



May 25, 2010

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS NO. 268-10-021

Developing Rehabilitation Assistance to Schools and Teacher Improvement (DRASATI) for Lebanon

AMENDMENT NO. 3

The following are Answers to Questions received on the RFA:

1. Component 3: Increased Learning Opportunities: The RFA refers to the CERD training centers. We are aware that there are 33 CERD training centers in various parts of the country. 18 need upgrading in terms of equipment and labs in addition to certain minor infrastructure rehabilitation. This is directly linked to improving the quality of in-service teacher training component. The RFA mentions the development of teacher training modules and methodologies and is not clear on physical improvements. Would the cost of upgrading the training centers be allowed as part of the program? If so, should it be part of the \$33 million?

Response: The RFA does not make any reference to physical improvements of the CERD training centers. Physical improvements of the CERD training centers are not part of this RFA.

2. Has USAID made provisions or otherwise factored in for the fact that some school administrators, teachers, and/or community organizers may not pass the USG vetting process given Lebanon's current political environment and associations?

Response: It is the duty of the Implementer to comply with all US laws including Executive Orders to protect against program benefits being provided, even inadvertently, to terrorists or their supporters, including people or organizations who are not specifically designated by the USG but who may nevertheless be linked to terrorist activities. In the event it is discovered that an individual does not pass the USG and Implementer's vetting process, the Implementer must inform USAID of its discovery and take steps to suspend any present or proposed USAID funded assistance to the individual in question until further notice and instruction is provided to the Implementer by USAID.

3. To what extent, if any, is the ministry willing/able to compensate teachers for the time they may spend after school in extra-curricular activities? Payment to school "janitors" (security guards, etc.) is usually required for activities that require them to stay past the normal school

day; will the ministry cover these additional costs, or will the project budget need to include these expenses?

Response: It is USAID policy that salary supplements of host government employees including teachers is considered an exception to normal practice and would require an exceptional justification and approval by USAID. Salary supplements occurs when payments are made to augment a host government employee's salary or premiums, overtime, extra payments, incentive payments and allowance for which such employees would the employee qualify under host government rules or practice for the performance of his regular duties or for work performed during regular office hours. USAID/Lebanon encourages implementing partners to work with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) to provide such contributions.

4. The discussion on teacher training indicates a focus on "English-based subjects: math and science." However, in Lebanon, math and science can be taught in either English or French from intermediate school onward. Does USAID wish for partners to focus only on public schools that offer math and science in English, or all public schools?

Response: The focus of the RFA is all public schools, and not only the ones that teach English-based subjects.

5. What is the geographic code for this project? Would USAID consider applying the 935 geographic code?

Response: The authorized geographic code for procurement of goods and services is 000 i.e. U.S. Local procurement is authorized according to 22 CFR 228.40. Any deviations from local procurement limitations will require a waiver to be submitted by the Recipient and approved by the Mission Director.

6. On page 22 of the RFA, the third bullet item under "other submission requirements", refers to NICRA. Should all partnering organization submit a NICRA and/or related information, or only if they have 20% or more of the budget? Does the same apply to local partners in Lebanon?

Response: All partnering organizations should submit a NICRA and/or related information including local partners in Lebanon. However, **Section IV Application and Submission Information, item (B) Cost/Business Application Format, the third bullet under the section titled "Other Submission Requirements for applications submitted in response to this RFA consist of"** is modified as follows:

Current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) negotiated between the applicant and a Federal agency (if available). If a NICRA is not available, the following is required: 1) Copies of the applicant's financial reports for the previous 3-year period, which have been audited by a certified public accountant or other auditor satisfactory to USAID; and approval by a CPA firm of the indirect cost rate proposed for the duration of this project; or detailed explanation of how the indirect rate was calculated.

7. On page 21, the RFA requests several cost documents from the applicant (i.e. SF 424/A/B, Representations and Certifications, NICRA, etc.). Are these items required from each member of the consortium group, or only from the prime?

Response: The SF 424/A/B is required from the prime only. The Reps and Certs are required from the Prime and sub-awardees. For the NICRA, please see response above.

