



**Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Children with Disabilities
(NOFO No. 72038623RFA00003)
Responses to NOFO Questions
April 6, 2023**

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

1. USAID cites the 2022 Rapid Assessment of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Children with Disabilities multiple times in the NOFO. Can USAID make the document public?

OR

The NOFO cites a Rapid Assessment of FLN for CwDs that USAID/India conducted in July 2022. Can this document be made available?

OR

Could you provide access to the Rapid Assessment of FLN for CwDs report mentioned in the NOFO that was carried out by USAID/India in July 2022? It doesn't seem to be available online.

USAID Response : The copy of the Assessment is included as attachment A to this document.

2. Are implementers expected to work with the National Institutes or university for pre-service teacher education?

USAID Response : This will depend on the approach taken up by the implementers to achieve the goals stated in the Program Description of this NOFO. However, teacher capacity building within established institutional structures will remain a significant component of the activity.

3. The NOFO indicates that construction activities will not be authorized (pg. 26) under this activity but lists the following illustrative indicator: “number and percentage of

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mainstream government preschools and schools with improved physical access to LwD”. The wording of this indicator suggests that the activity would include improvements to the school’s physical infrastructure. Can USAID clarify or further explain what “physical access to LwD” means.

OR

Section D.5.d Funding restrictions refers to – “Construction will not be authorized under this grant”. How does this restriction relate to provision for works on (physical) accessibility in schools or other educational infrastructure?

OR

Section D.5.d – Funding restrictions - how does this restriction relate to provision for works on (physical) accessibility in schools or other educational infrastructure?

USAID Response : This indicator is eliminated to avoid confusion.

4. Please clarify the wording for the following illustrative indicator “Number of functional facilities (preschools, schools, health centers) for timely detection of delays and disabilities”. Does this mean the number of facilities where personnel have increased capacity to detect delays and disabilities? Or does this mean simply that number of facilities being used to conduct early detection screening (even if done by external organizations).

USAID Response : Please note that the indicators are only proposed ones and the final ones will be arrived at during the co-creation process depending on the design and implementation approach. The core idea remains the improvement in timely detection of delays and disabilities and how exactly the applicant intends to achieve this result will depend on their technical approach.

5. The NOFO description implies in several places that the activity is intended to strengthen the mainstream public education system but the anticipated results and indicators focus solely on LWD. Is it USAID’s intent that the activity focus only on LWD and not measure changes for other children in the public education school settings?

USAID Response : Since the activity will be implemented in mainstream schools and preschools, all children will be benefited by the universal design for learning. The measurement of results however, will focus on the benefits achieved for Learners with Disabilities (LwD).

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6. As early intervention is a strong contributor to meeting developmental and learning milestones for CwD, does USAID have a preference for a particular detection tool?

AND

Does USAID prefer a particular assessment methodology such as an adapted EGRA, EGMA as part of this project?

USAID Response : No. It is for the applicant to recommend the particular tools justifying how these can meet the requirements stated under the objectives in the Program Description under this NOFO.

7. To support improved teaching practices, are both pre-service and in-service teacher training to be considered under the project or only one of them?

USAID Response : This is for the applicant to recommend in line with their technical approach.

8. Beyond generating awareness on the various government schemes supporting CwD, is the project mandated to ensure community linkage with social protection schemes?

USAID Response : This is for the applicant to recommend in line with their technical approach.

9. Provide a focused description pertaining to the organizational technical approach and positioning addressing specifically the challenges and goals detailed in Section A of the NOFO. - To what extent of detailing is required in the Concept Paper on the Technical Approach and Positioning. More specifically, the information could be condensed into schematic diagrams and infographics (is this acceptable since there is a page limitation?)

USAID Response : Yes, “condensed into schematic diagrams and infographics” is acceptable as long as the technical approach meets ALL of the requirements in Section D.4 of the NOFO.

