



USAID | WEST BANK/GAZA

Solicitation No.: RFA-294-17-000002

Title: Education for the Future Activity

Amendment No.: One (1)

Amendment Issuance Date: April 24, 2017

Subject: Education for the Future, Request for Applications (RFA), Amendment No. One (1)

Dear Prospective Applicants:

The purpose of this amendment is to provide responses to the questions received in response to the subject RFA.

All other terms and conditions of this RFA remain unchanged.

Sincerely,

Jason Gilpin
Agreement Officer
USAID/West Bank and Gaza

Request for Application RFA-294-17-000002

Education for the Future Activity

Amendment No. 1 Questions and Answers

1. **Question:** Will the activity cover the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip?

Answer: The Activity will not cover Gaza.

2. **Question:** Would USAID be open to regrouping some of the responsibilities within the key personnel descriptions on pages 34-35, as long as all responsibilities are covered in the four key positions?

Answer: Yes, if there is a good justification in the application for doing so.

3. **Question:** Among the indicators listed for IR2 on page 26 of the RFA is the following: “Percentage of improvement of the daily functions at the central ministry, district and school levels.” Please confirm that the intention is to track the *number* of daily functions that are improved, as it would be difficult to assess the actual percentage by which a specific function has improved.

Answer: USAID anticipates that the percentage of change, rather than the number of daily functions, will be tracked. This calculation will be drawn from the benchmarks / milestones that are fully or partially achieved based on targets in the Annual Implementation Plan and Performance Monitoring Plan.

4. **Question:** The RFA says teachers in selected schools who teach grades 1-10 will be selected to receive training at NIET... priority will be given to teachers of English, Arabic, Math, Science and Technology. Grades 1-4 do not have subject teachers, the teachers at these grades are “classroom teachers” they teach all subjects, except English which is taught by an English teacher. Are these teachers still included? Or the training is limited to grades 5-10 as it is in LTD.

Answer: Training is not limited to teachers of grades 5 – 10, but includes all eligible teachers from grades 1- 9 (based on the definition of Basic Education in the new Education Law). There should be clear criteria for selection of trainees that take into consideration matters such as qualification of teachers, gender equality, prioritization of the five subject matters (English, Arabic, Math, sciences and technology), the unmet needs for training, etc. Regarding Training for Teachers of Grades 1-4, applicants should consider that teacher training for these grades is a new area for USAID and training in universities for teachers for Grades 1-4 have recently been funded by other donors. After award, the Recipient will work in close coordination with the MOEHE, USAID and other stakeholders (including the World Bank and European Joint Financing Partners) to devise

an optimal plan for interventions for teacher training in these grade levels. As such, the venue and content of the teacher training for grades 1-4 is not expected to be identified at time of application.

5. **Question:** When does USAID anticipate this program will begin?

Answer: USAID anticipates that the program will begin in October 2017.

6. **Question:** Could USAID confirm that that the geographic scope of this activity includes East Jerusalem but not Gaza?

Answer: Gaza is not included in the scope of this Activity. East Jerusalem is included in the geographic scope of this Activity.

7. **Question:** On page 19, the solicitation states, “Teachers in selected schools who teach grades 1–10 (or 1-9 if the new Education Law is ratified) will be selected to receive training at NIET, based on the criteria and process to be agreed upon by MOEHE, NIET and USAID.” Considering the new education law could be ratified before this program begins, should Applicants budget for program activities in grades 1-9 or grades 1-10?

Answer: The Education Law has been ratified recently by the Palestinian President. “Basic Education” is now considered grades 1 – 9, which is the target of this Activity.

AMENDMENT TO THE RFA:

The RFA is hereby amended to reflect grades 1-9 as defining “basic education” throughout the RFA, beginning on page 9 of the RFA.

8. **Question:** The RFA states, “USAID does not require cost sharing under this RFA” (p. 40); but, the applicant is asked to “provide in-kind assistance in support of the approved SIPs” (p. 20) and “support the development, and **partial funding**, of School Improvement Plans (SIPs), for all targeted schools” (p. 20). Would USAID please clarify:

- a. What constitutes “in-kind” assistance in support of approved SIPs?

In-kind assistance covers a wide spectrum of interventions that illustratively could include procurement of IT equipment, installation of shades in playgrounds, renovation of computer lab rooms, etc. The important point to add here is that no cash transfer to schools shall take place.

