



Date: December 20, 2023

Subject: USAID's Responses to Applicants' Questions on Annual Program Statement No. 72061724APS00001_Targeting the Learning Crisis (TLC) _ (Amendment 01).

Dear Applicants:

The purpose of this amendment is to provide responses to questions received from applicants on December 7, 2023 on the subject Annual Program Statement (APS).

This APS amendment includes the following:

- 1. APS amendment 1, the changes are highlighted in yellow.**
- 2. USAID's responses to potential Applicants' questions, please refer to attachment 1 of this letter.**
- 3. A budget template, included as attachment 2 of the amendment package.**

This letter does not obligate USAID to execute an award; nor does it commit USAID to pay any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of applications. Furthermore, the U.S. Government reserves the right to reject any and all applications, if such action is considered to be in the best interest of the U.S. Government. All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

Sincerely,

Andreea Surdu,

Agreement Officer

USAID/Uganda

ATTACHMENT 1

USAID's Responses to Applicants' Questions on Annual Program Statement No. 72061724APS00001_Targeting the Learning Crisis (TLC)_ (Amendment 01).

1. Can Applicants use a 10-point Calibri font for tables, graphs, or graphics?

USAID Response: Yes. Please note: graphs are not required and will count towards the page limit.

2. Based on the timeline provided on page 10 and the description of Phase 3 on page 8, we identified that there is about one week between receiving budget instructions and the due date of presenting a full detailed budget at the oral presentations. Could USAID please provide these instructions in advance to Applicants, with an additional opportunity to ask questions?

USAID Response: We have attached the budget template to this Amendment 1 to the APS along with the responses to the Q&A's on grants.gov, posted on Dec. 20, 2023.

3. The APS provides a timeframe on page 10 up through the Co-Design Step 1 Oral Presentations. Could USAID please indicate when full technical applications and final cost proposals will be due?

USAID Response: Full technical applications and cost proposals will be created during Co-Design Step 2: Activity Refinement.

4. What is USAID's anticipated start date for awards issued under this APS?

USAID Response: USAID aims to have the activity awarded in time for active implementation by the start of the 2025 school year.

5. Is there a MB limit (per email) for the electronic submission?

USAID Response: We are only accepting concept notes that are a 5-page PDF document as indicated in the APS.

6. Is there a requirement to balance target refugee and host communities for the case of War Child Holland's Education interventions?

USAID Response: No.

7. Is it possible that a potential applicant works through local partners as co-implementors of the USAID Grant?

***USAID Response:** USAID activities are awarded to a “prime” and in the vast majority of activities the prime works with and through sub-awardees (subs). USAID desires to have local organizations as part of this activity. Only organizations that submit concept papers will be eligible to be a prime or a sub on this activity.*

8. **On TLC APS funding priorities:** Your call for applications specifically identifies targeted instruction as the only intervention strategy you wish to fund at the P3-P5 level. At P1-P2 there seems to be some flexibility when it comes to proposing other evidence-based strategies. My question is whether this call would support interventions that are complementary to targeted instruction—as well as being evidence backed and cost-effective—yet which are not explicitly focused on targeted instruction? Would this only be possible for applications that focus on P1-P2, or could such an application target P1-P5 (as our current intervention targets P1-P7)?

***USAID Response:** Above all else USAID seeks the achievement of a significant and measurable increase in the number of P1-P5 students who are able to read and perform math functions at a level expected for their age.*

USAID views targeted instruction as: (1) using student-level formative assessments to understand individual students’ current math and reading levels; (2) dividing students into groups based on their learning needs, rather than age or grade level for a portion of the day or year; and (3) providing that student instruction specifically to address their diagnosed learning levels. This grouping and instruction can be achieved through a variety of set-ups, such as implementation by trained school teachers or by trained volunteers, and integration into regular classroom time or as after-school tutoring. USAID posits that this an essential next step in increasing literacy and numeracy in Uganda, especially, as evidence has shown, in P3-P5.

As outlined in the Merit Evaluation Criteria in Section E, USAID will prioritize targeted instruction in its review, particularly for P3-P5. However, if there is a better, proven, more cost effective intervention to increase literacy and numeracy that does not include individual student level assessment and teaching to the needs of that student, please propose the superior intervention and the cost-effectiveness evidence behind it in the concept paper.

9. **On Research:** The call for applications states that USAID will identify research partners, however our intervention has a long-standing research PI who is based at the University of Chicago (as well as visiting at Makerere University). Would we still be able to include the PI on our project or would they be considered a separate applicant, despite the fact that our project is collaborative? The call for applications states that entities should apply separately, but it is not clear what that means for research-implementer partnerships.

***USAID Response:** USAID will procure a separate evaluation to answer research questions that USAID deems essential for the activity. This evaluation, which will be procured by USAID, is meant to focus on USAID questions policy and programming level evaluating the impact of the activity on student learning outcomes as well as monitoring implementation quality and fidelity. While this*

will be a separate procurement, the specifics of the evaluation will be finalized in collaboration with the successful applicant(s).

USAID understands that research or evaluation, in addition to and in coordination with the independent USAID evaluation, may be essential for activity implementation to obtain activity goals. If the applicant believes that their proposed approach would be enhanced by research or evaluation, they are encouraged to include a description of such research or evaluation in their concept note, with a clear explanation of why this research is essential for the success of the activity.

