee cohort under component two. Additional refugee cohorts may be enrolled subject to funding availability. The program consists of up to four cycles whereby each cycle consists of the following:

- One year of recruitment, selection and enrollment. It is estimated that the first four years of the program are dedicated to outreach, dissemination, selection and enrollment, whereby each year targets one distinct cycle. For refugees, only the first year of implementation is dedicated to recruitment. Should funding be available, USAID will allow the recruitment of additional cohorts through substantial involvement.
- Up to one preparatory year,
- Up to four academic years per cycle only.

USAID/Lebanon reserves the right during implementation to shorten the activity duration in case funding is not available to enroll up to four student cohorts. In all cases, the duration will not exceed nine years.

3.3.a Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (ME&L)

Approach - The applicant must demonstrate how they will maintain close monitoring of the scholars under the two components to keep track of their achievements and challenges. The applicant must not create parallel structures to those that already exist within the university, but rather reflect how internal communication within the university for instance might be harnessed to better serve the monitoring purposes of the higher education scholarships

project. The approach must cover the various tools and processes that the implementing partner may use to monitor students at all times to prevent drop-outs and mitigate challenges including personal ones, psychosocial, academic, leadership engagement, and adaptation issues at the university. The approach must detail monitoring, evaluation and learning strategies to track students throughout their enrollment and up to two years post-graduation.

Longitudinal Study - The applicant must present its approach to collecting baselines, and annual aggregate data on each cohort to compare the achievements of the same cohort compared to the previous year, and compared to regular students at the university. The applicant should present its detailed approach to a longitudinal study to determine the:

- Likelihood of improved interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork, time management and leadership without the USAID scholarship;
- Likelihood of leadership engagement in the community without the USAID scholarship;
- Likelihood of high academic achievement without the USAID scholarship;
- Likelihood of improved employment prospects without the USAID scholarship.

3.3.b Expected Results:

Upon completion of the project, USAID expects at least the following:

- Up to four annual student cohorts of financially disadvantaged Lebanese school students, representing an appropriate gender-balance, and coming from diverse geographical locations will have been selected and received full scholarships to support their undergraduate education under USP(8).
- At least one refugee cohort of financially disadvantaged refugees legally residing in Lebanon. Subject to availability of funding, up to an additional three cohorts may be enrolled, which must be reflected in the application.
- All scholars will have engaged in extra-curricular activities geared towards leadership development and civic engagement;
- All scholars will have completed internships or USAID-focused research upon project completion;
- At least 70% of the scholars have demonstrated at least a sustained academic average throughout the project lifetime as reflected in their cumulative averages or GPAs. For the purposes of this exercise, “sustained” means that the cumulative average remains the same or within a four percent (4%) margin upwards or downwards compared to the initial average earned during the first regular semester;
- At least 80% of the scholars have cumulative averages upon graduation over 80%;
- At least 50% of the scholars will have assumed at least once a prominent position in their university based leadership activities by the time of graduation (such as club president or vice president, committee team leader, project manager);
- At least 95% of the scholars will have actively participated in the completion of meaningful community based service projects;
- At least 95% of the scholars will have graduated successfully within the project duration, and within their expected academic degree duration;
- At least 95% of the scholars will be prepared for the labor market through training and career guidance;

- At least 75% of the scholars must be employed or pursuing graduate studies within a period of three to six months post-graduation.

3.4.a Conditions to Maintain the Scholarship

- The applicant must present in their application, in a tabular format as per below details, the conditions for maintaining the scholarship applicable to all students, noting that USAID will unify through substantial involvement all conditions amongst all partners during implementation. These conditions will govern the scholarships during implementation and therefore USAID will not serve as basis to deviate from these conditions or approve exceptions. Students' dismissal will be governed by the conditions to maintain the scholarship and will not require USAID approval. USAID should be duly and proactively informed though.

Condition	Proposed Monitoring Tools	Terms	Illustrative Implication on Student	Cost Implication on USAID
Illustration: Academic Probation		2 semesters of repeated probation where the cumulative average falls under 70%	Student is dismissed from the program	...

All conditions related to at least the following must be presented in the table above: probation, drop in the cumulative average, drop in the major cumulative average where applicable, failure to participate in leadership engagement and/or leadership workshops, absence without justified cause, temporary voluntary suspension of studies, justified absence under specific dire conditions to be defined, disciplinary actions, course withdrawals and course failures not exceeding two courses per academic year on the USAID share, successful preparatory year completion, change of major, other deviations such as registering courses that do not count towards the degree, failure to complete the mandatory internship, failure to participate in the career preparation workshops, cessation of co-funding by the parents towards the tuition, and inability to renew the residency permit. Irrespective of the set conditions, all students must graduate during the project's lifetime and during their cycle of enrollment unless explicitly approved by USAID in specific cases as per final agreed upon conditions to maintain the scholarship during implementation.

3.5.a Outreach

In addition to a branding strategy and marking plan that will be finalized post-award, the applicant should present its approach to maximize outreach to the general public for the duration of the award, including disseminating success stories, and regularly promoting the scholarships through print and audio-visual media. The plan must include means to engage the scholarship recipients' parents in annual events. The applicant may specifically allocate a budget for outreach activities, subject that the requested funds do not exceed 1% of the total USAID funding. The applicant may contribute additional funding through cost-sharing.

3.6.a Institutionalization

The applicant is required to present its plan to institutionalize specific components of the USAID scholarships, to be determined by the applicant, and to be replicated and offered to regular students where possible, such as new trainings or workshops, specific graduation requirements, or new processes.

~~Applicants who have innovative institutionalization plans that demonstrate a multiplier effect and outreach to the largest number of regular students, and who offer tuition reduction above the NFO requirement by at least 5% under both components, may be eligible to budget for up to \$150,000 to support institutionalization activities. The applicant may request such funding in their cost application within the ceiling, while USAID reserves the right to make a determination of eligibility of such costs based on (1) the proposed institutionalization plan, (2) offered tuition reduction, and (3) funding availability. The final institutionalization plan will be finalized and approved with USAID during implementation as part of substantial involvement.~~

Applicants who have innovative institutionalization plans that demonstrate a multiplier effect and outreach to the largest number of regular students may be eligible to budget for up to \$150,000 to support institutionalization activities. The applicant may request such funding in their cost application within the ceiling, while USAID reserves the right to make a determination of eligibility of such costs based on (1) the proposed institutionalization plan, (2) offered cost-sharing, and (3) funding availability. The final institutionalization plan will be finalized and approved with USAID during implementation as part of substantial involvement.

Additionally, USAID allows applicants to budget up to \$25,000 for staff development and training specifically on matters related to USAID compliance, project management, monitoring and evaluation, and financial controls to manage Federal grants.

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

Subject to funding availability, USAID intends to provide **\$46,000,000** in total USAID funding over a **nine (9)** year period. The award ceiling for this program is **\$23,000,000**. However, the applicant proposing substantially cost effective approaches yielding very competitive and cheapest average cost per student may be eligible to receive up to an additional \$2 million above the award ceiling. The \$2 million are part of the **\$46,000,000** and therefore will be deducted from the applicant that demonstrates less cost effective approaches. Actual funding amounts are subject to availability of funds. The total funding is distributed as following:

- o Component one: \$38,000,000 (award ceiling \$19,000,000)
- o Component two: \$8,000,000 (award ceiling \$4,000,000, estimated at one million per year)

USAID intends to award up to **two (2)** Cooperative Agreements pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity.

USAID reserves the right to fund any one or none of the applications submitted.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The period of performance anticipated herein is **nine (9)** years. The estimated start date will be upon the signature of the award, on or about September 30, 2018.

3. Substantial Involvement

USAID anticipates having substantial involvement throughout the implementation of this cooperative agreement in accordance with ADS 303.3.11. The specific areas of USAID involvement will include:

- a. Approval of the recipient's annual implementation plans; and annual monitoring, evaluation and learning plans.
- b. Approval of specified key personnel.
- c. Collaborative involvement in selection of advisory committee members, active participation of USAID, through a designated USAID/Lebanon representative to the selection committee, in the selection of the scholarship students. Also, USAID/Lebanon AOR will actively participate in the selection process, including when using remaining balances, at large to ensure that this process is actually aligned with the gender and geographic distribution guidance and any other eligibility requirement provided. A USAID/Lebanon representative will also participate in other reviews, in addition to the selection, as clearly indicated in the program description. Other aspects related to further selections such as selecting replacement students or additional ones through cost-savings will be subject to USAID review and approval. Approval of the enrollment of up to four USP(8) cohorts and/or three additional refugee cohorts is subject to AOR approval based on funding availability and AO internal determination. If funding is not available

for additional cohorts, USAID reserves the right to shorten the program duration and enroll as many cohorts as planned funding allows.

- d. Approval of sub-grants and sub-awards. In accordance with 2CFR200.308(c)(6), unless described in the application and funded in the approved budget of the award, the sub-award, transfer or contracting out of any work under the award will require prior approval.
- e. Agency monitoring to permit specified kind of direction or redirection because of interrelationships with other projects, namely previous USP programs at the university and other current USP programs implemented by other implementing partners. This applies specifically to the following:
 - Investigating possible areas of collaboration amongst implementing partners in recruitment of students such as through joint school visits;
 - Finalizing the students selection criteria under both components, including illustratively nationality and type of eligible schools based on specific Mission Direction;
 - Unifying the admissions and financial aid application in terms of content and structure, and having a joint application amongst implementing partners. This includes as well aligning the two-tiered approach to ensure a similar timeline and no overlap in university test dates. It is expected that each component will have its standalone distinct unified application;
 - Unifying the financial need assessment under both components including at least the income threshold, supportive documentation, interview questions, interview process, tuition basis for subsidies calculation based on the tuition of the cheapest university;
 - Unifying the leadership assessment approach under both components, including at least the leadership questions in the admission application, composition of the interview panel, interview questions, interview scoring and any other related aspect;
 - Unifying the shortlisting approach under both components on the basis of clear scores and weights given to each selection criterion;
 - Unifying the vetting and due diligence approach for each component;
 - Unifying the messaging guideline amongst implementing partners that will serve as the recruiters' manual during school visits, including restricting messaging to promoting the USAID funding and scholarship only and prohibiting any promotion of the university or its activities;
 - Reviewing and approving any selection contingency plan related to Bacc-II results based on Government of Lebanon decisions, as applicable to both components,
 - Review and approve any changes to the list of proposed majors under USP(8) on the basis of tangible information and concrete studies related to the labor market, professional orders and employers;
 - Providing guiding principles governing the implementation of community service projects;
 - Unifying the terms of the USP(8) competition amongst the implementing partners;

- Unifying the general conditions to maintain the scholarship amongst implementing partners to ensure fair and similar treatment of all students under both components, including the sort of information provided to students through MOUs;
- Facilitating student exchanges amongst implementing partners by facilitating an institutional arrangement between host-universities, if it does not exist, to allow cross-registration or exchange. Individual cross-registration will not require USAID approval.
- Coordinating the organization of annual receptions and any other USP promotion as per terms of BSMP;
- Directing and approving the management of remaining balances (cost-savings) as per set priorities, and providing any additional selection criteria applicable to the additional students;
- Finalizing and approving the institutionalization plan;

4. Title to Property

Property title under the resultant agreement shall vest with the recipient in accordance with the Requirements of 2 CFR 200.311, except for student laptops that follow the below terms:

The title to property of laptops shall vest with the students at the beginning of the program as soon as the implementing partner procures these computers competitively, as per 2CFR200.31, only with the following specific conditions; otherwise laptops will be the property of the implementing partner, and will be borrowed by the scholars based on a loan agreement:

- 1) The transfer of title to the students should be documented; i.e., the implementing partner should prepare a delivery order and have it signed by each scholar confirming that they received the laptop. The delivery order should state the laptop brand, make and edition, serial number of the laptop, date of delivery, student ID and student full name. The delivery note may include points raised under bullets 5 and 6 below. The transfer of title happens is recommended to take place collectively, for instance during the orientation session at the university, and preferably witnessed by USAID.
- 2) The implementing partner must document in a program inventory the laptops, and updates this inventory on a yearly basis. The program inventory should include all details pertaining to the laptop such as brand, make, serial number, name of student owner.
- 3) The implementing partner ensures that scholars and their laptops are available to the AOR for purposes of data verification and end use checks. AOR will be making such end use check on a yearly basis or could be semester basis.
- 4) The implementing partner ensures that all laptops are properly marked with USAID identity throughout the duration of the program. As such, the implementing partner should provide the scholars with the corresponding USAID identity tags.