- b. Is some portion of activity funds required to support some actions identified in approved SIPs?

Yes. A portion of activity funds shall be allocated to implement selected components of School Improvement Plans.

- c. If cost share is not required, how will SIPs get fully funded?

The school should be trained and encouraged to fund-raise from the community, private sector, local authorities, development organizations and others to fund components under SIPs. Some components of SIPs might go unfunded for a while, but the exercise of developing SIPs and fund raising is worth undertaking.

9. **Question:** One of the indicators, referenced on p. 21, is the “Percentage improvement in students’ utilization of 21st century skills.” Would USAID please clarify if the indicator is meant to focus on the improvement in the student’s utilization of the skills, or the improvement in the student’s skills?

Answer: The indicator is meant to focus on improvement in students’ utilization of 21st century skills.

10. **Question:** Would USAID please clarify what “New” means in reference to several indicators mentioned on page 21: New Number of males age 10-14, New number of females age 10-14, New number of males age 15-19, New number of females age 15-19, New number of learners with disabilities?

Answer: The word “New” refers to new sub-indicators added recently to the F Framework developed by Washington. The parent indicator is as stated on page 21: “3.2.1-14: Number of learners in primary schools and/or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance.” Please ignore the word “New” in the mentioned sub-indicators as it has no technical meaning other than flagging to users that the indicators have been added recently.

11. **Question:** The RFA requires that the Respondent collects information on the number of students by age, gender, and disability. Does the MOEHE already collect this information, and if so, by what means and how frequently?

Answer: The MOEHE already collects this information through mandatory direct reporting by schools. MOEHE reports on this data on annual basis.

12. **Question:** Would USAID please provide a summary / assessment of the pilot LTD project referenced on page 23 to support applicants developing plans to implement similar coding activities in additional schools?

Answer: The pilot activity on coding has been launched recently and no assessment has occurred to date. LTD has begun a pilot program to introduce coding / programming in schools for grades 9 in Hebron and Jenin as a pilot phase. In Hebron, LTD identified consultants, recent IT graduates and /or senior university students to help implement this initiative. The consultants in Hebron produced a booklet to serve as a guide for the school students on the chosen language of coding – Scratch. Consultants trained the selected university graduates/students who will conduct implementation in the schools and briefed them on the goal of the program, how to approach the students and handle the classroom along with logistical requirements. Thus far, there are 18 coordinators in 32 schools teaching grade 9 in Hebron, North Hebron and South Hebron. In Jenin, the consultants

prepared a draft booklet for a different programming language known as C-Sharp. The pilot in Jenin is only in one school with a plan to include more by September 2017.

13. **Question:** IR 3.1 is phrased differently on pages 18 and 24. Please confirm which version is to be used.

Answer: The version on page 24 is to be used. IR3.1 reads as: Expanded and well developed non formal education programs implemented and sustained.

14. **Question:** On page 24, IR 3.1's last indicator (Number of civil society partnerships in support of non-formal education programs) appears to gather the same information as the 3rd indicator (Number of public and private civil society institutions engaged in and supported non-formal education programs). Would USAID consider deleting the last indicator or rephrasing to make the difference between the indicators clearer?

Answer: Partnerships (mentioned in last indicator for IR 3.1) refer to relatively longer term relationships that could span a good part of the Activity's lifetime and has multidimensional aspects to help realize the objectives of the Activity. "Institutions engaged" as mentioned in the third indicator refer to short term engagements such as support to a one-day activity, or sponsoring a contest, or hosting a workshop. In this sense engagements are for a short duration, less costly, and less strategic in terms of contributions to realizing the overall objectives of the Activity. In all cases, the Applicant may propose other terminology to distinguish between these two indicators as particularly used in the M&E Plan.

15. **Question:** On page 24, would USAID consider including disaggregation in the 3rd indicator under 3.1 – "Number of private civil society institutions engaged in supporting non-formal education programs disaggregated by type of support (financial and/or in-kind)?"

Answer: USAID may consider disaggregation of the mentioned indicator, and modifications to other proposed indicators, at a later stage when the M&E plan is prepared by the Recipient after award. For the sake of responding to the current solicitation, USAID maintains the language of the indicators as mentioned in the solicitation document.