If an applicant does have a pre-existing research and/or implementing partner, please indicate the name of the partner(s), and include details of the partnership. In determining if a separate concept paper should be submitted in a case such as this, USAID suggests asking: is the relationship your organization has in this case with an individual or separate entity? If an individual is contracted for the work, they can reasonably be included in your concept. If a separate entity or organization is contracted for the work, it should supply its own concept paper.

- 10. Following up on the previous question, if a pre-existing research-implementation partnership is not permitted during the application process, would it still be possible for that collaboration to continue were the implementer to include its existing research plans as part of the proposal and the researchers as sub-grantees?**

***USAID Response:** As indicated in the previous response, pre-existing research-implementation partnerships are permitted during the application process. Each entity needs to submit its own concept note describing its contribution to the activity to be eligible for funding.*

- 11. Would a university department or research group fall within the designation of a "Non-traditional Partners", and would we be considered eligible for the award?**

***USAID Response:** No, a university department or research group does not fall within the designation of a "Non-traditional Partners."*

Yes, a university department or research group is considered eligible for the award.

Please note from Section C.1: USAID/Uganda strongly encourages concept papers from all interested entities.

- 12. Can you give examples of past projects that were co-designed with USAID?**

***USAID Response:** No. Each co-design is unique and USAID does not want to inadvertently set expectations for this co-design.*

- 13. We have a situation where implementers have been working closely with university researchers in the United States to implement an RCT of an intervention with great success. Recently, all parties have worked closely with government partners to discuss scale-up. Is it possible to apply for joint implementation and research funds for a scale up of the approach?**

***USAID Response:** Each entity needs to submit its own concept note describing its contribution to the activity to be eligible for funding. If an applicant does have a pre-existing research and/or implementing partner, please indicate the name of the partner(s), and include details of the partnership. Please also describe the role that the proposed research and collaboration with the government will play in ensuring effective scale-up of the successful intervention.*

Please refer to the response to Question #9 for more details.

- 14. Does this call fund both implementation and research or implementation only? It seems there is interest in research, but it's not clear whether the research would be funded independently of implementation.**

***USAID Response:** USAID will procure a separate evaluation to answer research questions that USAID deems essential for the activity. This evaluation, which will be procured by USAID, is meant to focus on evaluating the impact of the activity on student learning outcomes as well as monitoring implementation quality and fidelity. While this will be a separate procurement, the specifics of the evaluation will be finalized in collaboration with the successful applicant(s).*

USAID understands that research or evaluation, in addition to and in coordination with the independent USAID evaluation, may be essential for activity implementation to obtain activity goals. If the applicant believes that their proposed approach would be enhanced by research or evaluation, they are encouraged to include a description of such research or evaluation in their concept note, with a clear explanation of why this research is essential for the success of the activity.

- 15. Section D.4 suggests that "applicants are required to apply as individual entities allowing coalitions to be formed during the co-creation process." If implementers and researchers would submit the same concept note, should they still apply as separate entities using the same note?**

***USAID Response:** Each entity that desires to receive funding should submit a concept note detailing that entity's specific, proposed contribution to the activity. Each concept note should be unique to that entity and its specific role.*

- 16. The above-mentioned study is cited in the GEEAP document cited in the TLC APS grant call as a promising intervention. However, it is not described clearly in the set of priority areas in sections E and H of the call, which seem to emphasize targeted instruction over other approaches. The one we have in mind has proven to be highly cost effective and developed in the priority regions of Uganda described in the call. Is such an intervention eligible for the**

current call, or are proposals limited to the set of interventions described in sections E and H of the grant call?

USAID Response: Above all else USAID seeks the achievement of a significant and measurable increase in the number of P1-P5 students who are able to read and perform math functions at a level expected for their age.

USAID views targeted instruction as: (1) using student-level formative assessments to understand what math and reading levels an individual student is at; (2) dividing students into groups based on their learning needs, rather than age or grade level for a portion of the day or year; and (3) providing that student instruction specifically to address their diagnosed learning levels. This grouping and instruction can be achieved through a variety of set-ups, such as implementation by trained school teachers or by trained volunteers, and integration into regular classroom time or as after-school tutoring. USAID posits that this an essential next step in increasing literacy and numeracy in Uganda, especially, as evidence has shown, in P3-P5.

As outlined in the Merit Evaluation Criteria in Section E, USAID will prioritize targeted instruction in its review, particularly for P3-P5. However, if there is a better, proven, more cost effective intervention to increase literacy and numeracy that does not include individual student level assessment and teaching to the needs of that student, please propose the superior intervention and the cost-effectiveness evidence behind it in your concept paper.

- 17. The call document cites four types of funding instruments in section A3: cooperative agreements, fixed amount awards, renewal awards and simplified grants. Which type of awards have been funded in the past using this call?**

USAID Response: None. This is the first funding opportunity under this APS.

- 18. This may be a typo in the call document, but the cover sheet says the text of the concept note should be limited to three pages while the remainder of the document suggests the concept note can be up to five pages long. Can you please clarify?**

USAID Response: Thank you for identifying the inconsistency. This will be highlighted and corrected in the amended version of the APS. The concept note can be up to 5 pages long.

- 19. Page 7 - Phase 1: Concept Paper Submission - USAID states, "Applicants are required to apply as individual entities allowing coalitions to be formed during the co creation process." May applicants propose partner organizations as part of the concept paper with the understanding that partnerships may change during later phases?**

USAID Response: Yes. However, each organization needs to submit an individual concept paper to be eligible for funding.