- 5) Scholars should graduate successfully from the program. A scholar who fails the program or drops from it should return the laptop back to the implementing partner.
- 6) The implementing partner ensures that scholars maintain and safe-keep their laptops. Scholars should be warned that if they sell, exchange or damage their laptop, the scholar has to reimburse its fair market price. This should be included in the student scholarship contract. The student scholarship contract should include as well tips to safeguard the laptop such as keeping it in a protective case, not leaving the laptop unattended, not leaving the laptop in the car exposed, not throwing the carrying case, etc.
- 7) Scholars should be warned against using their laptop to do cyber bullying, harassing others, accessing illegal or undesirable material, violating copyrights, plagiarizing, and violating applicable university policies related to computer/network access. These terms should be included as well in the student scholarship contract.
- 8) It is highly recommended that the implementing partner, as part of the laptops procurement, procures a maintenance contract to provide critical troubleshooting and support to the scholars once the laptops are transferred to them. USAID procured computers cannot have illegal software copies.

5. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for this program is 937 which includes the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source.

For accurate identification of prohibited sources, please refer to 22 CFR 228 and Automated Directive System (ADS) Chapter 310 entitled “Source and Nationality Requirements for Procurement of Commodities and Services Financed by USAID.”

6. Purpose of the Award

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support of the “Higher Education Scholarships” which is authorized by Federal statute.

The successful Recipient will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The Recipient will assume responsibility for administering Federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award. The Recipient using its own unique combination of staff, facilities, and experience, has the primary responsibility for employing whatever form of sound organization and management techniques may be necessary in order to assure proper and efficient administration of the resulting award.

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Applications should be from qualified U.S. or non-US entities, such as private, non-profit organizations (or for-profit companies willing to forego profits), including private voluntary organizations, universities, research organizations, professional associations, and relevant special interest associations.

USAID encourages applications from potential new partners.

USAID will accept a maximum of one (1) application per organization for consideration under this NFO.

All applicants must be registered in Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) and the System for Award Management (SAM) - <http://www.sam.gov/> - prior to submitting the application to be considered eligible. (Proof of registration must be submitted as part of the application.)

Interested parties may submit applications individually or in partnership with other institutions. Additionally, irrespective of the nature of the applicant, the host university (or universities) where the scholarships will be offered and where students will graduate from ultimately must meet the criteria detailed in the section below. An applicant, who may manage the entire program and place scholars at different higher educational establishments, may propose multiple host-universities that must fit the set criteria in the section below. Note that the scholarship may be implemented through two models:

1. Model One: A single applicant who will oversee the entire program, manage the recruitment and enrollment phase and register students at different host universities; or
2. Model Two: Different universities applying directly to recruit, select, enroll and then manage scholars registered on campus.

2. Type and Nationality of the Host University

The targeted host university (or universities) is expected to be: a leading top-quality, not-for-profit university in Lebanon that promotes tolerance, critical thinking, diversity, respect and freedom. The university should be a student-centered institution that provides quality academic and extra-curricular support to the student body. The host university must be officially accredited by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), and be accredited as an institution at large by an American accrediting body such as the Middle States Council for Higher Education (MSCHE) or New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) or other international accrediting agency that can evidence such accreditation meets requirements similar to American accreditation.

The applicant should include in its annexes proof of accreditation with MEHE and an American /international accrediting body with the due evidence and analysis.

3. Cost Sharing

Applicants may propose cost share in cash, in-kind, or a combination of both, and can include contributions from the university, local counterpart organizations and other donors (not other USG federal funding sources), as directed by the PD. Cost share refers to the resources an applicant contributes to the total cost of an agreement. The cost share must be verifiable from the recipient's records; for U.S. organizations it is subject to the requirements of 2 CFR 200.306, and for non-U.S. organizations it is subject to the Standard Provision "Cost Share"; and can be audited. Cost share is the portion of project or program costs not borne by the United States Government (USG). Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide innovative approaches to cost sharing and to provide detailed explanations in their applications. In addition to USAID funds, applicants are encouraged to contribute resources from their own, private or local sources for the implementation of this program. Applicants are required to allocate USG funding towards student scholarships and ancillary costs should be attributed to the cost share contribution. Illustrative examples for cost share include overhead, non-exempt taxes, general and administrative costs or any other costs. Applicants should review 2CFR200.306 in determining cost share contribution. Cost share will be considered as an element of cost effectiveness under USAID regulation 2CFR200 and of applicable USAID policy and procedure: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>

Cost sharing contributions should be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110 – Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations which can be found at the following link <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a110/a110.html#23>. Information regarding the proposed cost share should be included in the SF 424 and the Budget as indicated on those documents. The cost sharing plan must be discussed in the Budget Notes to the extent necessary to determine its feasibility and realistic access to the sources and funds.

All cost-sharing contributions must be allocable to scholarships, reasonable, allowable and verifiable through independent financial audits.

There is no pre-determined minimal cost-share percentage that is expected out of the total cost; nonetheless, the applicant must take into consideration the following:

- An upfront tuition reduction of at least 17% for all tuition charges including preparatory or language training semesters is mandatory under USP(8);
- An upfront tuition reduction of 25% for all tuition charges during the preparatory year, and 40% on undergraduate and certificate programs under the refugee scholarship support;
- The tuition for all programs and certificates must be based on the 2017-2018 rates only as per published rate online and applicable for the duration of the program for all cycles;
- Annual tuition increases are not allowable on the Federal share and hence may be counted solely towards the cost-share;
- For every additional 10% tuition reduction towards undergraduate degrees in USP(8), other than the freeze of annual increases, the applicant may apply for an additional one million US Dollar in Federal funding above the NFO ceiling.

Illustratively, if the applicant offers an upfront tuition reduction of 27%, then the applicant may apply to the NFO award ceiling of \$23,000,000 + \$1,000,000. Applicants may not apply for more than \$2million above the NFO award ceiling. The final negotiated budget of successful applicants will depend on funding availability, after calculating the Federal share of the applicant that has the highest upfront tuition reduction. In case all applicants propose a similar tuition reduction, then USAID reserves the right to allocate the largest portion of funding to the applicant that proposes the lowest average cost per student (calculated on the basis of dividing the total requested funds on the federal share over the number of expected students).

- Students and their parents must contribute yearly towards the tuition in a proportional amount to the average school tuition in grades ten, eleven and twelve, irrespective of what the source of payment was. Illustratively, if a student was enrolled at a private school in grades ten and eleven with an annual tuition of \$3,800, and then at a public school in grade twelve for a tuition of \$130, then the required parents' contribution to the tuition under USP will be $(\$3,800 + \$3,800 + 133)/3 = \$2,578$ per year. This contribution should be provided yearly for all academic programs including the preparatory year.
- ~~Students' whose school tuition exceeds 35% of the applicable tuition at the cheapest partner university are not eligible to benefit from USP, unless they were supported officially by a scholarship.~~
- Students' whose school tuition exceeds approximately 35 to 40% of the applicable tuition at the cheapest partner university are not eligible to benefit from USP, unless they were officially supported by a scholarship.
- Waiving of entrance exam fees for English proficiency or university admission that shortlisted applicants must take;
- Accounting for staff time dedicated to service the scholarship program at the various units including admissions office, financial aid, recruiters, academic advisors fillings special programmatic reports, student affairs, financial oversight, and administrative assistants,
- Possibly sharing unrecovered indirect charges under the NICRA since the cap on overall management costs out of the total project costs, including direct and indirect costs is set at eleven percent (11%).
- In-kind contributions towards the community service projects including reasonable third party contributions may be accounted for;
- Payment towards special academic cases such as having the university and/or student paying for failed or repeat courses as long as a policy is made public upon project start to ensure students are informed of financial burdens associated with failed courses;
- Covering direct operational costs that are not included within the NICRA such as utilities, or dedicated rent for the scholarship program.

Services that university staff usually provide, such as admissions, advising, orientation, clubs registration, registrar and transcripts recording, or faculty assignments to regular students as part of the university regular academic work, must not be charged towards the USAID share of the project. They may, however, count towards the cost-share. Only services that are provided uniquely to this project, and are not usually part of the university regular academic support, may be charged to USAID. All costs will be analyzed for cost containment, realism, and suitability to the

project. USAID recommends the cost-share of customs and VAT if they are not exempt from them.

The project will look at critical aspects related to cost containment; as such, typical services that are provided, for instance by the registrar, admissions, student affairs or financial aid offices, or any staffer assisting to that respect, shall not be charged to the USAID share of the program. The applicant must determine efficient ways to enhance internal communication amongst its established departments and offices that manage the scholarship program to acquire support services to the scholars at no cost from USAID. Parallel structures established to existing university infrastructure to serve the purposes of USP will be critically reviewed as part of the application evaluation and is a key determinant factor in making awards.

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

When making their submission, applicants must include all the required documents listed in the program description, section A of this NFO, and comply with all requirements in the subsequent sections pertaining to content and form of submission, format under the technical and cost applications, and required attachments.

1. Agency Point of Contact

Name: Mr. Aaron Ruble
Title: Agreement Officer (AO)
Street Address: US Consulate General Frankfurt - Giessenerstrasse 30
Email: aruble@usaid.gov
Phone and Fax numbers: +49-69-7535-2592

Name: Mr. Joseph Kawal
Title: Acquisition & Assistance Specialist
Street Address: USAID/Lebanon – U.S. Embassy Beirut
Email: kawalja@state.gov
Phone and Fax numbers: +961-4-542 600 ext. 4709

Questions and Answers:

All questions regarding this NFO should be submitted in writing to the attention of both Mr. Aaron Ruble and Mr. Joseph Kawal to the e-mail addresses listed above.

Questions regarding this NFO should be submitted electronically to the attention of both Mr. Aaron Ruble via email at aruble@usaid.gov and Mr. Joseph Kawal at kawalja@state.gov no later than Wednesday January 3, 2018 15:00 Beirut time to provide sufficient time to address the questions and incorporate the questions and answers as an amendment to this NFO. Any information given to a prospective Applicant concerning this NFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective Applicants as an amendment to this NFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicant.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

To facilitate the competitive review of the applications, applications must conform to the format prescribed below. Applications must be submitted only by e-mail in two separate parts: (a) technical, and (b) cost or business application as described in the cover letter of this NFO.

