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Issue Date: October 15, 2021
Deadline for Questions: October 25, 2021, 4:00 PM (Morocco Time)
Concept Papers Deadline Submission: **November 22, 2021**
Closing Time: 4:00 PM (Morocco Time)

Amendment: 000001
Amendment Issue Date: November 8, 2021

Subject: USAID/Morocco Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: 72060822RFA00001 - Amendment 000001

Program/Opportunity Title: Bridge to Middle School Activity

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 98.001

To: All Interested Respondents/Parties:

The purpose of this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) amendment 000001 is to extend the submission of the Concept papers to **November 22, 2021 at 4:00 PM (Morocco Time)** and provide answers to questions raised by prospective applicants in reference to subject NOFO, as reflected on pages 2 through 13 of this amendment as well as revise specific sections in the NOFO impacted by the responses. The revisions to the NOFO are highlighted in yellow in the Revised NOFO.

Attachment 2 has been revised and other attachments have been added as follows:

Attachment 2 - Revised Concept Paper Template

Attachment 4 - JICA general education engagement information

Attachment 5 - Morocco Landscape Assessment for Multilingual instruction

Attachment 6 - Task 1a Arabic Literacy Segment final

Attachment 7 - Vision_strateg_CSEF16004fr

This amendment 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 of the NOFO remain unchanged

Thank you for your interest in USAID Programs.

Sincerely,

Zachary Clarke
Regional Agreement Officer

Amendment No. 000001 - NOFO 72060822RFA00001

Bridge to Middle School Activity

Attachment No.1 - Questions & Answers

Question 1: Can USAID please clarify if public and/or universities can be considered as “qualified local partners?” If not, can USAID please provide a definition of qualified local partner?

USAID Answer 1: Yes, local higher education institutions (HEIs) can be considered as “qualified local partners”. In addition, a qualified local partner can be public, private, NGOs, or other Moroccan organizations. The NOFO has been updated accordingly on page 8. Please see Revised NOFO.

Question 2: Section V.3 Can USAID please provide these the attachments referenced on the bottom of page 7? (“Please see information in the attachments on relevant initiatives in teacher training and assessment”)

USAID Answer 2: The attachments referenced on the bottom of page 7 are provided.

Question 3: Can USAID please clarify if the Ministry will provide office space in Rabat and in the regions (with the academies) to co-locate?

USAID Answer 3: This has not been determined yet and can/will be discussed with the MEN during Phase 2 with the Apparently Successful Applicant. The merit review of concept papers will not be impacted by any suggestions/proposals on this question of co-location. Therefore, USAID asks that the applicants include the office space costs in their proposed budget.

Question 4: The solicitation mentions that under Objective Two, that *Bridge* partner(s) will align the Grades 7-9 Arabic curricula with the Global Proficiency Framework.

- Does USAID expect *Bridge* to also align the Grades 4-6 Arabic curricula to the GPF?
- Does USAID expect *Bridge* to also implement policy-linking workshops to set national benchmarks for Arabic? If so, for what grades?

USAID Answer 4: Yes, USAID expects *Bridge* to also align the Grades 4-6 Arabic curricula to the GPF. In addition, USAID expects *Bridge* to also implement policy-linking workshops to set national benchmarks for Arabic for Grades 4-6.

Question 5: Can USAID clarify if applicants should identify and propose geographic areas for implementation or will that be done in consultation with the MEN and USAID?

USAID Answer 5: The applicant can propose possible geographic areas for implementation for planning and cost purposes with the understanding that final selection of geographic areas will be done in consultation with the MEN and USAID during Phase 2, the co-creation process.

Question 6: Page 10, Objective 2, there is mention made of a recent USAID-sponsored review of the current Arabic language curriculum. Can USAID please provide a link to the review documentation?

USAID Answer 6: The final USAID-sponsored review of the current Arabic language curriculum was included as an attachment to the Revised NOFO.

Question 7: Page 11, paragraphs 2 and 3, mention is made of USAID-supported work for pilot production of 7th grade prototypes. Can USAID provide a link so that any reports or products from this intervention can be reviewed?

USAID Answer 7: USAID is still working on the production of the 7th grade prototypes and other similar guides for grades 8 and 9 will not be available until early 2022.

Question 8: Page 15, the solicitation mentions a new BA teaching degree funded by USAID under the HEP-M program. Can USAID please provide a link for quarterly reports or other documents about recent developments of this program?

USAID Answer 8: Kindly refer to this [link](#) for resources and recent development of this program.

Question 9: Page 14 states that “USAID anticipates conducting a process evaluation of the program’s implementation, as well as an impact evaluation restricted to components of the *Bridge* pilot school interventions.” Can USAID please clarify whether these processes and impact evaluations will be conducted by an external evaluator, or whether USAID anticipates these evaluations to be conducted by *Bridge*?