8. Is USAID providing Custom Duty, VAT, and other tax exemptions?

Response: There is no current and comprehensive bilateral agreement between USAID and the Government of Lebanon that provides tax, duty and VAT exemptions for USAID funded implementing partners. However local law provides certain applicable exemptions that the implementing partner must seek and use including working with the counterpart host government officials to secure such exemptions from tax, VAT, duty and other types of taxes. It is recommended that the implementing partner seek the guidance of local counsel and current USAID partners operating in Lebanon as well as discuss options with host government counterparts in securing such exemptions. **For further guidance, see http://www.usaid.gov/lb/about_us/faqs.html**

9. Can USAID provide information on the customs clearance process? Will USAID assist in the duty-free clearance process?

Response: We have no information on the customs clearance process, as it is the duty of the implementing partner to secure such clearances when applicable. We do not assist in the duty-free clearance process. See response to the Question above.

10. Will there be any agreement with the Government of Lebanon to exempt the program from paying custom duty and taxes?

Response: There is no such plan for the near future. USAID/Lebanon is not in a position to comment on or speculate on any such future agreement.

11. On page 24 of the RFA, item 3. Are there any requirements for key personnel beyond what's mentioned in the RFA?

Response: No additional requirements for key personnel other than that stated in the RFA need to be submitted.

12. What is Lebanon's geographic code? Are there any specific guidelines or restriction for purchasing a vehicle in Lebanon? Is USAID providing authority to import vehicles into Lebanon duty free?

Response: The authorized geographic code for the procurement of goods and services under this project is 000. There are no specific guidelines or restriction for purchasing a vehicle in Lebanon other than those stated in the standard provisions and ADS 312. USAID is not providing authority to import vehicles into Lebanon duty free. However, to get customs duty free, please see response to question number 8 above and the following web-site: http://www.usaid.gov/lb/about_us/faqs.html

13. Will USAID authorize including the organizational chart required in Section IV. (A), page 21, as an attachment to the technical application?

Response: The organization chart can be an attachment. It will not count towards the 35 page limitation.

14. Will USAID authorize including the table which shows the level of effort for each position proposed required in Section IV. (A), page 21, as an attachment to the technical application?

Response: The level of effort table can be part of an attachment and will not count towards the 35 page limitation.

15. The RFA indicates that the Recipient will be required to submit a Performance Monitoring Plan (Section F, page 17). Can USAID confirm that applicants are not required to submit a draft Performance Monitoring Plan with their applications?

Response: A performance monitoring plan needs to be submitted after award and not with the application. A draft performance monitoring plan does not need to be submitted with the Application.

16. On pages 17-18, Sections F, G, and H require the “recipient” to provide a Performance Monitoring Plan, address Cross-cutting Themes, and submit a Branding and Marking Plan. Can we assume from this terminology that these components are not required of applicants but rather are due after the award is made? If they are to be included as part of the proposal, please indicate whether the PMP and Branding and Marking Plan can be included in the Annex.

Response: The PMP can be submitted after award. The Branding and Marking Plan will be submitted with the apparent winning Applicant i.e. it is not required to be submitted with the initial Application. Please see response to question 18 below.

17. If a draft Performance Monitoring Plan is required with applications, will USAID authorize applicants include it as an attachment to the technical application?

Response: A draft Performance Monitoring Plan is not required to be submitted with applications.

18. The RFA indicates that the Recipient will be required to submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan (Section H, page 18). Can USAID confirm that applicants are not required to submit a draft Branding Strategy and Marking Plan with their applications?

Response: Under Section V Application Review Information, it is stated that “The apparent successful applicant will be requested to propose a branding strategy and marking plan which provides for appropriate acknowledgment of USAID support, and which will be required as a material element of the Cooperative Agreement.” Thus, the Applicant does not need to submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan at the Application stage. However, he/she, if become an apparent successful Applicant, will be requested to submit the BSMP prior to award.

19. If a draft Branding Strategy and Marking Plan is required with applications, will USAID authorize applicants include it as an attachment to the technical application?

Response: Please see response to question 18 above.

20. The RFA indicates that the Recipient will be required to submit a Work Plan for the project (Section I, page 18). Can USAID confirm that applicants are not required to submit a draft Work Plan with their applications?

Response: As stated in the RFA, the work plan is to be submitted after award. Applicants are not required to submit a draft Work Plan with their applications.