Electronic: E-mail submissions must include the following in the subject line:

- a. "Technical application under NFO 72026818RFA00003, submitted by: {name of Applicant Organization}"
- b. "Cost application under NFO 72026818RFA00003, submitted by: {name of Applicant Organization}"

Applications must be sent to the following e-mail addresses: aruble@usaid.gov and kawalja@state.gov

Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NFO. Failure to do so will be at the applicant's risk.

Each applicant shall furnish the information required by this NFO. The applicant shall sign the application and certifications and print or type its name on the Cover Page of the technical and cost applications.

A. TECHNICAL APPLICATION FORMAT

Technical applications should be specific, complete and presented concisely. Technical applications should take into account requirements of the program/activity and evaluation criteria found in this NFO. A lengthy application does not in and of itself constitute a well thought out proposal. Applications shall demonstrate the applicant's capabilities and expertise with respect to achieving the goals of this activity.

The application must be written in English and is limited to 35 pages for the main portion of the **Technical Application** and 60 pages for the **Annexes**. PAGES EXCEEDING THESE PAGE LIMITS WILL NOT BE REVIEWED. The application shall be typed on standard A4 sized paper with at least one inch margins and with each page numbered consecutively. Fonts used must not be less than 11 points.

The main portion of the **Technical Application** (35 pages maximum) must follow the following format:

1. Cover Page (1 page limit - not included in page limit)

The Cover Page must include: the NFO Number; the name of organization(s) submitting application; the name of a contact person and title or position with the organization; the e-Mail Address, telephone and fax numbers (if applicable), and the postal and physical addresses of the organization(s).

Applicants should also state clearly whether the identified contact person has the authority to negotiate on behalf of the applicant, or, if not, the contact information for the appropriate person with the authority to negotiate.

2. Table of Contents (not included in page limit) listing all parts of the technical application, with page numbers and attachments.

3. Acronym List (not included in page limit)

4. Executive Summary (counts toward the page limitation and must not exceed one page): Briefly describing: a) the proposed vision and goals of the program and b) the managerial approach that the applicant will bring to bear on the overall management of the program. State the bottom line funding request from USAID and the bottom line cost share secured from other sources (state the sources and amounts) for the proposed program.

5. Technical Application Body

The technical application body shall be organized using the same headings as the technical evaluation criteria and addressing the relevant sections in the Program Description. The sections are listed and further described below:

Technical Approach

- **Component 1: The University Scholarship Program – Phase Eight (maximum twenty pages):**
Applicants must describe in detail the proposed program and its technical approach; how they intend to achieve the program objectives and how the program will significantly contribute towards accomplishing the program's proposed expected results. The program description should include all technical aspects related to student's eligibility, vetting, program dissemination, selection and contingency plans, gender and diversity, enrollment approach and its subsections, the comprehensive scholarship and its subsections, the leadership training, the job readiness training and the alumni section.
- **Component 2: Refugee Scholarship Support (maximum seven pages):**
Applicants must describe in detail the proposed program and its technical approach; how they intend to achieve the program objectives and how the program will significantly contribute towards accomplishing the program's proposed expected results. The program description should include all technical aspects related to the refugees' part including eligibility, enrollment approach and enrichment activities, and how all other sections related to the Lebanese such as alumni, vetting and others will apply to the refugees.

Applicants must address all merit criteria listed under section E in the core of the technical application, except as mandated in the annexes and described in the "Attachments" section.

Program Management (maximum six pages)

- Applicants should detail their program management approach including the key personnel, the specific management considerations, the management controls and reflection on the program duration, the initial ME&L approach and quantified expected results based on the requested funding, the illustrative conditions to maintain the scholarship that will be unified during implementation, the outreach plan in support prospectively of the branding strategy and marking plan (the latter not required), and the initial institutionalization plan.

Past Performance (maximum one page)

The applicant must include a complete list of all U.S. Government, other donor, and/or privately funded contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, etc. received in the last three years involving programs similar to the program proposed in the application. The following for each award listed must be provided:

- a) Name and address of awarding organization or agency;
- b) Place of performance of services or program;
- c) Award number;
- d) Amount of award;

- e) Timeframe of award (start and end dates (month/year) of services/program);
- f) Name, current telephone number and e-mail address of a responsible technical representative of that organization or agency; and
- g) Brief description of the program, Results achieved.

USAID may contact references and use the past performance data, along with other information to determine the applicant's responsibility. The Government reserves the right to obtain information for use in the evaluation of past performance from any and all sources inside or outside the Government.

6. Attachments

Attachments should be titled (e.g. Annex A). Annexes must be used to support the detailed methodology in the application. The application must include the entire scope of information required in the program description of this NFO as per various sections above related to the program objective, approach, components one and two; annexes are only supportive documentation. The core of the implementation approach and methodology must be included in the application only.

Annexes must not exceed 60 pages. Annexes must be compiled in three distinct electronic batches (e.g. MS Word, PDF), with appropriate page numbers as per below list: a batch for technical documents, another for supportive documents and a final one for administrative papers. An additional twenty (20) pages may be allowed, in addition to the 60, for a detailed analysis of the accreditation status. Annexes must not include generic extracts from university publications such as academic catalogues or other research material without a detailed explanation of how this extract fits within USP and matches its requirements. USAID will not make interpretations based on the submitted publications' extracts; it is the responsibility of the applicant to clarify how these extracts support the USAID scholarships or any of its activities. Annexes must include at least the following in three separate batches, each batch representing one of the sets below only as follows:

a. Batch one: Technical Documents:

1. Draft illustrative work-plan for the duration of the project in a chart format such as GANTT or any tabular format that projects activities against a timetable reflecting specific milestones to be achieved covering both components. The work plan must not be in a narrative format;
2. Detailed timetable and/or work plan reflecting activities and milestones of the program dissemination and recruitment phases per cycle per component in a chart format;
3. Detailed list of orientation activities and workshops that will help the student integrate in student life on campus per cycle and per component;
4. Detailed timetable and/or work plan reflecting all structured leadership activities in a chart format. The list should highlight whether the organization responsible to complete the activity, whether the applicant or a proposed sub-awardee
5. Detailed list of leadership trainings and workshops including brief description and objective, number of workshops and expected participants per workshop in a tabular format, for each component. The list should highlight whether the organization responsible to complete the activity, whether the applicant or a proposed sub-awardee

6. Detailed timetable and/or work plan of the career counseling and guidance activities in a chart format per cycle for each component. The list should highlight whether the organization responsible to complete the activity, whether the applicant or a proposed sub-awardee;
7. Detailed list of program staff including, name, position, level of effort per month, number of months of service per year, number of years, justification for the position, level of effort under other USPs and duration of this level of effort, and an indication whether the staff is on the USAID-share or cost share,
8. Detailed organizational chart for the program reflecting reporting lines and actual names of the incumbents under each position; in addition to coordination lines with relevant departments and offices within the host university;

b. Batch Two: Supportive Documents:

1. Past Performance information, please refer to evaluation criteria related to the past performance submission
2. Resumes of key personnel not exceeding two pages per resume;
3. Letters of commitment from key personnel;
4. Letters of commitment from any proposed sub-awardee(s) reflecting very briefly the scope of their engagement, total budget allocation, any cost share contribution and duration of their engagement;

c. Batch Three: Administrative Documents:

1. Confirmation of the applicant's status (NGO, not for profit, 501(c)(3),
2. Confirmation of the University accreditation status with MEHE;
3. Confirmation of current accreditation status and analysis to reflect similar qualifications to American accreditation (an additional 20 pages may be allowed for the detailed analysis when actual American accreditation is not in place);
4. Confirmation of legal status of the host university(ies) if different than applicant (e.g. as a university, not for profit, NGO, etc.);
5. Detailed list of available dorms including their capacity and current occupancy and plan to house the scholarship recipients scholars over the duration of the program;

Note: If the full application exceeds 35 pages (excluding annexes) ONLY the first 35 pages will be considered when evaluating the application. Likewise, only the first 60 pages of the annexes will be evaluated.

B. COST/BUSINESS APPLICATION FORMAT

Cost/business sections of the application must be separate from the technical section. There is no page limitation to the cost/business submittal.

The Applicant must sign and submit the cost application standard form number SF-424 and SF-424A, 424B. Standard Forms can be accessed electronically at www.grants.gov.

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

- Pre-Award Certifications, Assurances and Other Statements of the Applicant/Recipient as stated in ADS 303.3.8 and are available on the following web-site <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>.
- Other submission requirements for applications submitted in response to this NFO.

Other submission requirements for applications submitted in response to this NFO consist of:

- **Detailed/itemized budget** in excel format, including all formulas, with a supportive budget narrative in MS word for each budget class category, including explanation of how costs were estimated, for both the requested USAID funding and proposed cost share amounts. More information on the detailed/itemized budget are provided further below in this same section.
Similar budget detail with narrative is requested for organizational partners teaming with the prime applicant.
- Current **Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)** negotiated between the applicant and a Federal agency (if available). If no NICRA the Applicant should submit the following:

Reviewed Financial Statements Report: a report issued by a Certified Public Account (CPA) documenting the review of the financial statements was performed in accordance with Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services; that management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation. The account must also state the he or she is not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the financial statements; or

Audited Financial Statements Report: An auditor issues a report documenting the audit was conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS), the financial statements are the responsibility of management, provides an opinion that the financial statements present fairly in all material respects the financial position of the company and the results of operations are in conformity with the applicable financial reporting framework (or issues a qualified opinion if the financial statements are not in conformity with the applicable financial reporting framework).

- If **program income** (i.e., cost recovery or other revenues generated under the award) is anticipated, the estimated amount should be reflected in the budget, and the Budget Narrative should describe how the program income is proposed to be treated, i.e., additive, cost sharing, or deductive, or a combination thereof (See 2CFR200.307).
- **Cost Sharing:** The Applicants should estimate the amount of cost-sharing resources to be mobilized over the life of the agreement and specify the sources of such resources, and the basis of calculation in the budget narrative. Applicants should also provide a breakdown of the cost share (financial and in-kind contributions) of all organizations involved in implementing the resulting Cooperative Agreement.
- **Evidence of responsibility, documents** the Agreement Officer can use to determine the Applicant:

- a. Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the award;
- b. Has the ability to comply with the award conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the Applicant;
- c. Has a satisfactory record of performance. Past relevant unsatisfactory performance is ordinarily sufficient to justify a finding of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance;
- d. Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics and is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a Cooperative Agreement under applicable laws and regulations (e.g., EEO).