20. Page 8 - Section D: Application and Submission Information, D.4 Application Process for Implementers Seeking Funding, Phase 2: Concept Paper Review - USAID states that USAID/Uganda will review concept papers as they are received. Given that this APS is open for one year, are applicants permitted to submit a revised concept paper at a later date if their first submission receives a Decision to Not Proceed letter?

USAID Response: Yes. However, USAID does not have any obligation to review the submission.

21. Page 12 - Section E: Concept Paper Review Information, E.1. Merit Review Criteria - Can USAID provide merit review criteria for Phase 1? USAID provides merit review elements for Phases 2, 3 and 4 and notes on page 8 that the Concept Paper will be evaluated against the merit review criteria, but the criteria is not provided.

USAID Response: Phase 1 is Concept Paper Submission; there is no merit review by USAID at this stage.

Phase 2 is Concept Paper Review; this is when USAID reviews the concept papers using the merit review criteria.

22. Page 21 - Attachment 1: Concept Paper Template - We believe USAID has mistakenly stated that the Cover Page is not part of the 3-page limit, and rather intended to state that the Cover Page is not part of the 5-page limit.

USAID Response: That is correct. It is a mistake. Concept Paper has a 5-page limit.

23. Page 21 - Attachment 1: Concept Paper Template - Is the Applicant required to adhere strictly to the suggested page limit of individual sections as long as the Applicant stays within the overall 5-page limit (e.g., can the Applicant go over or under the suggested ½ page limit for the Concept Introduction as long as the overall concept paper stays under 5 pages)?

USAID Response: Suggestions are not requirements. The applicant should present the requested information to the extent that best conveys their concept.

24. Is USAID primarily interested in classroom-based/teacher oriented solutions, or is there room to include community and/or systems inclusive approaches under this APS.

USAID Response: USAID is primarily interested in the achievement of a significant and measurable increase in the number of P1-P5 students who are able to read and perform math functions at a level expected for their age.

USAID views targeted instruction as: (1) using student-level formative assessments to understand individual students' current math and reading levels; (2) dividing students into groups based on their learning needs, rather than age or grade level for a portion of the day or year; and (3) providing that student instruction specifically to address their diagnosed learning levels. This

grouping and instruction can be achieved through a variety of set-ups, such as implementation by trained school teachers or by trained volunteers, and integration into regular classroom time or as after-school tutoring. USAID posits that this is an essential next step in increasing literacy and numeracy in Uganda, especially, as evidence has shown, in P3-P5.

- 25. Is USAID's focus with this APS on cost-effectively scaling the Targeted Instruction approach, enhancing the approach, or both.**

***USAID Response:** USAID's focus is on the achievement of a significant and measurable increase in the number of P1-P5 students who are able to read and perform math functions at a level expected for their age.*

Concept papers should propose an intervention that best achieves this objective.

- 26. Could USAID provide more detail on how this new program will fit in with current and future USAID education and youth programming in Uganda.**

***USAID Response:** This program is the future USAID education and youth programming in Uganda. It will leverage materials and methodologies that have been created in past programming.*

- 27. The APS refers to an independent evaluator that will be identified by USAID. Can USAID confirm that applications could still build in a controlled research component into the application that looks at the impact of the proposed intervention or if this would fall more to the independent evaluator to look at?**

***USAID Response:** The concept note is intended to be an opportunity for applicants to present what the proposed intervention(s) will be. USAID intends to have the evaluator be part of the co-creation "activity refinement" phase to build aspects needed for the evaluation into the implementation plan. If the applicant believes that their proposed approach would be enhanced by research or evaluation, they are encouraged to include a description of such research or evaluation in their concept note, with a clear explanation of why this research is essential for the success of the activity.*

- 28. Does USAID intend to engage local partners in co-creation even if they do not submit concept Papers?**

***USAID Response:** Only organizations that submit concept notes will be part of co-creation. USAID encourages local organizations to submit concept notes.*

- 29. If a local organization does not submit a concept paper, can a prime organization engage them as a partner later in the process?**

USAID Response: No. Those that intend to be “primes” should encourage local organizations they would like to work with to submit concept papers.

30. On pages 4 and 18 of the APS, USAID, states, “It is understood that all partners will share risks and responsibilities,” and “USAID will prioritize concepts that... 2) contribute expertise, share risk...” respectively. Could USAID please clarify what types of risks it expects the applicants, and later implementing partners, to share?

USAID Response: USAID definition of risk is “the effect of uncertainty on objectives” which considers the negative threats and positive opportunities on the activity.

31. On page 10, the APS includes a calendar of events. Given the short period between notification of inclusion in the oral presentations (February 7, 2024) and the oral presentations (February 12- 16, 2024) and the need for applicants to make the right presenters available, could USAID please clarify the composition of the applicant’s oral presentation panel as soon as possible, including how many presenters are allowed or required and their expertise and/or role in the applicant’s Organization?

USAID Response: The composition of the applicant's presentation panel will be determined by the applicant. Presenters do need to be associated with the organization they are representing and have the intention to continue to be associated with the organization for the foreseeable future.

32. On page 8 of the APS, USAID states that applicants invited to the oral presentation will also “be asked to provide a detailed budget for discussion.” Given that co-design will not yet have happened and a consortium will not yet have been formed, would USAID consider requiring a summary budget instead of a detailed budget?