16. **Question:** The Program Manager/Technical Expert qualifications include the requirement for "at least 10 years of experience managing educational programs" (p. 35). Would USAID consider broadening the requirement to say, "at least 10 years of experience in program management, with at least 5 years managing education programs"?

Answer: USAID accepts the proposed language and hereby posts an **AMENDMENT TO THE RFA:** On page 35, for the Program Manager/Technical Expert position, the minimum qualifications is hereby amended to "at least 10 years of experience in program management, with at least 5 years managing education programs".

17. **Question:** The description of collaborative involvement on page 38 of the solicitation states, "USAID's representative will have concurrence on the selection process of

participating governmental and non-governmental Higher Education Institutions, and concurrence on the final selected HEIs”. Would USAID confirm the selection process referenced should be applied to the selection of the 400 schools rather than governmental and non-governmental Higher Education Institutions?

Answer: USAID confirms that the selection process mentioned on page 38 refers to the selection of 400 schools. Should the applicant propose working with HEI to implement components under the Education for the Future Activity, USAID’s concurrence is required on the selection of higher education institutions.

18. **Question:** USAID requires or states a preference for candidates with Arabic language competency for all key personnel positions except the Compliance Manager. Would USAID like to require Arabic language competency for the Compliance Manager position?

Answer: This Section remains unchanged.

19. **Question:** The RFA references the 2015 Annual Report published by the MOEHE. Would USAID please share the report?

Answer: The Annual Report 2015 is available at MOEHE web site:
<http://www.moehe.gov.ps/en/Brochures-Studies>

20. **Question:** Under section F.3.g Final Report, Timing (p. 66), the deadline to submit the Final Report is indicated as not less than 60 days prior to the end of the award period, while the section F.3.3 Reporting Schedule (p.68), indicates that the deadline is 90 calendar days after the expiration or termination of the award. Please confirm the correct deadline.

Answer: The correct deadline for submission of the final report is 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award.

AMENDMENT TO THE RFA:

On Page 66, Section F.3.g, the deadline to submit the final report is 90 days.

21. **Question:** Would USAID please clarify who will be the vetting official for this opportunity?

Answer: USAID/West Bank and Gaza’s Program Support Unit (PSU) is responsible for vetting.

22. **Question:** Would USAID please confirm that the vetting process for key individuals and partners can occur at point of award?

Answer: Vetting is required “prior to”.

23. **Question:** Page 72 of the RFA states, “For purposes of this requirement, “key individuals” means (i) principal officers of the organization’s governing body (e.g., chairman, vice chairman, treasurer and secretary of the board of directors or board of

trustees); (ii) the principal officer and deputy principal officer of the organization (e.g., executive director, deputy director, president, vice president); (iii) the program manager or chief of party for the USAID-financed program; and (iv) any other person with significant responsibilities for administration of USAID-financed activities or resources.”

Would USAID please confirm that the Program Manager / Technical Specialist, Compliance Manager, and M&E Manager for this activity are NOT included in the category of key individuals?

Answer: When identifying the legal entity (organization), the key individuals of the organization are subject for vetting as instructed in Mission Order 21:

c. Vetting of "Key Individuals": Whenever an organization must be vetted, each of the organization's "key individuals" must also be vetted. "Key individuals" means:

- (1) Principal officers of the organization's governing body (e.g., chairman, vice chairman, treasurer or secretary of the board of directors or board of trustees);
- (2) The principal officer and deputy principal officer of the organization (e.g., executive director, deputy director; president, vice president);
- (3) The program manager or chief of party for the USAID-financed program; and
- (4) Any other person with significant responsibilities for administration of USAID financed activities or resources.

Therefore, Program Manager / Technical Specialist, Compliance Manager, and M&E Manager or any key individual that have significant responsibilities on USAID project or Authorized signature, is also identified as key individual and subject to vetting.

24. **Question:** Please confirm that USAID will be contracting and paying for an audit firm to conduct the annual audit and that the audit covers both the Prime and sub-recipients.

Answer: The Agency Contracted Audit (ACA) will be procured by USAID/WBG. Applicants must not budget for or include any cost associated with ACA in their cost application.

25. **Question:** (a) To ensure consistent cost comparisons across applicants, would USAID consider providing a plug figure for school renovation activities?

Answer: Thank you for your comment. The plug figure is hereby \$4,000,000.