Detailed/Itemized budget:

- The applicant must submit as well its methodology to calculate the tuition, under each component separately, in the budget reflecting the applicable USAID tuition per student per faculty, and all other applicable university costs compared to similar costs applicable to regular students at the targeted university. The cost breakdown shall demonstrate clearly where the applicant exercised the tuition reduction, and sustained tuition over the years without subjecting it to annual increases. **During negotiations, USAID will award more funding, up to an additional \$2million, to the university that provides the lowest average cost per student under component one. The average cost per student will be determined based on dividing the total amount of funding requested on the Federal share under component one on the total number of expected students under the same component.**
- The applicant must submit the **detailed budget** in an excel format, including itemized cost breakdowns, the necessary calculation formulas and due explanations. The budget and supporting budget narrative must include the detailed breakdown of sub-awards costs, if any. The budget must be broken down per year, for the entire nine years duration, and by major category (e.g. personnel, fringe benefits, contractual, transport, other direct costs, indirect costs). The excel worksheets **must not** contain passwords, locked cells, hidden spreadsheets or references to calculations not provided elsewhere in the application and **all calculations and formulas must be visible**.
- The **budget narrative** must be submitted in MS Word format articulating the rationales and details for each cost, including a detailed list of all applicable academic costs from the University catalogue including housing, tuition, social activities, internet and other charges.
- The **management structure** must be clearly reflected in the budget and budget narrative. Levels of effort per month, number of months and the monthly remuneration must be clearly reflected for all personnel including key and admin/support staff. The applicant must use the below format in the budget presentation for personnel costs.
A similar table must be provided reflecting the proposed level of effort (LOE) under this and duration of this LOE, and LOE of the proposed personnel under other USPs and duration of the corresponding LOE.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
						Year 1			Year 2		
Position	Number of staff	Proposed Monthly Salary	Number of months	% Level of Effort per Month	Total Amount per year	USAID Share	Cost Share	Total	USAID Share	Cost Share	Total
					=BxCxDxE						

The budget submission must include a **summarized Excel budget** as following (edit line items as necessary to reflect the budget submission):

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
	Unit	Unit Cost	Number of Units	Notes	Year 1 – USAID	Year 1 – Cost Share	Repeat for all years as per columns F, G and H	Total USAID across all years	Total Cost Share across all years
Management Costs									
Personnel (a)									
Personnel (b)									
Fringe Benefits									
Travel									
Supplies									
Sub-awards									
...									
Total									
Other Direct Project Costs									
Component One – Cohort One									
Tuition – Total									
Tuition – Intensive English									
Tuition – Major A (3 years)									
Tuition – Major B (3 years)									
Tuition – Major C (4 years)									
Tuition – Teaching Diploma									

...									
Stipends									
Books									
Housing									
Medical Insurance									
Transportation Allowance									
Leadership Workshops									
Career Guidance...									
USP competition									
Alumni activities									
Component One – Additional Cohorts under USP(8) subject to Funding Availability and USAID approval during implementation									
USP(8) Cohort number two (only totals are required); expected number of students =									
USP(8) Cohort number three (only totals are required); expected number of students =									
USP(8) Cohort number four (only totals are required); expected number of students =									
Component Two – One Cohort Only									
Tuition – Total									
Tuition – Intensive English									
Tuition – Major A (3 years)									
Tuition – Major B (3 years)									
Tuition – Major C (4 years)									
Tuition – Teaching Diploma									
Certificate programs									
Stipends									
Books									
Housing									
Medical Insurance									
Transportation Allowance									
Leadership Workshops									
Career Guidance...									
...									
Component Two – Additional refugee cohorts subject to Funding Availability and USAID approval during implementation									
Refugee Cohort two (only totals are required); expected number of students =									
Refugee Cohort three (only totals are required); expected number of students =									
Refugee Cohort four (only totals are required); expected number of students =									
Outreach (must									

not exceed 0.8%)									
Staff Development and Training									
Institutionalization cost									
Total									
...									
...									
Total Number of Students under component one									
Average Cost per Student under component one (divide the total USAID requested funds over total number of expected students)									
Total Number of Students under component two									
Average Cost per Student under component two (divide the total USAID requested funds over total number of expected students)									
Percentage of USAID Management Costs of Total USAID Funding Requested (must not exceed 11%)									
Percentage of Other Direct Costs of Total USAID Funding Requested									
Percentage of Sub-awards (USAID share) of Total USAID Funding Requested									
Percentage of Cost Share of total Project Costs									

The detailed breakdown of sub-awards should be presented in separate tabs.

The applicant must submit as well a **summary budget** that, if approved, will constitute the basis of the award budget exactly as per the following:

Budget Cost Category	USAID Share	Cost-Share
Personnel		
Fringe Benefits		
Transport		
Contractual		
Outreach		
Institutionalization		
Staff Development and Training		
Sub-Awards		
Equipment		
Supplies		
Sub-Total Management		
<i>Component one – USP(8) Cohort One</i>		
Training Allowances (i.e. stipends, transportation, and book allowances)		
Community service project funds		
Preparatory Year Tuition		
Other Direct Costs (student support costs)		
<i>Component one – USP(8) Cohort Two</i>		
Training Allowances (i.e. stipends, transportation, and book allowances)		
Community service project funds		

Preparatory Year Tuition		
Other Direct Costs (student support costs)		
<i>Component one – USP(8) Cohort Three</i>		
Training Allowances (i.e. stipends, transportation, and book allowances)		
Community service project funds		
Preparatory Year Tuition		
Other Direct Costs (student support costs)		
<i>Component one – USP(8) Cohort Four</i>		
Training Allowances (i.e. stipends, transportation, and book allowances)		
Community service project funds		
Preparatory Year Tuition		
Other Direct Costs (student support costs)		
Sub-Total Component One		
Component two – Refugee Scholarship Support		
Cohort one		
Cohort two, subject to funding availability		
Cohort three, subject to funding availability		
Cohort four, subject to funding availability		
Sub-Total Component Two		
Indirect Costs		
Total		
Project Income (TBD)	TBD	TBD

As per 2CFR200.308(e), USAID will restrict upon award the transfer of funds amongst direct cost categories, functions and activities in cases where such transfers exceed 10% of the total budget as last approved by the Agreement Officer.

Identified below are some of the common cost elements in a budget and the required information in the budget and budget narrative.

Salaries

Please provide a separate line item for each proposed individual and identify each by name, title and the level of effort and salary rate. Also include position descriptions for all employees and consultants whose compensation will be charged as a direct cost to the agreement. This information will also be required for sub-recipients. Also, specify key personnel and all essential personnel under the program and include CVs for all those individuals and salary history. Direct salaries and wages must be proposed in accordance with the applicant's personnel policies.

Salary history must be provided for every person engaged in the LOE, irrespective of whether charged on USAID or cost-share. The salary history must be provided irrespective of whether the person worked during the past three years at the applicant's organization or somewhere else, and irrespective of whether the person is key personnel or support. Compensation for

employees engaged in work on Federal awards will be considered reasonable to the extent that it is consistent with that paid for similar work in other activities of the non-Federal entity.

Fringe Benefits

Please provide a breakdown of proposed fringe benefits. This breakdown must include the rate at which the benefit is charged and the base against which it is applied. If the applicant has a fringe benefit rate that has been approved by an agency of the Government, such rate will be used and evidence of its approval must be provided. If a fringe benefit rate has not been so approved, the applicant will propose a rate and explain how the rate was determined. If the latter is used, the narrative must include a detailed breakdown comprised of all items of fringe benefits (e.g., unemployment insurance, workers compensation, health and life insurance, retirement, etc.) and the costs of each, expressed in dollars and as a percentage of salaries.

Travel and Transportation

Please provide the destination and duration of each trip, the individuals traveling, and a breakdown between the per diem and airfare and the basis for each. The application will indicate the number of trips, domestic and international, and the estimated costs. Specify the origin and destination for each proposed trip, duration of travel, and number of individuals traveling. Per diem must be based on the applicant's normal travel policies (applicants may choose to refer to the Federal Standardized Travel Regulations for cost estimates).

Other Direct Costs - Please provide a breakdown and explanation for all other direct costs (ODCs). This includes communications, report preparation costs, passports and visas fees, medical exams and inoculations, insurance (other than insurance included in the applicant's fringe benefits), equipment (procurement plan for commodities), office rent abroad, etc. The narrative will provide a breakdown and support for all and each other direct costs.

For Non-US local organizations, registered in Lebanon, if the applicant proposes expending more than \$300,000 of USAID funding during a single fiscal year of the applicant, the applicant must include funds within the budget to contract an audit. The average cost of an audit is approximately \$12,000.

Branding and Marking - The cost application must incorporate the estimated cost for Branding and Marking. Additional guidance is available in USAID Automated Directive System ADS 320 found at <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/320.pdf>.

Seminars and Conferences - The applicant will indicate the subject, venue and duration of proposed conferences and seminars, and their relationship to the objectives of the program, along with estimates of costs.

Monitoring and Evaluation Costs

Pursuant to ADS 203.3.5 Monitoring Activities/Implementing Mechanisms, recipients are required to provide in the budget a separate line item for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). The line item must include costs for data collection, analysis, and reporting. This line item will be tracked during implementation of the activity. The applicant will propose to USAID the most cost efficient and effective way to address this requirement.

Indirect Costs - The Applicant and/or Major Sub-Applicant that have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or the equivalent with USAID or another federal agency should include

indirect costs per the terms of their agreement. Local Institutions that do not have an indirect cost rate agreement with the US Government are not required to include one in the cost/business application submitted by local NGOs as prime Recipients or sub-recipients. Local institutions submitting applications should treat all indirect costs as direct costs.

Cost-Sharing - Please provide details on cost-sharing contributions that will be leveraged or provided for this program, including the donors, a narrative explanation of the contributions and other information allowing us to evaluate cost-efficiency of the proposed contributions, if any.

The proposed budget must provide cost estimates for the management of the program (including program monitoring). The Applicant should minimize administrative and support costs for managing the project to maximize the funds available for project activities.

C. DUN AND BRADSTREET UNIVERSAL NUMBERING SYSTEM (DUNS) NUMBER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (SAM)

All applicants [unless the applicant is exempted under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by USAID under 2 CFR 25.110(d)] is required to:

- 1) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application;
- 2) Provide a valid DUNS number in its application; and
- 3) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

USAID may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements 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.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be submitted no later than February 2, 2018 15:00 Beirut Time to the points of contact specified above.

As USAID is only accepting electronic submissions and there can be delays between when an application is received by the USAID servers and when that application is received in the submission email inboxes, an application is considered timely based on the time the application is received in the USAID/W servers.

Late or incomplete submission will be governed by the policies found at ADS 303.3.6.6 but the Agreement Officer reserves the right to reject any late or incomplete submissions.

E. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Construction under this award is not eligible for reimbursement.

Sub-awards to government organizations are not eligible for reimbursement.

USAID policy is not to award profit under assistance instruments. However, all reasonable, allocable and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the agreement program and are in accordance with applicable cost principle under 2 CFR 200 Subpart E. of the Uniform Administrative Requirements may be paid under the anticipated award.

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Applications will be reviewed in three steps:

- 1) A determination of eligibility to ensure that the applicant and host university meet the specified eligibility requirements based on the accreditation credentials presented and any detailed supportive analysis justifying how an international accreditation meets similar requirements to an American one as detailed under the Eligibility Requirement in Section C. Applications of ineligible applicants will not be evaluated further beyond step one.
- 2) A selection committee (SC) will review technical applications of **eligible** applicants/host universities, which will be reviewed in accordance with the selection criteria described below;
- 3) Thereafter, the cost/business applications of eligible applicants will be evaluated for general reasonableness, allowability, allocability, cost effectiveness, and realism. At his/her discretion, the AO may request feedback from the selection committee on the realism of proposed costs. **Cost effectiveness is significantly more important than technical factors though applicants are required to present at least a technically acceptable application.** USAID reserves the right to negotiate the final budget upwards or downwards based on the average cost of student to award more funding to the apparently successful applicant that has the most substantially competitive average cost per student.

The Government may make award on the basis of the initial applications received, without further discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. However, the Government reserves the right (but is not under obligation to do so), to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the activity description, budget, or other aspects of an application, or to negotiate the budget as per terms of the program description pertaining to cost-effectiveness.