USAID Response: We will attach the budget template to the first amendment to the APS along with these Q&A’s on grants.gov on or around Dec. 20, 2023.

33. Would USAID please confirm that the applicant can use smaller than 12 pt font for tables, graphics and text boxes?

USAID Response: Yes. Please note: graphs are not required and will count towards the page limit.

34. Could USAID provide more detail on how this new program will fit in with current and future USAID education and youth programming in Uganda.

USAID Response: This program is the future USAID education and youth programming in Uganda. It will leverage materials and methodologies that have been created in past programming.

35. The call indicates that "USAID/Uganda seeks to utilize its past programming and global evidence to implement... impactful programming, centered around Targeted Instruction pedagogy." Can USAID confirm that this implies an openness to looking beyond a purely TARL

approach, but also considering how TARL integrates with structured pedagogy programs and other evidence-based strategies for improving foundational skills?

USAID Response: USAID's focus is on the achievement of a significant and measurable increase in the number of P1-P5 students who are able to read and perform math functions at a level expected for their age.

36. The APS refers to an independent evaluator that will be identified by USAID. Can USAID confirm that applications could still build in a controlled research component into the application that looks at impact of the proposed intervention or if this would fall more to the independent evaluator to look at?

USAID Response: The concept note is intended to be an opportunity for applicants to present what the proposed intervention(s) will be. USAID intends to have the evaluator be part of the co-creation "activity refinement" phase to build aspects needed for the evaluation into the implementation plan. If the applicant believes that their proposed approach would be enhanced by research or evaluation, they are encouraged to include a description of such research or evaluation in their concept note, with a clear explanation of why this research is essential for the success of the activity.

37. Given the emphasis on sustainable and impactful programming, particularly in marginalized areas, in USAID's announcement for the Uganda TLC APS, and considering the call for evidence-based approaches, could you elaborate on the specific strategies or mechanisms proposed for the integration of Targeted Instruction (TI) and other evidence-based approaches in these areas?

USAID Response: No. That is the purpose of the concept notes.

38. In the context of evidence generation, could you provide insights into the type of collaboration and coordination expected between implementing partners and independent research institutions, especially in addressing the learning crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic?

USAID Response: It is unclear if this is asking about research institutions in general or one that is contracted for the activity. The implementing partner and the contracted independent evaluator will need to coordinate to ensure that technical implementation is not hindered by the evaluation and that implementation informs the evaluation.

39. In the eligibility section of the APS does the geographic code 937 relate to nationality of primes and implementing partners? Would a non-traditional partner with UK registration be eligible to prime and/or sub?

USAID Response: The geographic code does not apply to the employees of recipients or subrecipients nor to individual/independent consultants. It primarily refers to goods.

- 40. With its newly drafted Disability Policy, USAID is strengthening its commitment to ensure people with disabilities are included at all stages of USAID programs – how will this program ensure that children with disabilities are among the marginalized groups that are reached?.**

USAID Response: Concept papers should address how programming will reach and protect vulnerable and marginalized populations. This Activity is meant to benefit the most vulnerable districts and the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in their respective districts. The activity will use an inclusive classroom and school level strengthening approach, in which no particular population is targeted but all pupils are taken into consideration.

Those submitting concept papers will need to be aware of USAID policies concerning marginalized populations, how to address their needs, incorporate these needs into TLC programming, and protect their human rights.

- 41. Is the call relevant for potential subs/implementing partners to apply to get through to the co creation process and to link with a broader program where they can provide innovative expertise in one technical area. For example, ensuring children with disabilities have access to quality education? There could be reach across all the primary levels mentioned in the APS but just for a specific group of marginalized children. Would this type of application be favorably considered?**

USAID Response: Above all else USAID seeks the achievement of a significant and measurable increase in the number of P1-P5 students who are able to read and perform math functions at a level expected for their age.

Concept papers should address how programming will reach and protect vulnerable and marginalized populations. This Activity is meant to benefit the most vulnerable districts and the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in their respective districts. The activity will use an inclusive classroom and school level strengthening approach, in which no particular population is targeted but all pupils are taken into consideration.

Those submitting concept papers will need to be aware of USAID policies concerning marginalized populations, how to address their needs, incorporate these needs into TLC programming, and protect their human rights.

All concept papers will be evaluated using the merit review criteria.

42. Is it critical that projects work in one or more of the “most needy districts” identified by USAID in the APS? Or will projects that target other geographical areas identified on the APS list of other areas where USAID has projects be equally likely to be considered for funding?

USAID Response: Above all else USAID seeks the achievement of a significant and measurable increase in the number of P1-P5 students who are able to read and perform math functions at a level expected for their age.

Applicants should suggest implementing in the districts where the impact of programming will be greatest.

43. In the APS “coalition development” appears to be an option prioritized during “Co-Design step 1 (Coalition building) stage.” Is it also ok for organizations that have strong existing relations?

USAID Response: USAID would expect that the majority of organizations have strong existing relations. Each organization will be individually invited to co-creation if they pass the initial merit review process of Phases 2 and 3.

44. If a partner does not make it to oral presentation but does submit a concept note, are they ineligible to participate in the process (likely as a sub later on?)

USAID Response: Yes. Only those organizations invited to co-creation are eligible for an award.