USAID Answer 9: The process evaluation will be conducted by *Bridge*. The impact evaluation will be conducted by an external evaluator contracted by USAID. The NOFO has been updated accordingly on Page 14. Please see Revised NOFO.

Question 10: Section IV of Attachment 2 Concept Paper Template states that the applicant should “describe how the proposed activities and/or overall project respond to each of the core objectives described in Section III.” Can USAID please clarify if this is referring to Section III of the NOFO or of Attachment 2 Concept Paper Template?

USAID Answer 10: SECTION IV – CORE OBJECTIVES AND SUSTAINABILITY of Attachment 2 Concept Paper Template has been deleted. Please refer to USAID Answer # 40.

Question 11: Can USAID please clarify if there is a page limitation for Attachment 2, Section VI A. Partner Information?

USAID Answer 11: There is no limitation of pages under the Attachment 2 template Section V (ex Section VI) A. Partner Information. However, USAID expects the applicant to be precise and concise and use the optional spreadsheet format provided for the response as an example.

Question 12: Page 1, the NOFO states “If the Co-creation is successful the Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA) will be invited to Phase 3 and requested to submit a Full Application.” Can USAID please clarify if a single ASA will be chosen? What if the Co-creation is NOT successful? In this case, will USAID consider another Co-creation process with another applicant?

USAID Answer 12: Yes, only one ASA will be selected at Phase 1 (Concept Papers) and invited to Phase 2 (Co-creation). This same applicant may be invited to Phase 3 to submit a Full Application upon a successful Co-creation. If the Co-creation is not successful, USAID/Morocco may consider another Co-creation process with another highly ranked applicant. The NOFO has been updated accordingly on Page 1. Please see Revised NOFO.

Question 13: Page 6, the solicitation states that “the majority of the costs in the scale-up phases will be incurred by MEN.” What provisions will be made for the Ministry’s engagement in implementing the scale-up? Can USAID anticipate that these provisions will include the scale-up costs in the AREFs’ budgets?

USAID Answer 13: MEN is a critical partner in Bridge and has been extremely active in the design of this program. Ensuring successful implementation, including scale-up phases, will require close collaboration between USAID, the Bridge Implementing Partner, and MEN. Work plans, implementation targets and timelines for scale-up will be developed jointly by all partners during co-creation and into the implementation period. Provisions for scale-up will include close collaboration with AREFs.

Question 14: Page 6, the solicitation states that “printing and distributing manuals and guides” as USAID’s responsibility; however, the table that follows shows that this item will be the MEN’s responsibility. Could the text be referring to the experimentation materials while the item in the table is referring to the scale-up materials?

USAID Answer 14: Yes, the text is referring to the experimentation materials which is USAID’s Implementing Partner’s responsibility.

Question 15: Page 7, the solicitation states that “the ministry is anticipating a similar ‘whole school approach to the work under the *Bridge* program as used in the Lycee Atahadi program.” Will *Bridge* be allowed to (partially) fund infrastructure and equipment for the pilot schools" Projets d'établissement intégrés -- PEI", following the example of MCC?

USAID Answer 15: No, the Bridge program will not fund infrastructure and equipment for the pilot schools. The program will cover the costs of printing and distribution of manuals and guides in the pilot schools.

Question 16: The 4 cross-cutting technical considerations on p. 8 of the NOFO are different from those on the draft Theory of Change. Page 25, the cross-cutting issues listed include private-sector engagement, but private sector engagement is listed separately from the cross-cutting issues. Can USAID please clarify the cross-cutting technical considerations?

USAID Answer 16: As stated on page 25, the Concept Paper review process will include assessing applicants’ grasp and ideas on cross-cutting issues “such as gender, technology, private sector engagement and climate change.” Applicants are not limited exclusively to those listed cross-cutting issues. For ease of understanding, the NOFO has been updated on page 8 to add the Private Sector Engagement (PSE) as a bullet under ‘4. Cross-Cutting Technical Considerations’ rather than a separate section (#5).

Question 17: Page 1, Cover Letter: We kindly request that USAID/Morocco provide anticipated dates or an estimated timeframe for Phase 1 Concept Paper selection and Phase 2 (Co-Creation) to assist applicant planning.

USAID Answer 17: An estimated timeframe for Phase 1 Concept Paper Selection is December 2021; an estimated timeframe for the start of Phase 2 co-creation is January 2022.

Question 18: On page 5, Program Results, USAID states, “Bridge is anticipated to achieve quantifiable results at both the goal and the objective level,” with both Objective One and Two’s results being to “achieve increases in proficiency.” Please clarify if these increases are determined as part of the co-creation or predicted in the concept note by the offeror?

USAID Answer 18: The applicant should include intended and predicted levels of increased proficiency to demonstrate the applicant’s understanding of the potential for increase and time needed to reflect the increases. These predictions will be validated and/or refined during the Co-creation phase.