An award will be made according to the selection criteria below.

(1) EVALUATION OF THE TECHNICAL APPLICATION

Technical applications will be reviewed by a selection committee based on the criteria described below to check compliance against acceptability standards, and set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated in a fair manner. To facilitate the review of

applications, applicants must organize the narrative sections of their applications in the same order as the selection criteria using the outline provided below:

An outline of technical evaluation criteria are presented as follows:

Instructions to Applicants and reference to what needs to be submitted	Merit Criteria	Points
Technical Approach – Overall evaluation criteria that will be used to determine strengths, weaknesses, significant weaknesses, and deficiencies		46
Component 1: The University Scholarship Program – Phase Eight (maximum twenty pages): Applicants must describe in detail the proposed program and its technical approach; how they intend to achieve the program objectives and how the program will significantly contribute towards accomplishing the program’s proposed expected results. The program description should include all technical aspects related to students’ eligibility, vetting, program dissemination, selection and contingency plans, gender and diversity, enrollment approach and its subsections, the comprehensive scholarship and its subsections, the leadership training, the job readiness training and the alumni section.	This section will review specifically if the overall proposed technical approach will reasonably produce the intended results in a specific timeframe as per terms of the NFO: 1- Extent to which the applicant will leverage existing resources (centers, tools, and personnel) to implement realistically all requirements to recruit, shortlist, enroll, follow-up and monitor, civically engage and prepare diverse Lebanese students for the labor market	26
Component 2: Refugee Scholarship Support (maximum seven pages) Applicants must describe in detail the proposed program and its technical approach; how they intend to achieve the program objectives and how the program will significantly contribute towards accomplishing the program’s proposed expected results. The program description should include all technical aspects related to the refugees part including eligibility, enrollment approach and enrichment activities, and how all other	2-Extent to which the applicant presents an approach consistent with the scholarships for Lebanese as per NFO terms, to recruit refugees of diverse nationalities, shortlist, enroll in degree and certificate programs as appropriate, follow-up and monitor, civically engage and prepare refugee students for the labor market	20

sections related to the Lebanese such as alumni, vetting and others will apply to the refugees.		
Technical Approach –Standards that will be checked for acceptability (YES: clearly mentioned in the application and meets the NFO requirements / NO: not included in the application, or was included in the application, but does not meet the NFO requirements or has omissions)		14
Refer to 1.1.a	The applicant respects the eligibility criteria for Lebanese students;	0.25
Refer to 2.1.a	The applicant respects the eligibility criteria for Refugee students;	0.25
Refer to 1.1.b and Section F – Reporting Requirements – Technical Deliverables	The applicant acknowledges the importance of vetting and due diligence and recognizes that a guideline will be developed for USAID approval during implementation;	0.25
Refer to 1.1.c – Engagement	The applicant presents a reliable approach to engaging with MEHE, select schools for visit, leverage currently enrolled USP scholars, and reach out to schools that were not visited;	0.25
Refer to 1.1.c – Guiding Principles	The applicant presents a dissemination approach that reaches out physically to the specified number of schools in the NFO and to a large number of eligible private schools including refugee related ones while adhering by the specific dissemination considerations;	0.5
Refer to 1.1.c – Application Package	The applicant proposes a feasible way to make the application available to applicants including physically, electronically and leveraging online platforms;	0.25
Refer to 1.1.c – Risk Mitigation Plan	The applicant offers a realistic risk mitigation plan;	0.25
Refer to 1.1.c – Shortlisting	The applicant adopts the two-tiered shortlisting approach as requested in the NFO and ensures a competitive and fair selection process for Lebanese;	0.5
Refer to 2; 2.1.a and 1.1.c - Shortlisting	The applicant adopts the two-tiered shortlisting approach as requested in the NFO and ensures a competitive and fair selection process for Refugees;	0.5
Refer to 1.1.a – Financial Need	The shortlisting approach relies on financial need review criteria similar to the ones proposed in the NFO for Lebanese;	0.5
Refer to 1.1.a – Financial Need and 2.1.a	The shortlisting approach relies on verifiable and reliable financial need review criteria for Refugees;	0.5
Refer to 1.1.d	The applicant acknowledges that a selection contingency plan will be finalized with USAID during implementation;	0.25
Refer to 1.2	The applicant will address gender and diversity considerations during outreach, recruitment, shortlisting and selection of the proposed student cohorts that requires USAID approval;	1
Refer to 1.3.a	The applicant proposes a choice of major and academic options (major/minor, TD and double majors) that is consistent with the NFO requirements;	1
Refer to 1.3.b and 2.1.b	The applicant respects the admission terms applicable to Lebanese and refugees;	0.25
Refer to 1.3.c	The applicant respects the terms of changing majors as	0.25

	per NFO;	
Refer to 1.3.d	The applicant will prepare and finalize a MOU prior to students enrollment;	0.25
Refer to 1.3.e	The applicant respects the terms of the exchange semester;	0.25
Refer to 1.3.f and 2.1.c	Students will be fairly and reliably assessed for and placed in preparatory year programs;	0.5
Refer to 1.4.a,b,c, e and 2.1.d	The scholarship package is consistent with the terms of the NFO (stipend, summer semesters, tuition including cost-sharing, housing and transportation, book allowances)	0.25
Refer to 1.4.d	The applicant will orient students after selection to the university life, city life, scholarship requirements and career guidance, including engaging the parents, and will ensure student integration after enrollment.	0.25
Refer to 1.4.f and 2.1.d	The applicant adopts a structured approach to managing remaining balances on both Federal and cost shares, mitigating and preventing drop-outs and secure replacements as per NFO;	0.25
Refer to 1.4.g	The applicant will allow students to work as per USAID funding requirements;	0.25
Refer to 1.5(1)	The applicant will offer interpersonal skills training to students as per NFO;	0.25
Refer to 1.5(2)	The applicant will offer a structured approach to ensure that students are enrolled in university clubs;	0.25
Refer to 1.5(3) and 2.1.e	The applicant will offer civic engagement and advocacy workshops as per NFO;	0.25
Refer to 1.5(4) and 2.1.e	Students will be engaged in community service projects as per terms of the NFO;	0.25
Refer to 1.5(5)	The applicant will engage students in voluntarism activities as per NFO;	0.25
Refer to 1.5(6)	The applicant will organize roundtables and seminars, offered outside of regular courses;	0.25
Refer to 1.5 – Collaboration	The applicant will collaborate with other implementing partners to involve students in civic engagement activities;	0.25
Refer to 1.5 – Personal Growth	The applicant proposes a realistic and feasible approach to measuring student growth	0.5
Refer to 1.5 – USP Competition and 2.1.e	The applicant will organize a USP competition abiding by the set principles in the NFO;	0.25
Refer to 1.6 – Career Orientation and 2.1.e	Students will be oriented during shortlisting and orientation to their majors	0.25
Refer to 1.6 – Job Readiness (1)	Students will be structurally engaged in job fairs;	0.25
Refer to 1.6 – Job Readiness (2)	Students will attend structured career counseling including testing such as Myers Brigs;	0.25
Refer to 1.6 – Job Readiness (3)	Students will attend specific job readiness workshops as per required topics in the NFO;	0.25
Refer to 1.6 – Job Readiness (4)	Students will engage in at least 120 hours of internships;	0.25
Refer to 1.6 – Job Readiness (5)	Students will benefit from tailored soft skills training matching the students' interest and identified labor market needs;	0.25
Refer to 1.6 – Job Readiness	Students will attend entrepreneurship training covering	0.25

(6)	all required topics in the NFO and will have the opportunity to link to microfinance institutions;	
Refer to 1.6 – Tracking and 2.1.e – Tracking	Graduates will be tracked for two-years post-graduation to follow-up on their employment;	0.25
Refer to 1.6 – Tracking and 2.1.e – Tracking	The applicant will evaluate student achievements in finding employments and compare them to their regular students and other scholarships' beneficiaries.	0.25
Refer to 1.7	The applicant will enhance the work of alumni chapters as per NFO	0.5
Program Management – Overall evaluation criteria that will be used to determine strengths, weaknesses, significant weaknesses, and deficiencies		25
Program Management (maximum six pages) -applicants should detail their program management approach (particularly 3.1.a) including the key personnel, the specific management considerations, the management controls and reflection on the program duration, the initial ME&L approach and quantified expected results based on the requested funding, the illustrative conditions to maintain the scholarship that will be unified during implementation, the outreach plan in support prospectively of the branding strategy and marking plan (the latter not required), and the initial institutionalization plan	The applicant proposes a cost-effective, clear and feasible approach relying primarily on existing resources within the host universities to coordinate, implement and follow-up on students throughout the entire steps from recruitment to post-graduation follow-up	15
Program Management – Standards that will be checked for acceptability (YES: clearly mentioned in the application and meets the NFO requirements / NO: not included in the application, or was included in the application, but does not meet the NFO requirements or has omissions)		10
Refer to 3.1.b	At least two Lebanese key personnel are identified as per NFO requirements	0.5
Refer to 3.1.b	Identified key personnel have the requisite capability and relevant experience to manage the two scholarship components	1
Refer to 3.1.c	Management controls are in place to ensure that the scholarships under both components are provided transparently and fairly on the basis of established eligibility criteria only.	1
Refer to 3.2.a	The program duration is properly set to nine years including four possible cycles of Lebanese and refugees subject to funding availability;	0.5
Refer to 3.3.a – Approach	The applicant proposed a system to constantly monitor students throughout their enrollment and up to two years post-graduation	2
Refer to 3.3.a – Longitudinal	The applicant presents a reasonable and feasible	1

Study	longitudinal study	
Refer to 3.3.b	The expected results are clearly identified, quantified and are set as per NFO	1
Refer to 3.4.a	The illustrative conditions to maintain the scholarship are reasonable for the purposes of the application	1
Refer to 3.5.a	The applicant will conduct outreach activities to regularly promote the project through various media tools	1
Refer to 3.6.a	The applicant proposes an initial illustrative reasonable institutionalization plan based on specific replicable scholarship components	1
Past Performance		15
Past Performance (maximum one page) The applicant must include a complete list of all U.S. Government, other donor, and/or privately funded contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, etc. received in the last three years involving programs similar to the program proposed in the application. The following for each award listed must be provided: a) Name and address of awarding organization or agency; b) Place of performance of services or program; c) Award number; d) Amount of award; e) Timeframe of award (start and end dates (month/year) of services/program); f) Name, current telephone number and e-mail address of a responsible technical representative of that organization or agency; and g) Brief description of the program, Results achieved. USAID may contact references and use the past performance data, along with other information to determine the applicant's responsibility. The Government reserves the right to obtain information for use in the evaluation of past	Extent to which the past performance records demonstrate successful past performance in achieving results on similar programs, including the past performance on its teaming partners. (a) The applicant must provide an information sheet for each grant, cooperative agreement, contract, or other programs that are similar to the program description in this application that have been performed by the applicant or by a member of the applicant's team over the past three years. In case the applicant does not have a relevant past performance record as an institution, the applicant is encouraged to submit relevant past performance details for any of its proposed sub-awardees, staffers, consortium members or resources. Past performance evaluation will be then undertaken based on this information. Applicants who do not have any past performance record will not be favorably or unfavorably evaluated against the past performance criteria. For each program listed, the applicant must provide the following information: - o Award number if applicable; - o Agency or entity providing the funding; - o A brief description of the program including, but not limited to, a discussion of the complexity /diversity of activities; - o Primary location(s) of implementing the activities; - o Duration of the program including start and completion dates; - o Dollar value of the program reflecting clearly amounts of donor funding and cost shares separately; - o Contact information for two persons from your funding Agency excluding names of the contract specialists assigned to this NFO, including name, job title, mailing address, phone numbers and e-mail addresses. USAID recommends that you alert the contacts that their	15