45. Can we work with the organizations that did not go beyond the concept stage application

USAID Response: Yes. But they will not be eligible for TLC funding.

46. What is the estimated date for the oral presentation?

USAID Response: Timeline included in the APS:

*January 15, 2024: Deadline for receipt of concept papers for priority consideration in primary Co-Design workshop
on/around (o/a) February 7, 2024: Notifications to conditionally accepted applicants
o/a February 12-16, 2024 : Oral presentations in person and virtual
o/a February 20, 2024: Invitation to Co-Design Step 1 (Coalition Building) letters sent
o/a March 6-8, 2024: Co-Design Step 1 (Coalition Building) workshop (In-person in Kampala)
o/a March 18-20, 2024: Co-Design Step 1 (Coalition Building) Oral Presentations*

47. If a local partner I intend to work with is dropped at the 1st stage, do we have to make some amendments to our oral presentation if we have been invited to the oral presentation.

USAID Response: *You are encouraged to focus on what your organization will contribute to the activity at every stage.*

48. Regarding ECD, does the Mission consider ECD to be home-based or center-based learning?

USAID Response: *To be clear, we are using the term “Early Childhood Education” in the APS. We encourage proposing evidence-based early childhood education interventions that will have the greatest impact on the activity objective.*

49. Is it ok to mention the local partners you intend to work with?

USAID Response: *Yes. Concept papers will be evaluated using the Merit Review Criteria and applicants should submit concept papers that best address those criteria.*

50. Will USAID make known the content of different partners’ concept papers after the oral presentation phase to support coalition building?

USAID Response: *USAID does not intend to share concept papers. Organizations may choose to do so.*

51. There are very few local actors in the room. Can the solicitation be re-circulated through a networks such as character for change?

USAID Response: *Please send the APS information to any networks or organizations that you deem would be interested in the APS.*

52. Is the Mission looking at funding targeted instruction pedagogy among teachers for pre-primary, P1 and P2.

USAID Response: *Above all else USAID seeks the achievement of a significant and measurable increase in the number of P1-P5 students who are able to read and perform math functions at a level expected for their age.*

53. Can the mission share more information on current programming for OVC and feed the future in the selected districts.

USAID Response: *Publicly available information can be found at: <https://www.usaid.gov/uganda>*

54. How does the Mission define “targeted learning in crisis” under this Activity,. Can you please elaborate.

USAID Response: USAID is unable to find the phrase “targeted learning in crisis” in the APS.

55. Is it feasible to have local organizations submit concept notes by Jan 15.

USAID Response: USAID has given over 30 working days to submit proposals. 15-20 working days is the norm.

56. How can we make it more flexible to ensure local partners participate?

USAID Response: A benefit of issuing an APS is the expanded opportunity for local partners to participate.

57. Can the Mission give us an indication of the level of evidence that an applicant needs to demonstrate in order for its proposed intervention to be minimally competitive? For example:

- a. evidence of cost-effectiveness?
- b. evidence of population-based impact?
- c. evidence of feasibility of implementation?
- d. evidence of scalability?
- e. evidence of achievement of expected outputs?
- f. evidence of achievement of expected outcomes?

USAID Response: The evidence should be to a degree that a reasonable person would determine that the evidence base, in terms of the intervention's impact on improved math and literacy outcomes, the extent to which it has been tested at scale, and the extent to which it is cost-effective, is compelling.

Cost-effectiveness is an estimate of how much a key development outcome changes as a result of an intervention compared to how it would have changed without that intervention (i.e., impact), per dollar spent. There is no single threshold for an intervention to be considered “cost-effective”: judging cost-effectiveness requires a comparison among alternative interventions, to identify the one that tends to have the greatest ratio of impact per dollar spent.

The APS references cost-effective and scalable interventions identified in the 2023 publication “Cost-Effective Approaches to Improve Global Learning: Recommendations of the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (GEEAP).” USAID encourages applicants to review this publication for further information.

58. In the APS “coalition development” appears to be an option prioritized during “Co-Design step 1 (Coalition building) stage.” Is it also ok for organizations that have strong existing relationships working as a team of lead partners and implementing local partners to apply as a team or applicant package at the CN stage?

USAID Response: *Each organization that desires to be part of co-creation will need to submit their own concept note.*

59. If a concept addresses two distinct components, is there potential for USAID to accept the part for one component while declining the other, or will a decision be made on the concept paper as a whole?

USAID Response: *Concept notes will be evaluated against the merit review criteria.*

60. If a concept addresses two distinct components, is there potential for USAID to accept the part for one component while declining the other, or will a decision be made on the concept paper as a whole?

USAID Response: *Concept notes will be evaluated against the merit review criteria.*

61. Regarding the geographical scope, is it anticipated that the three components outlined will be implemented within the same districts / geographical areas, or is there flexibility for them to be distributed across different same geographical areas / districts?

USAID Response: *Concept notes should propose the most effective manner to achieve the overall activity objective.*

62. Can one organization send two applications. one for ECD and the other for Basic Education

USAID Response: *Only one concept note per organization will be accepted.*

63. For a concept paper that addresses two distinct components, may the required sections be addressed separately for each component within the concept paper, provided the overall content does not exceed the 5-page limit?