AMENDMENT TO THE RFA: Section D.5.g, insert the following:

“School Renovation Activities: All applicants must budget a plug figure of \$4,000,000 for the life of the award for school renovation activities to support the program description. This line item does not need to be broken down in budget tables or explained in detail in the cost narrative.”

Question: (b) If USAID will not consider providing a plug figure, would USAID consider providing the number of schools in which renovation activities will likely take place?

Answer: Resolved in Answer 26(a) above.

26. Question: Can NGOs and CBOs from Gaza apply under the RFA?

Answer: In accordance with the RFA, Section C.1 'Eligible Applicants', NGOs and CBOs from Gaza may apply under this opportunity.

27. Question: Do we need to speak Palestine language and provide services as same?

Answer: Please refer to the requirement under A.10 'key personnel' of the RFA.

28. Question: Can a US nonprofit apply for this grant?

Answer: In accordance with Section C.1 of the RFA, 'C.1 Eligible Applicants', 'Qualified U.S. and non-U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), U.S. Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs), and U.S. and non-U.S. for profit firms (provided they forgo profit) may participate in this funding opportunity. '

29. Question: Do you have a template to write the application under the RFA?

Answer: No, an application template will not be provided.

30. Question: Page 40 states that "*USAID does not require cost sharing under this RFA*" while Page 58 on Review and Selection process states that "*Inclusion of cost share in the application may be considered to break a tie if all technical and cost factors between two applications are otherwise equal*". Page 59 also states "*Cost Applications...will be evaluated for cost effectiveness including the level of proposed cost share*":

2 CFR 200.306 (a), albeit referring to research proposals, states that if cost share commitments are voluntary, it cannot be used as a factor during the merit review of applications. Since this NOFO does not explicitly require cost sharing, please confirm that any voluntary cost share will not influence the decision of the review panel.

Answer: Consistent with the CFR as well the Agency's regulations (ADS 303.3.10.2), cost sharing may be considered if the funding announcement addresses how it will be considered. With specific regard to this RFA, cost sharing will be considered should there be a tie between Applicants where the technical and cost factors are evaluated equally.

31. Question: Page 62 reflects the due date of the Implementation Plan as 90 days after the award start date. Page 62 reflects the M&E Plan due date as "Timing: Within 60 days after award attached to the Implementation Plan".

Given that these two documents are meant to be submitted together, can we change the M&E Plan due date to 90 days after award attached to the Implementation Plan? Please note that Page 68 tags the Implementation Plan due date as 60 days.

Answer: The correct deadline for submission of the Implementation plan and the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan is 90 days after the issuance of the award.

Amendment to the RFA:

On page 63, Section F.3.2, the deadline to submit the M&E plan is 90 days.

On page 68, Section F.3.3, the deadline to submit the Implementation Plan is 90 days.

32. **Question:** Page 66 states *“The annual report must be submitted no later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal year other than the last year of contract performance, when the final report will be submitted”*.

Would USAID consider changing this due date per 2 CFR 200.328 (b) (1) to: “annual reports must be due 90 calendar days after the reporting period”? Page 68 does reflect this correct, regulatory due date.

Answer: Thank you for the question. We have amended this section.

AMENDMENT TO THE RFA:

Page 65, remove d) in its entirety and replace with the following:

“d.) Annual Performance Reports (Annual Report)

Purpose: The Annual Report will cover all of the items included in the Quarterly reports, with a focus on results over the entire award fiscal year. The Annual Report will be used by USAID to assess the status of the activity in relation to the time remaining for performance. Each Annual Report will include an assessment as to whether the objective of the award will be accomplished within the remaining time and available resources.

In addition, the Recipient should include an assessment as to the effectiveness of the M&E Plan in measuring impact including:

1. The status of evaluation activities including the establishment of baseline data;
2. The appropriateness of the data collected to measure activity impact;
3. The identification of unanticipated challenges in the collection of evaluation data;
4. The appropriateness of the overall activity M&E Plan to measure impact and any proposed revisions thereto;
5. Practical or political factors that should be considered when analyzing the performance data;
- and
6. The effectiveness of the evaluation activities to inform programming.

Timing: The Annual Report will be submitted in lieu of the 4th Quarterly Report. The DRAFT Annual Report will be due within 30 days after the end of every fiscal year, with the final due within 90 days after the end of every fiscal year. For example, the first Annual Report will cover from time of award through 30 September 2018. The DRAFT Annual Report will be due on 30 October 2018 and the FINAL Annual Report will be due on 30 December 2018.