performance from any and all sources inside or outside the Government.	names have been submitted and that they are authorized to provide performance information concerning the listed awards if and when USAID requests it. If extraordinary problems impacted any of the referenced programs, provide a short explanation and the corrective action taken in this section of the Technical Application. The applicant must submit similar information related to the sub-awardees reflecting past performance over the past three years. (b) Performance information will be used for both the responsibility determination and best value decision. The applicant must submit information concerning its annual operating budget for the past three years. USAID may use performance information obtained from other than the sources identified by the applicant. USAID will utilize existing databases of past performance information and solicit additional information from the references provided by the applicant and from other sources if and when the Agreements Officer finds the existing databases to be insufficient for evaluating an applicant's performance. (c) If the performance information contains negative information on which the applicant has not previously been given an opportunity to comment, USAID will provide the applicant an opportunity to comment on it prior to its consideration in the evaluation, and any applicant's comment will be considered with the negative performance information. (d) USAID will initially determine the relevance of similar performance information as a predictor of probable performance under the subject award. USAID may give more weight to performance information that is considered more relevant and/or more current. The applicant's performance information determined to be relevant will be evaluated in accordance with the elements below: - o Quality of product or service, including consistency in meeting goals and targets; - o Timeliness of performance, including adherence to schedules and other time sensitive project conditions, and effectiveness of home and field office management to make prompt decisions and ensure efficient completion of activities; - o Business relations, addressing the history of professional behavior and overall business-like concern for the interests of the customer, including coordination among team members and developing country partners, cooperative attitude in remedying	
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	problems, and timely completion of all administrative requirements; - o Customer satisfaction with performance, including end user or beneficiary wherever possible; - o Effectiveness of key personnel, including appropriateness of personnel for the job and prompt and satisfactory changes in personnel when problems with clients were identified; and - o Cost control, including forecasting costs as well as accuracy in financial reporting, ensuring that unnecessarily expensive technical assistance is not used when lower cost advisors are adequate, and pacing the expenditure of level of effort such that deliverables and outputs can be produced within budget.	
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(2) EVALUATION OF THE COST APPLICATION

The cost application will be evaluated for cost effectiveness, cost realism and maximizing the use of cost share and the number of beneficiary students using USAID funding. Cost sharing contributions will be evaluated as well for cost effectiveness and realism including whether the applicant meets the NFO requirements for cost-sharing and whether they exceed these expectations. Cost applications will be evaluated for innovative cost containment methods that minimize the average cost per student, maximize the number of Lebanese and refugee students, and minimize management costs so that American taxpayers' money provides real support to direct beneficiaries. A realistic commitment to cost-share is generally viewed as enhancing the evaluated cost effectiveness of a program. Please note that cost share will be specifically tracked by USAID during program implementation to ensure compliance; it is subject to USAID audit as well.

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

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

2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The award will be administered in accordance with the following applicable standard provisions:

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

For non-U.S. organizations, this section must state that ADS 303mab, Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations will apply.

Full copies of the 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 are incorporated hereby by reference. Please refer to ADS 303.4 and 303.5 for guidance. However, the applicable standard provisions will be attached to the final award document.

3. Reporting Requirements.

A. Initial Budget, Work-Plan and Monitoring, evaluation and learning Plan

No later than sixty days after signature of the award, the recipient will finalize the initial work-plan submitted with the NFO and submit it for approval by USAID, based on the approved award, reflecting generally activities for the duration of the program, and covering distinctly the two components.

The recipient will draft as well a more detailed initial work-plan covering the first year of implementation, which will include all activities managed and implemented by the recipient under each component. The annual work-plan will clearly indicate specific tasks, milestones, and individual responsibilities for task completion. The work-plan will serve as a reference point for progress reporting, and updating the prospective annual work-plans. The work-plan will permit monitoring of the award performance and costs. It will also be one of the progress performance monitoring tools for USAID.

The initial work-plan, and subsequent annual work-plans, must include a section reflecting outreach activities that the implementing partner will undertake to promote the scholarships to the general public based on the terms of the branding strategy and marketing plan. This includes activities beyond the mandated year-one recruitment activities and must reflect all

sorts of initiatives to promote the activity publicly, including media tools, appearances and other means. The proposed activities' timing must be realistic and should factor the time required for USAID clearances of all public promotions.

The work-plan submission must include separately a detailed itemized budget, as per the approved award budget and per component, in addition to a pipeline analysis of costs already incurred and projections of costs for the life of the award reflecting detailed cost-shares and USAID funding separately and per year. The budget projection should reflect on a yearly basis the funds allocated for that specific year, actual expenditures, balance and yearly projection in the future. Remaining balances (cost-savings) must be clearly identified in the budget on the Federal and cost-share portions.

Along with the work-plan, the recipient must submit an initial draft monitoring, evaluation and learning (ME&L) plan to measure progress under the program. This plan must include, based on Mission guidance, at least a narrative explaining the monitoring, evaluation and learning process, reflect relevant indicators with the necessary targets for the life of project and for the first year of implementation, detailed performance indicators reference sheets (PIRS) and other requirements as stipulated in ADS 201. The prospective plans include baseline data about the students to be compared to yearly performance measures reflecting academic performance, leadership, employment and other critical aspects of the project. The ME&L plan must also include data collection reflecting key indicators at the host university, namely enrollment, retention, drop-out, employment, leadership engagement of regular students.

USAID/Lebanon will approve the work-plan and monitoring, evaluation and learning plan in writing after any outstanding issues are resolved. Amendments to these documents prospectively may be proposed by the recipient for approval by AOR, USAID/Lebanon.

B. Quarterly Progress Reports

During all years of programmatic recruitment and selection, thirty days after the end of each calendar quarter, the recipient must submit to the AOR, USAID/Lebanon, a detailed narrative progress report. It will reflect achievements in relation to agreed-upon benchmarks contained on the annual work plan and ME&L plan. The report will specify any problems encountered and indicate resolutions or proposed corrective actions. The report will list activities proposed for the next quarter. This type of report is required only for the recruitment, selection and enrollment phase of each cycle.

Starting with the end of the first quarter (typically in January) during the second year of implementation when the first cycle students are actually enrolled, thirty days after the end of each quarter, the recipient must submit to the AOR a progress report based on a specific format prepared in coordination with the AOR capturing relevant programmatic information and performance monitoring tools. The quarterly report includes a summarized reporting on each recipient scholar performance, registration status, courses, leadership engagement and other relevant aspects of the project. This report is intended to cover the progress of scholars under all cycles.

C. Accruals

USAID performs a quarterly accrual exercise at the end of each quarter; i.e. December 31, March 31, June 30, and September 30. Awardees are required to submit four quarterly accrual expenditures reports 15 days before the end of a quarter per year. The recipient must submit a spreadsheet showing cumulative disbursements and estimated (un-disbursed) accruals to the AOR, including supportive breakdowns as requested by the Mission.

D. Quarterly Financial Reports

Thirty days after the end of each calendar quarter, the recipient will submit to USAID/Lebanon a report on expenditures incurred during the report period and projected expenditures in the future. This will report against the Award(s) line items, and broken down in details.

The report must be supported with a detailed budget breakdown reflecting USAID expenditures and cost share per line item for the quarter and the projected costs in the future.

With each quarterly report, the recipient, if and when using a letter of credit, must report:

- Whether advance funding was requested,
- And, if such funding was liquidated in a timely manner.

E. Semi-Annual Progress Report, Pipeline Analysis, and Annual Work Plan and Monitoring/Evaluation Plan

Applicable only to the post-recruitment/selection phase under each cycle and per component: Starting with the second year of implementation, when the students are actually enrolled, the recipient must submit two semi-annual detailed narrative progress reports per year. These progress reports will reflect progress in relation to agreed-upon benchmarks contained in the award and approved annual work-plan and monitoring, evaluation and learning plan. The report will specify any problems encountered and indicate resolutions or proposed corrective actions. It will be a comprehensive narrative report summarizing the previous period activities and accomplishments using the annual work plan as a starting point and will serve as the tool by which USAID/Lebanon monitors the performance of the recipient. The semi-annual reports will reflect on recent achievements and overall project accomplishments under each component. The first report is due by end of April of the second implementation year.

Detailed supporting documentation reflecting progress, challenges and achievements of the various activities and program activities must be annexed to the report. The report and all supporting documentation must be submitted no later than one month post expiry of two successive quarters. The semi-annual report must also include information related to ME&L tracking of the longitudinal study, specific indicators pertaining to regular students at the university and as defined by USAID (enrollment, graduation employment, drop-outs...) and baselines collection and follow-up. This must include as well information related to post-graduation follow-up as applicable.

The report will include status of project activities and will summarize services delivered and progress towards achieving results identified in USAID's Program Areas. It will document both successes and failures of the interventions, and discuss reasons for shortcomings and

recommend actions to overcome them. For each action, the Recipient will designate responsible parties and establish a timeframe for completion. The recipient shall use the approved work plan as basis to track activities.

The implementing partner shall provide a detailed line item Excel budget reflecting unit costs and total costs as per approved award budget, per component, and presenting the initial budget, actual expenditures, and balance per year and per share separately, for the duration of the award. This budget will serve as basis to discuss issues related to management and use of any remaining balances (cost savings). The planned use of remaining balances must be approved by the AOR, and the AO if needed as per terms of 2CFR200.308. At least two reports are required per implementation year starting in July of the first implementation year: the first report is due with the first selection proposal made to USAID, typically in July of the first implementation year, identifying any potential remaining savings resulting from the enrollment of the student cohort. The second semi-annual projection is due by end of April with the technical semi-annual report. These reports are due annually for the duration of the implementation. USAID may request additional reports as needed, particularly in cases of student drop-outs or student replacement, or interim student selection proposals. With every submission to USAID, the implementing partner must present to USAID an efficient and effective approach to manage remaining balances on the Federal and cost shares, especially towards enrollment of additional scholars.

Annually, the recipient must update no later than thirty days after the beginning of each implementation year, a detailed work plan reflecting activities that will be completed during the forthcoming year. The work plan is subject to the AOR review and approval.

Moreover, the recipient is required to update, for AOR approval, a detailed monitoring, evaluation and learning plan annually no later than thirty days after the beginning of each implementation year. The Annual Monitoring, Evaluation and learning plan will be a stand-alone document. The monitoring, evaluation and learning plan provides output, outcome and impact indicators for all activities detailed in the work plan, including life of project indicators and targets as per USAID expected outcomes. Accurate measurement is done against established targets and baselines, which the recipient provides to the AOR by the beginning of each implementation year. The monitoring, evaluation and learning plan must include a detailed performance indicator reference sheet as per approved USAID templates, in addition to the MEL narrative and indicators table.

F. Recipient Exit Plan

Ninety days prior to the Award completion date, the recipient will submit to USAID a detailed plan describing all actions to be completed to demobilize the recipient's operations. The plan will designate dates for all actions. It must include, in addition to the demobilization plan, the following:

- Inventory of all commodities procured under the project and a plan for their
- Any plans to support students who failed to graduate on time during the project lifetime including cost-sharing schemes to support student graduation post project expiry;
- Plans to follow-up on alumni activities;
- Plans to follow-up on employment and enrollment in universities for graduate studies.