USAID Response: *Yes. Organizations should present in the manner that best conveys their concept within the stated guidance.*

64. Is USAID open to applicants offering, as part of their project, to translate the existing reading and language materials created through the previous USAID partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sport into other key languages not listed on the languages list in the APS, if the non-listed languages are languages used in schools by people groups within the targeted geographic regions identified in this call?

USAID Response: *Above all else USAID seeks the achievement of a significant and measurable increase in the number of P1-P5 students who are able to read and perform math functions at a level expected for their age.*

However, USAID desires to use existing materials.

65. Will priority be given to orgs/consortia that focus on more than one objective?

USAID Response: *No. All concept notes will be evaluated against the merit review criteria.*

66. Are March co-design oral presentations in person or virtual or hybrid?

USAID Response: *Oral presentations will likely be hybrid. Note that there is no priority given to presentations because of in person or online delivery.*

67. Considering USAID commissioned the Uganda Non-State Schools Assessment, which highlights the role of low-cost private schools in addressing the learning crisis, what is the role USAID sees for low-cost private schools and education financing in this Annual Program Statement (APS)?

USAID Response: *Above all else USAID seeks the achievement of a significant and measurable increase in the number of P1-P5 students who are able to read and perform math functions at a level expected for their age.*

If applicable to the achievement of the activity objective; schools, type, and roles should be identified in the concept paper.

68. Considering USAID is already funding the 5-year Integrated Child and Youth Development activity which began in 2021, will this APS be additive or a follow-on opportunity?

USAID Response: *This APS is the next step in USAID/Uganda Education programming.*

69. Under this Activity, does the Mission consider ECD as home-based or center-based learning? Does the mission have a preference for either?

USAID Response: *To be clear, we are using the term “Early Childhood Education” in the APS. We encourage proposing evidence-based early childhood education interventions that will have the greatest impact on the activity objective.*

70. The APS said that the mission is looking at "innovative and creative ideas that can be rigorously tested, shared, and potentially scaled in Uganda within this context." Does the mission require innovative and creative ideas that already have been tested with evidence generated? Can the evidence come from other parts of the African region or other region?

USAID Response: *Above all else USAID seeks the achievement of a significant and measurable increase in the number of P1-P5 students who are able to read and perform math functions at a level expected for their age.*

Concept papers should propose the interventions that will best achieve this objective.

71. Could USAID please confirm its preference for districts that overlap between Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) programming and Feed the Future (FtF) only includes Kotido? (Pg 17)

USAID Response: *The preference is where OVC “and/or” FtF is programming. USAID will update the text.*

72. Could USAID clarify priority ranking for the following district criteria: OVC programming, FtF activities, and “needy” districts? (Pg 18)

USAID Response: *Above all else USAID seeks the achievement of a significant and measurable increase in the number of P1-P5 students who are able to read and perform math functions at a level expected for their age.*

There is no stated priority ranking. Concept papers do not need to target particular districts, but should propose districts in which they can achieve the greatest impact. Concepts papers should justify why the identified districts are targeted.

73. Co-Creation: Will we have a detailed understanding on the co-creation process for this particular APS? (example: How will co-creation move forward, solely on proposals on their way to award, or with multiple entities and multiple potentials?)

USAID Response: *Please refer to Section D of the APS.*

74. Are agencies not registered in the US eligible to apply?

USAID Response: *Yes. Note that government entities are not eligible.*

75. How does the call address and try to balance the board between the INGOs and local NGOs? Do you have specific slot for local and national organizations for example?

USAID Response: *Both international and local NGOs are eligible to apply and participate in the co-creation process.*

76. How is this call considering putting localisation at the forefront: By localisation I mean USAID giving the opportunity to local organizations to access direct funding from USAID.

USAID Response: *Local organizations have the opportunity for direct funding through this APS.*

77. Education is a broad intervention area that requires collaborative effort. Is it ok if for example, an Organization put up a concept note aiming at addressing for example access with the view that probably another partner with another component such as quality will be implemented by another partner?. Should a partner submit a concept note covering the entire education intervention?

USAID Response: *We encourage organizations to focus on what their contribution to the overall activity will be in their concept note.*

78. What is the maximum duration of the activity?

USAID Response: *5 years.*

79. At what stage will the organizations go through the pre-award assessment.

USAID Response: *After Co-creation - activity refinement.*

80. What is the minimum and maximum amount per concept?

USAID Response: *Dollar amounts are not considered at Phase 1: Concept Paper submission. However, note that the stated ceiling for this activity is \$45 million.*

81. Do you have any interest in projects that support the conditions necessary for learning/academic performance (i.e.: social-emotional learning, safety at home and school, parental engagement, etc...)?

USAID Response: *USAID is interested in activities that will contribute to achieving the objective of the activity.*

82. Can an organization be competitive if it has little or no evidence-based interventions to propose, BUT already has strong working collaboration with the government Education authorities and significant work in Basic Education/ECD in many of the USAID-suggested districts?

USAID Response: *USAID would need to review the concept paper to answer this question.*

83. Can USAID please clarify whether organizations can continue to submit concept notes after the January 15 priority deadline - but still while the APS is open - and then be incorporated into a consortium? I'm asking especially concerning local partner organizations that may not be able to respond before January 15. Should it be a separate concept note on the same objective?