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10. On page 21 it states that “USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections. Please ensure that applications comply with the page limitations”. But on page 22 it states that the “Concept Paper can be no more than a maximum of 14 pages(exclusive of annexures)” and then on page 24 it says that “annexures should be attached including, but not limited to” and then lists three examples. Are applicants able to submit annexes to the Concept Note and if so, will they be reviewed and considered? Are applicants required to submit the three listed annex examples? If so, are they included in the merit review? Are there are any page limits for the suggested annexes?

USAID Response :The concept note needs to be **no more than 14 pages**. This includes 12 pages for technical approach, and one page each for Organizational Structure and Management, and Institutional Capacity and History of Performance. USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits.

Please refer to Section D.4.1 C, D and E (page 23-24) of the NOFO to provide required details under each section. The applicant/s can use their discretion on the best way to represent this information.

The applicant can exercise their discretion in annexes, both in terms of content and number of pages. However, it is mandatory to respond to the three components named recommended intervention locations along with a reasonable justification, examples of scaled up programs, pertaining to Foundational learning outcomes and children with disabilities and scaling up plan as detailed in NOFO (page 24). There is no page limit on the annexures.

11. Collaboration and coordination plan with all relevant stakeholders including local actors - Details on the identified bodies/experts that will act as stakeholders to partner the project, should that be mentioned in the concept paper. Does this mean that we have to submit a complete list of collaborators and a partnership matrix?

USAID Response: An indicative list of relevant stakeholders is acceptable at this stage. The goal is to identify all major ecosystem players and reflect on the mutually complementary role they can play in order to build and strengthen a conducive ecosystem for educational access of CwD. Based on this understanding and

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strategizing the applicant should share an indicative collaboration plan defining which partnerships will be achieved and how.

12. Sustainability - Should the parameters of sustainability be included in the concept note? Should we propose all dimensions of sustainability? (Financial sustainability, governance sustainability, institutional sustainability etc.)

USAID Response : An indicative list is fine at this stage but there should be clear evidence of thinking and approach around how the activity will be sustained after the support of USAID and partner ceases.

13. Does the current grant allow the partner organization to conduct a Situational Analysis or Baseline (first quarter of the grant) to ascertain exact Status of Education.

USAID Response : Depending upon their technical approach, the applicant shall provide rationale for the proposed situational analysis or baseline.

14. Anticipated results and indicators - Should there be an impactful change in these indicators through our intervention?

USAID Response : The list shared in the NOFO is only indicative and it is up to the applicant to suggest modifications as per their technical approach. However, it is important to demonstrate the measurement path that would be taken to create evidence and show impact in the context of the technical approach of the applicant.

15. The Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for LwD activity will approach all interventions using principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) - Should the project design include the UDL approach for intervention or it could be one of the approaches that should be followed during implementation.

USAID Response : This is up to the applicant on what they consider is the best way to include UDL approach in the project design.

16. Considering the vast range of disabilities in terms of type and severity, will USAID have any specific criteria or focus for this call?

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OR

Given the diverse nature of disabilities in terms of their type, severity, and spectrum, will USAID adopt a focused approach or specific criteria for targeting children with disabilities in this call?

USAID Response : As stated in the NOFO, USAID recommends the applicant to provide a certain criterion of focusing on certain type/s of disabilities and define a technical approach accordingly.

17. Is it necessary for the project to cover all districts within the selected states, or can specific districts be chosen based on the criteria established for the project interventions?

USAID Response : As stated in the NOFO , the location and quantum of reach is for the applicant to define as per the resources and the technical approach. It is unlikely that the project will be able to cover all districts but applicants must consider how scaling up can occur.

18. Please confirm that we are using a standard concept note format into which we can edit the specific components mentioned under this section? Any link to get the format.

USAID response: As the NOFO states, the concept note needs to address Technical Approach , Organizational Structure and Management as well as the Institutional Capacity and History of Performance. USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits stated in the NOFO. The details to be addressed in all 14 pages have been explained in the NOFO(page 24) itself and the format is up to the applicant to decide on.