G. Recipient Final Reports

Ninety days after the award completion date, the recipient will submit final technical and financial reports to the AOR which will summarize implementation progress of all tasks including achievements of strategic results, shortfalls, problems, recommended solutions, and recipient's assessment of Award work completed. The report shall provide quantitative representation. Accomplishments will need to be documented by data and not anecdotal reporting for the analysis and conclusions must be submitted with the final report. However, success stories must be duly documented and reported. The final report will include also information related to the post-graduation follow-up and monitoring.

H. Project Materials

The Recipient must submit copies to AOR, USAID/Lebanon of all materials developed under the project specifically for the USAID scholarship recipients through the USAID or cost-shares. These materials include but are not limited to: training materials, conference reports, project promotional material, media outreach and publications, and leadership workshops training outlines. The materials to be submitted and the number of copies and language shall be identified in the Annual Work-plans. Project material pertaining to each implementing year must be submitted with the second semi-annual report each year.

I. AID TRACKER

The partner will be using according to USAID/Lebanon requirements the Aid-Tracker for tracking, disaggregating, and reporting on all program activities. This online system uses the latest technology and provides a transparent way for USAID and program partners to review the immediate and long-term impact of activities. The system must be updated in a timely manner as per Mission requirements.

J. Branding Strategy and Marking Plan (BSMP)

The Recipient must finalize and submit to USAID/Lebanon for approval the BSMP within 30 days after award. The BSMP must ensure public outreach to promote USP beyond the direct university audience and the listed outlets in the draft BSMP, and beyond the first year of implementation. The BSMP must present a structured approach to regularly engage with the media, general public and disseminate stories and appropriate content to the general public. The BSMP must include means to engage the scholarship recipients parents in meaningful events organized under the award.

K. Technical Deliverables

– Financial Need Assessment Guideline

Ninety days post-award, the Recipient must submit to USAID a draft document that includes at least the proposed income threshold to be used for financial need assessment under each component, the supportive documents required for financial need assessment, the sort of interviews to both students and parents separately, the interview questions to determine financial need, the tuition basis to determine the educational subsidy based on the tuition of the cheapest university. The document will be reviewed by the AOR, edited and aligned to present a uniform approach amongst all implementing partners, and ultimately approved by the AOR. This document shall

become the main reference guiding the implementation of the financial need assessment of USP applicants.

- Leadership Potential Assessment Guideline

Ninety days post-award, the Recipient must submit to USAID a draft document that includes the proposed leadership questions under each component in the admissions application, the composition of the interview panel, the interview questions and the interview scoring methodology. The document will be reviewed by the AOR, edited and aligned to present a uniform approach amongst all implementing partners, and ultimately approved by the AOR. This document shall become the main reference guiding the implementation of the leadership assessment of USP applicants.

- Final Selection Scoring

Ninety days post-award, the Recipient must submit to USAID a draft document that proposes the weights and scores that will be attributed to each selection criterion under each component, namely: school grades, university testing grades, interview results, Bacc-II results, financial need, and any other considerations. The document will be reviewed by the AOR, edited and aligned to present a uniform approach amongst all implementing partners, and ultimately approved by the AOR. This document shall become the main reference guiding the implementation of the leadership assessment of USP applicants.

- List of Majors and Supportive Documents

Ninety days post award, the Recipient must submit a detailed list of majors, as approved in the award, in addition to plans to conduct any proposed labor market survey in specific fields of study, and plans to hold discussions with professional orders.

Within eighteen months of implementation, the Recipient must submit the results, findings and recommendations of the initial labor market surveys if any, the conclusions from the discussions with the professional orders and any recommendations affecting the proposed list of major. The AOR will review and make a final determination of allowable majors under USP. The recipient is encouraged to complete the labor market survey within the first nine months of implementation.

- Vetting and Due Diligence Guideline

Ninety days post-award, the Recipient must submit to USAID a draft document that proposes the vetting and due diligence approach under each component to be adopted for both students and, as applicable, their parents/legal guardians. The document will be reviewed by the AOR, edited and aligned to present a uniform approach amongst all implementing partners, and ultimately approved by the AOR. This document shall become the main reference guiding the implementation of vetting and due diligence for the duration of the activity.

- Recruiters Guideline

Sixty days post-award, the Recipient must submit to USAID a draft document that proposes the guideline that governs the messaging school recruiters will adopt under each component. The document will be reviewed by the AOR, edited and aligned to present a uniform approach amongst all implementing partners, and ultimately

approved by the AOR. The guideline will be used to train recruiters prior to school visits to ensure consistent messaging and a unified approach to addressing public inquiries and questions. The guideline will include controls to ensure that the school visits are restricted to promoting the scholarships and USAID funding only and are not used as tools to promote the university or any of its regular programs.

– Institutionalization Plan

Within one year of implementation, the Recipient must finalize the institutionalization plan initially and illustratively proposed in the application in response to the NFO, that will provide all details needed to institutionalize specific components of the scholarship, including any intended use of possible funding provided by USAID for that purpose. The document will be reviewed, edited and ultimately approved by the AOR.

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

Questions and comments related to this NFO must be submitted electronically to the attention of both Mr. Aaron Ruble via email at aruble@usaid.gov and Mr. Joseph Kawal at kawalja@state.gov no later than January 3, 2018, 15:00 Beirut Time using the following format for the email subject line: “72026818RFA00003, Higher Education Scholarship Program (HES)” – [Name of Organization] Questions/Comments”.

SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

Partner Vetting Pre-Award Requirements

(a) USAID has determined that any award resulting from this assistance solicitation is subject to vetting. An applicant that has not passed vetting is ineligible for award.

(b) The following are the vetting procedures for this solicitation:

- (1) Prospective applicants review the attached USAID Partner Information Form, USAID Form 500-13, and submit any questions about the USAID Partner Information Form or these procedures to the agreement officer by the deadline in the solicitation.
- (2) The agreement officer notifies the applicant when to submit the USAID Partner Information Form. For this solicitation, USAID will vet [insert in the provision the applicable stage of the selection process at which the Agreement Officer will notify the applicant(s) who must be vetted]. Within the timeframe set by the agreement officer in the notification, the applicant must complete and submit the USAID Partner Information Form to the vetting official. The designated vetting official is:

Vetting official: -----

Address: -----

Email: lebanonaidvsu@usaid.gov (for inquiries only).

- (3) The applicants must notify proposed subrecipients and contractors of this requirement when the subrecipients or contractors are subject to vetting.

Note: Applicants who submit using non-secure methods of transmission do so at their own risk.

(c) Selection proceeds separately from vetting. Vetting is conducted independently from any discussions the agreement officer may have with an applicant. The applicant and any proposed subrecipient or contractor subject to vetting must not provide vetting information to anyone other than the vetting official. The applicant and any proposed subrecipient or contractor subject to vetting will communicate only with the vetting official regarding their vetting submission(s) and not with any other USAID or USG personnel, including the agreement officer or the agreement officer's representatives. The agreement officer designates the vetting official as the only individual authorized to clarify the applicant's and proposed subrecipient's and contractor's vetting information.

(d) (1) The vetting official notifies the applicant that it: (i) is eligible based on the vetting results, (ii) is ineligible based on the vetting results, or (iii) must provide additional information, and resubmit the USAID Partner Information Form with the additional information within the number of days the vetting official specified in the notification.

(2) The vetting official will coordinate with the agency that provided the data being used for vetting prior to notifying the applicant or releasing any information. In any determination for release of information, the classification and sensitivity of the information, the need to protect sources and methods, and the status of ongoing law

enforcement and intelligence community investigations or operations will be taken into consideration.

- (e) Reconsideration: (1) Within 7 calendar days after the date of the vetting official's notification, an applicant that vetting has determined to be ineligible may request in writing to the vetting official that the Agency reconsider the vetting determination. The request should include any written explanation, legal documentation and any other relevant written material for reconsideration.

(2) Within 7 calendar days after the vetting official receives the request for reconsideration, the Agency will determine whether the applicant's additional information merits a revised decision.

(3) The Agency's determination of whether reconsideration is warranted is final.

- (f) Revisions to vetting information: (1) Applicants who change key individuals, whether the applicant has previously been determined eligible or not, must submit a revised USAID Partner Information Form to the vetting official. This includes changes to key personnel resulting from revisions to the technical portion of the application.

(2) The vetting official will follow the vetting process of this provision for any revision of the applicant's Form.

- (g) Award. At the time of award, the agreement officer will confirm with the vetting official that the apparently successful applicant is eligible after vetting. The agreement officer may award only to an apparently successful applicant that is eligible after vetting.

Partner Vetting

- (a) The recipient must comply with the vetting requirements for key individuals under this award.
- (b) Definitions: As used in this provision, "key individual," "key personnel," and "vetting official" have the meaning contained in 22 CFR 701.1.
- (c) The Recipient must submit within 15 days a USAID Partner Information Form, USAID Form 500-13, to the vetting official identified below when the Recipient replaces key individuals with individuals who have not been previously vetted for this award. Note: USAID will not approve any key personnel who are not eligible for approval after vetting. The designated vetting official is:

Vetting official: -----

Address: -----

Email: lebanonaidvsu@usaid.gov (for inquiries only).

- (d) (1) The vetting official will notify the Recipient that it—
(i) Is eligible based on the vetting results, (ii) Is ineligible based on the vetting results,
or

- (iii) Must provide additional information, and resubmit the USAID Partner Information Form with the additional information within the number of days the vetting official specifies.
- (2) The vetting official will include information that USAID determines releasable. USAID will determine what information may be released consistent with applicable law and Executive Orders, and with the concurrence of relevant agencies.
- (e) The inability to be deemed eligible as described in this award term may be determined to be a material failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the award and may subject the recipient to suspension or termination as specified in the subpart “Remedies for Noncompliance” at 2 CFR part 200.
- (f) Reconsideration: (1) Within 7 calendar days after the date of the vetting official's notification, the recipient or prospective subrecipient or contractor that has not passed vetting may request in writing to the vetting official that the Agency reconsider the vetting determination. The request should include any written explanation, legal documentation and any other relevant written material for reconsideration.

(2) Within 7 calendar days after the vetting official receives the request for reconsideration, the Agency will determine whether the recipient's additional information merits a revised decision.

(3) The Agency's determination of whether reconsideration is warranted is final.
- (g) A notification that the Recipient has passed vetting does not constitute any other approval under this award.
- (h) When the prime recipient anticipates that it will require prior approval for a subaward in accordance with 2 CFR 200.308(c)(6) the subaward is subject to vetting. The prospective subrecipient must submit a USAID Partner Information Form, USAID Form 500-13, to the vetting official identified in paragraph (c) of this provision. The agreement officer must not approve a subaward to any organization that has not passed vetting when required.
- (i) The recipient agrees to incorporate the substance of paragraphs (a) through (i) of this award term in all first tier subawards under this award.



AMENDMENT 1 to NFO # 72026818RFA00003 - Higher Education Scholarships (HES)
Program and Answers to Applicants' Questions

1. Page 23, under leadership training and civil engagement, bullet number five:

Question: From our experience, sixteen hours of volunteering and community service per month is excessive. We propose reducing this to eight hours per month that would include training and workshops. This would only be implemented in the first one and second years. Afterwards, scholars will be heavily involved in their community based projects.