21. If a draft Work Plan is required with applications, will USAID authorize applicants include it as an attachment to the technical application?

Response: A draft work plan is not required with applications.

22. Does USAID use a separate set of per diem rates for host-country nationals for different locations within Lebanon? If so, can USAID provide those rates to applicants?

Response: USAID does not use a separate set of per diem rates for host country nationals. Per diem rates must not exceed the maximum rates published by the Standard Regulations for each area.

23. The amount provided for the rehabilitation, science laboratories, computer labs, furniture, and laboratory furniture seems low considering the scope of the project? Is the \$33m a fixed amount?

Response: The \$33 million is not a fixed amount, but was provided as an initial estimate for budgeting purposes only. This cost estimate is subject to change based on the results of the assessment conducted following program award. As noted in the RFA, Section I, Funding Opportunity Description, under Section D, Activity Description that the D-RASATI project implementer will need to carry out an initial assessment and then with approvals from the MEHE and USAID will set forth to carry out project activities in the areas of implementing school infrastructural rehabilitation, including building and equipment renovations and repairs, furniture, and computer and science laboratories.

24. Three years for school rehab and lab equipping seems short for 1400 schools. Is this deadline fixed or flexible?

Response: As noted in the RFA in Section I, Funding Opportunity Description: “The Recipient will conduct a comprehensive assessment of all Lebanese public schools to understand their teacher training needs, current physical status and identify and prioritize their most immediate needs.” Although an assessment will be conducted of all 1,400 schools, the specific interventions to be carried out during the three-year timeframe of this program will be determined jointly by USAID, the Recipient, and the MEHE, who will “work in partnership to determine the best strategy for equitably providing schools with rehabilitation services, including deciding how to work with the schools that have already received USAID-

assistance through the LEAD program. USAID and MEHE official approval must be secured prior to beginning implementation.”

25. Will USAID consider that depending upon the results of the initial infrastructure assessment, it may not be possible to fully rehabilitate and equip all 1,400 schools to the MEHE standards as required in the RFA?

Response: See answer to question #2 above. It is not within the program’s scope to fully rehabilitate and equip all 1,400 public schools in Lebanon, but rather to upgrade their educational environments. Rehabilitation works will target schools based on the results of the initial assessment.

26. Will USAID ask the Government of Lebanon to contribute to the program? Or will the Government of Lebanon be committing any contribution?

Response: The specific contribution of the Government of Lebanon to this program will be defined through a Memorandum of Understanding that will be signed before program implementation begins. The program is expected to be implemented in partnership with the Government of Lebanon as described in the RFA.

27. Section II Award Information: \$33 million is earmarked to cover "rehabilitation works, laboratories and materials." Does this amount exclude administrative and management costs that will be associated with undertaking this activity?

Response: Yes.

28. On page 6, the RFA references "building capacity for MEHE to deliver quality in-service teacher training;" what role will CERD play in delivering this training and how do MEHE coordinate their efforts?

Response: The Implementing Partner, Recipient, is encouraged to coordinate with MEHE and CERD to understand their respective roles.

29. On page 8, under bullet 4), the last paragraph of the RFA states: “An external mid-term evaluation will be required and should be factored into the program budget.” (a) Is there a recommended budgetary range for this evaluation? (b) Will the final evaluation be external? And (c) should the cost be factored in the program budget? (d) Does USAID anticipate or expect the outcome measurements of D-RASATI interventions to include comparisons with private schools in Lebanon?

Response:

a) There is no recommended budgetary range for the mid-term evaluation,

b) Yes the final evaluation will be external.

c) No, the cost should not be factored in the program budget for the final evaluation.

d) DRASATI interventions should be in compliance with standards and specifications set by MEHE.

30. Will assistance to the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) include direct financial support?

Response: Assistance to the Center for Educational Research and Development is expected to include technical assistance and capacity building, rather than direct financial support.

31. The RFA indicates that “There are approximately 40 teacher training centers in Lebanon and these centers, run by CERD, provide in-service teacher training for public schools” (page 13). Please provide the names and locations of these training centers.

Response: Applicants are encouraged to contact MEHE directly for this information.

32. Can USAID provide the local compensation plan for CCN staff to all applicants?

Response: The parameters of the local compensation plan will be shared with the apparently successful applicant prior to program award.