19. Whether the cost of these two evaluations will be part of the total project budget? Or USAID will have separate funds allocated for these proposed 2 evaluations? (Page 15: section B.4 'Award Renewal' 2nd paragraph)

USAID Response : The mid term evaluation is expected to contribute to activity design and evolution to better achieve outcome evaluation and focus on lessons learnt. Dissemination of learning from both would be a key aspect of ecosystem

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strengthening. Both these evaluations will be completed using the available activity funds and planned in close coordination with USAID.

20. Do we have to provide information of what, how, and how much can leverage and the source within the concept note? Also do we need to mention the leverage in terms of approximate financial value or can we mention the type of resources/ service/ other form of leverage (as per USAID definition) that we plan in the note? (Page 22: section D.4.1 'PHASE 1: Concept Paper Form' A (Bullet 4))

USAID response: A brief description of the approach towards leveraging is required. While the indicative target and sources are recommended they are not mandatory and can be revised during co-creation.

21. Do we have to provide partnership/ consortium details at the time of concept note, especially in the organization staffing/ management and the experience section? Or at this time can we present details of only the lead organization with key members details. (Page 24:section D)

USAID response: As explained in the NOFO(page 24) it is mandatory to provide a description of the management approach that shows the relationship between the prime and applicant organizations. The role and contribution of each consortium member also needs to be defined clearly. The role of four to five positions/ key personnel that would be critical to accomplishing the outcomes outlined in the Concept Technical Approach should be mentioned. The detailed organogram is not mandated at this stage.

22. Suggestion Received: Thanks for an excellent orientation to the project on FLN. Though I do not have a question but wanted to give an input regarding collaborative departments in the slide no. 5 entitled 'Vision of Activity'. I think it is extremely important that active collaboration should also be done with 'Public Works Department' (PWD) who is responsible for all barrier-free access. This department also has to mandatorily allocate 5% of their budget for issues related to Persons with Disability as per 2016 Act. You may like to include this department for collaboration.

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USAID response: Thank you for the suggestion. Collaboration and coordination plan with all relevant stakeholders including local actors is for the applicant to suggest and compile. Hence, they should identify the critical agencies/ bodies for collaboration.

23. Can the state selected be a state where work is already being done in FLN by us?

USAID response: This is for the applicant to propose the state along with an adequate justification and rationalization.

24. Just to clarify, is there only one award available? So, only one proposal will be funded?

USAID response: Yes, USAID intends to award one Cooperative Agreement, for details please refer to Section B.1 of the NOFO.

25. A number of different State lists are mentioned (including – NB – in the Analysis document), Does our Needs Assessment take cognisance of the four criteria list under this title? Can we add a few more relevant to the context?

USAID Response: A copy of the Rapid Assessment is attached, however, the applicant is encouraged to carry out their own research to support a technical approach.

26. Should the program/ intervention only be implementable in mainstream schools? or an intervention with a combination of in-school and out-of school (household level) may be considered as well?

USAID Response : the activity needs to establish robust service delivery mechanisms and systemic strengthening in mainstream schools to ensure universalization of Foundational learning. Effective community engagement process including strengthening home as a learning site is key to achieving the desired results as explained in the NOFO.

27. Is there any criteria for calculating reach in states where USAID is currently supporting the FLN program

USAID Response : Depending on the approach the applicant is encouraged to come up with their own criterion with adequate rationale and justification.

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28. Should both literacy and numeracy be given equal weight in the project? Or could we focus on one as the main target?

USAID Response : The applicant is expected to consider both literacy and numeracy in its technical approach.

29. Would literacy be English or state language or both.

USAID Response : As stated in the NOFO USAID recommends the applicant to come up with their own approach on the same with adequate justification.

30. Whether an organization can submit more than one (1) application in collaboration with different organizations as 'consortium partners'? (Page 17: section C.1 'Eligible Applicants' 1st paragraph)

USAID Response: As stated in Section C.1 of the NOFO, 'an organization may submit only one (1) application under this notice of funding opportunity. However, organizations participating as a member of a consortium may elect to participate in another consortium for a different Concept Paper in response to this NOFO.'