USAID Response: *Priority consideration will only be given to concept notes received before the January 15, 2024 deadline. USAID is under no obligation to review concept notes received after January 15, 2024.*

84. What level of evidence to you consider to be impactful,
We are looking for organizations that we can work with, how they are working and what will be their part in the organization. We are looking for organizations with demonstrable evidence that this approach has a great chance for success. Making sure we have the right people in the room

USAID Response: *The evidence should be to a degree that a reasonable person would determine that the evidence base, in terms of the intervention's impact on improved math and literacy outcomes, the extent to which it has been tested at scale, and the extent to which it is cost-effective, is compelling.*

Cost-effectiveness is an estimate of how much a key development outcome changes as a result of an intervention compared to how it would have changed without that intervention (i.e., impact), per dollar spent. There is no single threshold for an intervention to be considered “cost-effective”: judging cost-effectiveness requires a comparison among alternative interventions, to identify the one that tends to have the greatest ratio of impact per dollar spent.

The APS references cost-effective and scalable interventions identified in the 2023 publication “Cost-Effective Approaches to Improve Global Learning: Recommendations of the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (GEEAP).” USAID encourages applicants to review this publication for further information.

- 85. If an organization has interventions in Preprimary and primary, can they combine the concept notes since only one concept note is acceptable?**

USAID Response: *Concept papers may propose programming that focuses on one, two, or all three of the target levels. Concept papers should focus only on the programmatic areas where the submitting organization brings demonstrable expertise and ability to achieve desired outcomes in those areas.*

- 86. Is there a standard concept note format**

USAID Response: *Please see section D.4 and Annex 1 of the APS.*

- 87. With the questions and clarifications received for this round, are you open to extending the deadline for the submission of the CN?**

USAID Response: *No.*

- 88. Could you explain more about 'SAM'(in yellow) . what does it mean and how can we access it**

USAID Response: *The System for Award Management (SAM.gov) is an official website of the U.S. Government. There is no cost to use SAM.gov. You use this site to register to do business with the U.S. Government. Access it at SAM.gov. You are not required to be registered in SAM.gov to submit a concept paper. However, you must have an active SAM.gov registration in order to be eligible to receive an award from the U.S. Government. If your business entity does not have an active SAM.gov registration, you are encouraged to begin registering as soon as possible. Registration in SAM.gov is free.*

- 89. How would the impact of Early Childhood innovations show they are directly improving reading and writing?**

USAID Response: *That is to be included in the concept note by applicants.*

90. Could USAID please confirm its preference for districts that overlap between Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) programming and Feed the Future (FtF) only includes Kotido? (Pg 17). Could USAID clarify priority ranking for the following district criteria: OVC programming, FtF activities, and “needy” districts? (Pg 18)

USAID Response: *The preference is where OVC “and/or” FtF is programming. USAID will update the text. There is no preference. Concept papers should propose districts in which they can achieve the greatest impact.*

91. Is the call open to all types of approach including edutech if they contribute to increased literacy and math?

USAID Response: *Above all else USAID seeks the achievement of a significant and measurable increase in the number of P1-P5 students who are able to read and perform math functions at a level expected for their age.*

92. Is TLC the primary vehicle for education programming going forward in Uganda, or will there be other complimentary activities in addition to TLC as ICYD ends?

USAID Response: *TLC will be the primary vehicle for education programming going forward.*

93. Just for clarity which school year is being targeted? Please?

USAID Response: *USAID intends to begin programming in time for the school year 2025.*

94. Should an organization implementing a variety of activities that can contribute to the achievement of the APS focus or should we go broader

USAID Response: *The organization should put forward the concept in which they will have the most impact in achieving the activity objective.*

95. Do potential partnerships need to be geographically close to each other or just aligned in their approach?

USAID Response: *This will be addressed in the co-creation phase.*

96. Beyond the reading and language materials mentioned on page 17,, what other things from the ICYD program would you want to carry on into this project.

USAID Response: *Any activities that would contribute to the achievement of TLC objectives.*

97. Do USAID consider ECD to be home-based or center-based learning?

USAID Response: *To be clear, we are using the term “Early Childhood Education” in the APS. We encourage proposing evidence-based early childhood education interventions that will have the greatest impact on the activity objective.*

98. How does the mission define “targeted learning in crisis?” Can they elaborate?

USAID Response: *The phrase “targeted learning in crisis” does not appear in the APS.*

99. Is the mission also looking at targeted Instruction pedagogy among teachers for pre-primary and Primary 1 to Primary 2?

USAID Response: *The Mission desires interventions that will best achieve the activity objective.*

100. Do you have a plan to test some of the impactful innovations?

USAID Response: *The concept note is intended to be an opportunity for applicants to present what the proposed intervention(s) will be. USAID intends to have the evaluator be part of the co-creation “activity refinement” phase to build aspects needed for the evaluation into the implementation plan. If the applicant believes that their proposed approach would be enhanced by research or evaluation, they are encouraged to include a description of such research or evaluation in their concept note, with a clear explanation of why this research is essential for the success of the activity.*

101. Is TLC the primary vehicle for education programming going forward in Uganda, or will there be other complimentary activities in addition to TLC as ICYD ends?