33. **Question:** Page 78 contains “Requirements for Personnel Compensation” that sets out thresholds for Annual Salary Increases as follows: “CCN Staff: One annual salary increase of not more than 5% after the employee’s completing of each 12 months of satisfactory services under this Agreement”. There is an identical maximum threshold of 5% also cited for International Staff.

Unlike Acquisition instruments, there is no maximum threshold applied by USAID for Assistance, or Cooperative Agreements. 2 CFR 200 Subpart E (cost principles) do not mention any merit salary increase thresholds. Annual Salary increases for CCNs would rather be determined by the Recipient organization’s policies and procedures. Will USAID be willing to remove this condition from the NOFO in line with Assistance regulation?

Answer: This section is in accordance with assistance regulations. To remain in accordance with the cost principles in particular 2CFR200.403, in order to be allowable, costs must ‘Be necessary and reasonable for the performance of the Federal award and be allocable thereto under these principles.’ Therefore, USAID/WBG has determined that 5% increase specified in the RFA is reasonable.

34. **Question:** Page 71 on Capital Assistance states that “Prior to committing any USAID funds for capital assistance projects...the Recipient will provide USAID with sufficient information to determine that Palestinian counterpart institutions and communities have the capacity to maintain and utilize the assistance effectively”. Examples of capital assistance are given as “mechanical items and other equipment purchased for use by local partners”.

Can USAID be more specific on what constitutes capital assistance under this Agreement? Our interpretation of Section 611(e) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 provides that whenever certain types of funds are proposed to be used for a capital assistance project exceeding \$1 million, the head of agency must take into consideration the mission director’s certification as to the capability of the country to effectively maintain and utilize the project. Is that \$1M threshold applied to this award?

Answer: Thank you for the question. **Amendment to the RFA:**

The Recipient will provide USAID with sufficient information to assist the Mission in determining that Palestinian counterpart institutions and communities have the capacity to maintain and utilize the assistance effectively.

35. **Question:** The RFA cover sheet notes the proposal deadline as May 12, 2017 at **12 AM** Jerusalem time. However, page 44 notes that proposals will only be accepted between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM. Could USAID please clarify whether the intended deadline was May 12, 2017 by **12 PM** Jerusalem time?

Answer: AMENDMENT TO THE RFA:

The due date and time for submission of applications is 'May 12, 2017 at 12:00 PM'

36. **Question:** USAID has requested a hard-copy submission of Offeror's proposal. Would USAID consider an electronic-only submission for this solicitation?

Answer: No, hard copies are still required under this solicitation.

37. **Question:** If USAID will not consider an electronic-only submission, would USAID consider moving the hard copy submission deadline to the end of the day on May 18, with electronic submissions due on May 12?

Answer: The due date for submission of electronic and hard copies remains unchanged, May 12, 2017 at 12:00 PM.

38. **Question:** Page 16 of the solicitation states, "The predecessor activities serving basic education are scheduled to end in June 2018 (LTD) and March 2017 (SSP)." We understand that these activities were extended beyond those dates. Would USAID please confirm the new end dates for the LTD and SSP activities?

Answer: The completion date for the Leadership and Development Program (LTD) is June 2018. The completion date for the School Support Program (SSP) is August 2018.

AMENDMENT TO THE RFA:

Page 16, Section A.3, correct the end date of SSP. "The predecessor activities serving basic education are scheduled to end in June 2018 (LTD), and August 2018 (SSP)."

39. **Question:** We noticed the below inconsistency in defining sub-awardees that will be substantially involved in implementing the award, which could lead to confusion. On page 49, the RFA is indicating the following language regarding the Institutional Experience: "Similar information must be provided for every proposed partner organization that would represent 25% or more of the total proposed cost of the award". However, for Past Performance, Appendix A - Relevant Past Performance Information and Proposed Sub-awards (contracts/grants), the language is a little different, "Applicants who intend to utilize subawardees who will be substantially involved in implementation (i.e. receiving 25% or more of the total proposed activity cost)." Please clarify.

Answer: Please be advised that the same information is provided in both sections. For the purpose of this comparison, applicants should note that 'Activity' is the same as 'Award'.