Answer: The NFO is amended as follows:

Delete the following in Section 1.5 Leadership and Civic Engagement, bullet five on page 23, "Voluntarism activities with the expectations that students complete at least sixteen hours of documented and approved voluntarism activities per month during semesters of enrollment."

And replace with the following:

"Voluntarism activities with the expectations that students complete at least eight hours of documented and approved voluntarism activities per month of enrollment during the preparatory year and the first year, and at least twelve hours during subsequent years until graduation. These hours exclude training and workshop; only actual voluntarism activities must be counted."

2. Page 27, under Comprehensive Scholarships

Question: The applicant will be suggesting a degree program for the cohorts of refugees. Therefore, certificates will not be relevant to scholars. Will this affect the evaluation of the proposal?

Answer: The Refugee Scholarship Support is expected to include two academic options: (1) regular undergraduate degrees and (2) certificate programs. Therefore, the applicant must make degree and certificate programs available to refugees so the latter may elect which academic program to apply for.

The NFO is amended as follows:

Delete the following in Section 2.1.d "Comprehensive Scholarships" on page 27:

The Refugee Scholarship Support will offer a scholarship package similar to USP(8) including: a full undergraduate or certificate program scholarship including, per scholar for the expected duration of studies as per university course catalogue, housing or a lump-sum transportation allowance, books, a monthly stipend, medical insurance similar to regular students enrolled at the university, a laptop, and up to one preparatory year as needed. Scholars who do not receive housing must receive a transportation allowance.

And replace with the following:

The applicant, under the Refugee Scholarship Support, must offer a scholarship package similar to USP(8) including: a full undergraduate and certificate program scholarship including, per scholar for the expected duration of studies as per university course catalogue, housing or a lump-sum transportation allowance, books, a monthly stipend, medical insurance similar to regular students enrolled at the university, a laptop, and up to one preparatory year as needed. Scholars who do not receive housing must receive a transportation allowance. The applicant must make the

degree and certificate programs available to refugees so the latter may elect which academic program to apply for.

3. Page 8, under Financial Need, third bullet

Question: Over the last few years, the applicant has determined based on data from the World Bank and the Ministry of Labor an eligibility threshold of \$30,000 total income per family per year. This was implemented in USP seven. Does the applicant still need to hire a consultant to perform an additional student eligibility study?

Answer: As per NFO requirement under section Financial Need on page eight, the implementing partner is required to engage post-award the services of an expert consultant to determine and justify the total family income threshold.

4. Page 10, Application Package and Shortlisting sections

Question: The applicant feels that it is not be realistic to ask for two essays written in English from all applicants. Such essays could be demanded from short-listed applicants only, who would qualify to enter into sophomore (not intensive English).

Answer: The NFO does not specify that the leadership and choice of major justifications must be written in English though this remains an option if the student desires so. A language determination is made only for the third essay reflecting the financial status which must be in Arabic. Additionally, the NFO specifies that the essays must be written by “all students applying to the program.” The applicant must determine in its response to the NFO how the essays will be used in shortlisting as per NFO requirement page 10: “How preliminary shortlisting based on the initial admission and financial application review including review of the three essays is completed.”

5. Page 10, Application Package and Shortlisting sections

Question: Is USAID asking to include the essays as part of the overall scoring for admission to the program?

Answer: Please refer to the question above. The applicant must determine in its response to the NFO how the essays will be used in shortlisting as per NFO requirement page 10: “How preliminary shortlisting based on the initial admission and financial application review including review of the three essays is completed.” USAID is not making any preferential determination concerning scoring the essays at the initial selection stage as the applicant must determine how the essays fit in the overall shortlisting and selection process.

6. Page 16, under Exchange Semesters

Question: In light of the fact that students may benefit from a semester abroad during the course of their studies on condition that they graduate on time and that they receive USP financial support covering only tuition up to the level that would have been paid at the local host university under USP and housing and stipend up to the approved USP levels, and in light of the fact that other expenses associated with travel itself such as tickets, visas , travel insurance will not be paid out of USP, the question is “ can eligible students benefit from study abroad scholarships offered by the potential host university, and can they spend the study abroad semester in a university

located in the European Union where the potential host university has a number of exchange agreements?

The NFO is amended as follows:

Delete the following in Section 1.3.e “Exchange Semesters” on pages 16-17:

“Exchange semesters or cross-registration among local host universities of USP will be discussed and explored through direct facilitation by USAID/Lebanon, through substantial involvement, based on prior experience and lessons learned. The applicable tuition must be the lowest one of either the cross-registration tuition rate or the upfront reduced rate to USAID USP. Students may benefit from a semester abroad during the course of their studies only when they competitively secure such opportunity subject to the semester abroad not delaying their graduation. The students may receive USP financial support covering only tuition up to the level that would have been paid at the local host university under USP, housing and stipend up to the approved USP levels, and only in cases when travel happens during a mandated USP semester as per graduation plan. Other expenses associated with travel itself such as tickets, visas, travel insurance will not be paid out of USP. In case of travel, the student will not be allowed to seek employment irrespective of the number of hours of work per week. Only internships that are academically required may be allowed.”

And replace with the following:

“Exchange semesters or cross-registration among local host universities of USP will be discussed and explored through direct facilitation by USAID/Lebanon, through substantial involvement, based on prior experience and lessons learned. The applicable tuition must be the lowest one of either the cross-registration tuition rate or the upfront reduced rate to USAID USP. Students may benefit from a semester abroad during the course of their studies only when they competitively secure such opportunity subject to the semester abroad not delaying their graduation. The students may receive USP financial support covering only tuition up to the level that would have been paid at the local host university under USP, housing and stipend up to the approved USP levels, and only in cases when travel happens during a mandated USP semester as per graduation plan. Other expenses associated with travel itself such as tickets, visas, travel insurance will not be paid out of USP. In case of travel, the student will not be allowed to seek employment irrespective of the number of hours of work per week. Only internships that are academically required may be allowed.

Students may benefit from study abroad scholarships opportunities offered by the potential host university as long as students are not restricted or directed to these opportunities, the host university ensures that USAID funds will not be used to pay for such opportunity to the extent it is already paid for by another program, institution, donor or other entity, and the opportunity complies with all applicable terms and conditions of the USAID award. For example, the study abroad scholarship opportunity may be provided by sources in countries covered by Geographic Code 937 (refer to Geographic Code on page 37). Other sources may be considered on a case by case basis upon request and with appropriate justification by the implementing partner.”

7. Page 18, under Tuition

Question: What is the operational definition of the cheapest “partner university” as students whose school tuition exceeds 35% of the applicable tuition at the cheapest partner university are not eligible to benefit from USP, unless they were supported by a scholarship. Does it mean by partner universities only the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Lebanese American University (LAU) as they are at present the only two universities receiving and managing USP grants?

Answer: References made throughout the NFO (such as pages 8, 18, 40) to partner universities indicate the ultimate successful recipients of the Higher Education Scholarships Program awards and does not refer to AUB or LAU. This is a full and open competition and partner universities are not determined yet. The type and nationality of the partner university are determined on page 38. The cheapest university will be determined based on the average student tuition at each university under relevant majors for similar course load.

8. Page 25, under the Refugee Scholarship Support

Question: The applicant needs clarification regarding the two-tiered recruitment process of the refugee scholarship program.

Answer: The two-tiered approach must be consistent with the one required under the USP(8) and specific under “Shortlisting” on page eleven pertaining to having at least 40% of applicants sitting for university testing, and then at least 20% of the total applicants who have successfully taken the test be invited to interviews.

9. Page 18 under Tuition and Page 40, under Cost-Sharing

Question: Parent contribution: Would the grant amount be considered after deducting this amount from the student’s tuition OR this amount could be allocated fully/partially to be as Federal share OR the applicant’s share?

Answer: Under the program at large, the parents’ contribution must be deducted from the Federal share after the applicant reduces upfront the tuition. The parents’ contribution cannot be counted as part of the university’s upfront tuition reduction, but it may be counted as third party cost-share contribution. Therefore, the applicant must apply first the tuition reduction and annual tuition freeze based on the applicable rate of 2017-2018, then the parents contribute to reduce the USAID share further. Illustratively, if the tuition is \$20,000, the average parents’ contribution estimated at \$2,578 and the upfront reduction offered by the applicant at 17% is \$3,400, then the USAID share is $\$20,000 - \$3,400 - \$2,578 = \$14,022$.

NFO Amendments

Page 8, under Financial Need

The NFO is amended as follows:

Delete the following in Section Financial Need on page 8, first bullet:

“Parents must not earn any substantial subsidy to cover for educational cost. For purposes of the USP, parents must not earn an educational subsidy that covers at least 15% of the annual university tuition fee at the cheapest partner university. The tuition basis will be determined, similarly amongst implementing partners, in coordination with USAID through substantial involvement.”

And replace with the following:

“Parents must not earn any substantial subsidy to cover for educational cost. For purposes of the USP, parents must not earn an educational subsidy that covers illustratively approximately 15% of the annual university tuition fee at the cheapest partner university. The tuition basis and the final subsidy percentage will be determined, similarly amongst implementing partners, in coordination with USAID through substantial involvement.”

Page 18 under Tuition

The NFO is amended as follows:

Delete the following in Section 1.4.a Tuition, last bullet:

“Students’ whose school tuition exceeds 35% of the applicable tuition at the cheapest partner university are not eligible to benefit from USP, unless they were officially supported by a scholarship. Tuition subsidies made available to the children of teachers and administrators at schools are not considered scholarships.”

And replace with the following:

“Students’ whose school tuition exceeds approximately 35 to 40% of the applicable tuition at the cheapest partner university are not eligible to benefit from USP, unless they were officially supported by a scholarship. Tuition subsidies made available to the children of teachers and administrators at schools are not considered scholarships.”

Page 40 under Cost-Sharing

The NFO is amended as follows:

Delete the following in the second bullet:

“Students’ whose school tuition exceeds 35% of the applicable tuition at the cheapest partner university are not eligible to benefit from USP, unless they were officially supported by a scholarship.”

And replace with the following:

“Students’ whose school tuition exceeds approximately 35 to 40% of the applicable tuition at the cheapest partner university are not eligible to benefit from USP, unless they were officially supported by a scholarship.”

Page 33, under Institutionalization

The NFO is amended as follows:

Delete the first paragraph on page 33:

“Applicants who have innovative institutionalization plans that demonstrate a multiplier effect and outreach to the largest number of regular students, and who offer tuition reduction above the NFO requirement by at least 5% under both components, may be eligible to budget for up to \$150,000 to support institutionalization activities. The applicant may request such funding in their cost application within the ceiling, while USAID reserves the right to make a determination of eligibility of such costs based on (1) the proposed institutionalization plan, (2) offered tuition reduction, and (3) funding availability. The final institutionalization plan will be finalized and approved with USAID during implementation as part of substantial involvement.”

And replace with the following:

“Applicants who have innovative institutionalization plans that demonstrate a multiplier effect and outreach to the largest number of regular students may be eligible to budget for up to \$150,000 to support institutionalization activities. The applicant may request such funding in their cost application within the ceiling, while USAID reserves the right to make a determination of eligibility of such costs based on (1) the proposed institutionalization plan, (2) offered cost-sharing, and (3) funding availability. The final institutionalization plan will be finalized and approved with USAID during implementation as part of substantial involvement.”