USAID Response: *TLC is the primary vehicle for education programming going forward.*

102. A concept note should be atleast 3,000,000 \$ please explain that . Is it the Maximum or Minimum?

USAID Response: *“At least” means minimum. Please note: a) this is a guideline provided as a courtesy and b) budget amount is not one of the merit review criteria.*

103. You have mentioned two specific groups - refugees and orphans - is there any planned focus on disability?

USAID Response: *Concept papers should address how programming will reach and protect vulnerable and marginalized populations. This Activity is meant to benefit the most vulnerable districts and the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in their respective districts. The activity will use an inclusive classroom and school level strengthening approach, in which no particular population is targeted but all pupils are taken into consideration.*

Those submitting concept papers will need to be aware of USAID policies concerning marginalized populations, how to address their needs, incorporate these needs into TLC programming, and protect their human rights.

- 104.** Could you clarify if there is a policy within this APS that specifically prohibits exclusivity between organizations during the coalition building phase?

***USAID Response:** All information on the procurement process after concept paper submission on January 15 is provided as a courtesy and is subject to change. Those being invited to coalition building will be provided further guidelines. Those guidelines will include a prohibition on exclusivity agreements between organizations. However, organizations are only required to join the coalitions they desire to.*

- 105.** Could you clarify whether refugees can be targeted through this APS?

Concept papers should address how programming will reach and protect vulnerable and marginalized populations. This Activity is meant to benefit the most vulnerable districts and the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in their respective districts. The activity will use an inclusive classroom and school level strengthening approach, in which no particular population is targeted but all pupils are taken into consideration.

***USAID Response:** Those submitting concept papers will need to be aware of USAID policies concerning marginalized populations, how to address their needs, incorporate these needs into TLC programming, and protect their human rights.*

- 106.** If an organization would want to go for the three lots i.e. pre-primary, p.1 -p2 and p.3-p.5. Does this require three concept notes or just one combined concept?

***USAID Response:** One combined concept. Organizations are only allowed to submit one concept note.*

- 107.** With respect to the Targeted Learning Crisis (TLC), who are the children for Vulnerable and Marginalized populations?

***USAID Response:** This Activity is meant to benefit the most vulnerable districts and the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in their respective districts. The activity will use an inclusive classroom and school level strengthening approach, in which no particular population is targeted but all pupils are taken into consideration.*

- 108.** This is very likely a question for down the line, but regarding intellectual property/proprietary materials: Will organizations be required to unrestricted grant access to USAID and its partners to intellectual property and/or licensed or proprietary materials used as part of their project?

USAID Response: Please see USAID's Automated Directive System (ADS) Chapter 318
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2022-05/318.pdf>

109. What is the likely timeline between the different phases before one gets notifications

USAID Response: The timeline between phases will depend on the amount of concept notes that USAID needs to review.

110. Can USAID supervise the coalition building process to ensure everybody leveled ground and equal voice? ZUSAID will be there and a moderator will facilitate the discussions during the coalition building process.

USAID Response: USAID will be an active participant in coalition building. We intend to have a moderator facilitate the workshop.

111. Can USAID please clarify at what point in this process organization should identify/involve potential key personnel?

USAID Response: USAID assumes that this will be after the coalition presentations.

112. On page 10, I noticed that currently there is a likely 5 day turnaround from when applicants are notified of their presentation invitation to the first day of those presentations. Would it be possible to receive the instructions for the presentations prior to that notification so that applicants can begin to prepare ahead of time in case they are invited to that round?

USAID Response: Organizations will have sufficient time to prepare oral presentations.

113. In an event where in the last round you have INGOs skewing in the final list would you consider another thought? How would you in the spirit of promoting local capacity/innovation consider other idea?

USAID Response: The APS process is designed to allow participation of local organizations and foster new partnerships with USAID. USAID will be part of the co-creation process to make sure local organizations have the opportunity to be active participants in the process. However, this is an education activity, not a local capacity building activity. First and foremost USAID will seek partners of all types that will contribute to activity objectives.

114. Is there some danger for the small organizations who connect with a large organization (or more than one) in this coalition process, that perhaps there are various large organizations forming coalitions in that phase, and those large orgs are competing against each other to be the prime, isn't there then a risk for the small orgs that they could choose to align with the "wrong" large organization(s) and even if they are a technical expert, they lose the opp b/c they choose the wrong prime?

USAID Response: *Yes, there is that risk. Organizations are allowed to join any coalition that they are invited to join.*

115. Would the call be considered to have achieved its goal if in the last list of partners, no single local partner surfaced?

USAID Response: *This is speculative and cannot be answered at this time.*

116. When will primes be selected? Will this occur prior to the coalition building and co-design steps?

USAID Response: *During coalition building, the coalitions will choose who to put forth as primes.*

117. How much should the concept note refer to potential partnerships/consortiums planned?

USAID Response: *Potential partnerships/consortiums are not included in the merit review criteria for the concept notes.*

118. When is a prime's COP candidate, for example, expected to be identified and engaged in the process.

USAID Response: *USAID assumes that this will be after coalition building.*

119. I'm thinking through this process, and how the prime organization is going to emerge during coalition building ... can you please clarify at what point primes are going to need to have their key personnel candidates identified?

USAID Response: *USAID assumes that this will be after coalition building.*

120. And in addition - can USAID please clarify if they will allow a "small grants pool" to be part of the final program structure?

USAID Response: *This will be decided as part of co-creation.*

121. Should potential coalition partners be alluded to at the Concept Paper stage or is that at the discretion USAid at a later stage?

USAID Response: *Concept notes should include the relevant information that USAID would need to review them against the merit review criteria.*

122. In the co creation phase, can another funder that strives for the same goals be brought in and in this way make it a bigger project?

USAID Response: *Yes.*