31. Whether the cost incurred by a shortlisted agency for staff participation in the workshop will be paid by USAID for participating in the workshop will be reimbursed if the contract is not signed with the agency which participated in the workshop? (Page 20: section Phase 2- Co-Creation Workshop: 2nd paragraph; Page 23: 1st bullet 'Start-up Workshop' 1st paragraph, Page 29: Section Phase2 'CO-CREATION WORKSHOP' 2nd paragraph)

USAID response: As stated in the NOFO(page 20-21), the applicants are responsible for all the pre-award costs and that USAID will not reimburse any costs incurred during all the phases under this NOFO.

32. Do we have to give an approximate budget detail for different activities/ intervention within the concept note or can we quote a lump sum amount on the cover page? (Page 22: section D.4.1 'PHASE 1: Concept Paper Forma' A (Bullet 3)

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USAID response: Please refer to Section D.5(a) Business (cost) Application, **no Business (cost) applications are required to be submitted at Phase 1 or 2.**

33. The NOFO indicates that applicants must have successfully registered in SAM prior to submitting the full application (pg. 17). Does this apply to sub-awardees or only the prime applicant?

USAID response: As stated in Section C.3.1 of the NOFO, the applicant must be registered in SAM prior to submitting the full application. The prime applicant may not make a subaward to an entity unless the entity has provided its **Unique Entity Identifier** to the recipient. Subrecipients are not required to obtain an active SAM registration but must obtain a Unique Entity Identifier.

34. Submission of the Concept Paper is 25th of April, please confirm.

USAID response: As stated on the Cover Page of the NOFO, the submission date is April 25, 2023.

35. I was unable to attend the webinar on the “Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for Children with Disabilities” competition. The ETS Research division is considering responding. Is it possible to share any slides or a recording of the webinar?

USAID Response: The NOFO has all the information that is needed to successfully prepare and submit an application. The webinar merely covered information that is in the NOFO., therefore, no slides will be shared.

36. Section C ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION -

Current Verbiage : Eligibility for this NOFO is not restricted, open to all eligible and qualified U.S., local and international non-governmental entities. Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400(g), it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments such as Cooperative Agreements. While for-profit organizations may participate, pursuant to 2 CFR 700.13(a)(1), Prohibition against Profit, no profit will be paid to any for-profit entity receiving or administering Federal financial assistance as a recipient or subrecipient.

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Observation: While the NOFO does clearly articulate that it is “not restricted” and is open to all eligible and qualified local and non-governmental entities including for-profit organisations may participate, we wish to draw your attention to the 2 CFR 700.13(a)(1), which states that “no profit will be paid to any for-profit entity receiving or administering Federal Assistance as recipient or sub-recipient.”

Clarification Sought: We request you to please clarify if the financial assistance is limited to reimbursement of the costs and “markup” if any is disallowed.

USAID Response: Financial assistance is limited to reimbursement of allowable (direct) and allocable indirect costs. Please refer to 2 CFR 200.400 (link copied herein). <https://ecfr.io/Title-2/Part-200> No profit is allowed.

Remarks: We wish to bring to your attention that the SoW does include elements that would require strategy and technology expertise (Example: for strengthening service delivery mechanism which also include steps to enhance data driven decision making). Such expertise may or may not reside with non - profit organisations.

USAID Response: For profit organizations may apply for award, however, no profit will be reimbursed as the organizations will only be reimbursed allowable and allocable costs.

Suggestion: If our interpretation of the clause is current, we request you to please suggest an alternative mechanism which allows participating organisations to also bring for profit organisations that allow passthrough of a portion of the grant covering a cost (intellectual capital + time + material) and a reasonable markup for participating sub recipients.

USAID Response: The mechanism remains to be a cooperative agreement.