Question 19: On pages 5-6, Program Parameters, USAID states, “Bridge will operate in 30 primary schools and 60 middle schools across 3 regions of Morocco, with a proportional split between public and private schools, and with a clear “feeder” relationship between the selected primary and middle schools.”

- a. Given the specifications on the number of schools (30 primary, 60 middle school), it is likely that all primary schools can be linked with a middle school. However, because there typically are fewer middle schools than primary schools, it is less likely that all 60 middle schools will be linked to the targeted primary schools. Please confirm that the linkage between primary and middle schools pertains to the 30 primary schools and not all 60 of the middle schools.

USAID Answer 19a: All 30 primary schools must link to the targeted 60 schools. While it is not certain whether students from the 30 primary schools will matriculate to all targeted 60 schools, the partner - in collaboration with USAID during school selection - will seek to make this linkage using available data. The final selection of schools will be approved by USAID and MEN.

- b. Please provide the rationale and purpose for including private schools in the experimental sample and greater specification for private school selection. For example:

- i. Will their performance be compared with public schools? What is the research question or development hypothesis that inclusion of private schools will address?

USAID Answer 19b.i.: Yes, the performance will be compared with public schools. The overall objective is to pilot and test the new innovative pedagogical approaches that will be introduced in the curriculum across all public and private schools. The private and public schools will be required to implement the new curriculum once it becomes official. The research question will be (a) what are the challenges in implementing the new approaches in public and private schools and (b) what are the opportunities to accelerate change within Moroccan classrooms?

- ii. Is selection predicated on language of instruction and curricula, in addition to being located in a Bridge priority region?

USAID Answer 19.b.ii: The selection will be based on the representation of the private sector within the targeted regions and types of private schools: bilingual or trilingual.

iii. Are private schools expected to use the new government curricula and materials?

USAID Answer 19.b.iii: By virtue of Law 06-00 which governs the private education system, all private schools are mandated to apply the standard Moroccan curriculum and may add additional subjects if authorised by the Ministry.

Question 20: Page 6, Geographic Coverage: Please clarify whether the Applicant is expected to propose (1) three potential regions and (2) identify specific schools for consideration in the Concept Paper.

USAID Answer 20: Refer to USAID Answer #5. Also, USAID does not expect the applicant to identify specific schools, but may do so for cost purposes. Final selection of schools will be approved by MEN and USAID.

Question 21: Page 6, Financial Responsibility by Program Phase: Please specify the MOE scale-up plan and schedule for each grade and subject and clarify whether the Bridge Activity is expected to stop experimentation and its financial support for named inputs after one year of work in each grade (following the timelines on pages 10 and 12) or whether it will provide full support for on-going experimentation in all grades and subjects in the targeted schools over the life of the project.

USAID Answer 21: The Bridge program is expected to provide full support for on-going experimentation in all grades and subjects in targeted schools over the life of the project.

Question 22: On page 7 USAID states, “...(please see information in the attachments on relevant initiatives in teacher training and assessment),” but there are no such attachments. Can USAID please provide this additional information?

USAID Answer 22: Please refer to USAID Answer #2.

Question 23: Page 7, Collaboration and Sub-Awards: USAID states, “JICA will work in parallel to the Bridge partner to develop the math and IT modules needed for middle school instruction under Bridge. USAID, the MEN and JICA will coordinate to achieve the STEM goals of Bridge. As STEM programs involve the integrated approach to teaching and learning of science, technology and mathematics, Bridge will work closely with JICA to ensure the necessary integration.” We kindly request that USAID provide further clarification about JICA’s relation to Bridge.

a. Will USAID and the MEN coordinate with JICA to ensure that JICA’s timeline to develop the necessary math and IT modules is aligned with USAID and the MEN’s calendar for the piloting and revisions of all new middle school curricula and materials on page 12?

USAID Answer 23: Yes USAID and MEN will play a coordinating role to ensure successful alignment.

Question 24: On page 7, Collaboration and Sub-Awards, USAID states, “Bridge partners should examine how to use the results of the Lycee Atahadi program in teacher training, materials digitization, and CSO and parent involvement.” We kindly request USAID to share results from MCC’s “Lycee Atahadi” program.

USAID Answer 24: The Lycee Atahadi program is not complete so there are no final reports to share. For more information on MCC's work in Morocco, please see: <https://www.mcamorocco.ma/fr/pes?a=1>

Question 25: On page 9, Objective 1 USAID states, “the Recipient of the Bridge program will undertake a mandatory study, in the pilot schools, that will address two fundamental questions: a) what are the current performance levels of the grades 4, 5, and 6 students in Arabic (reading), math, and science; and b) what is the degree of application of the new primary school curricula in those subjects?” and “Each intervention selected must be well-justified by the data from the performance outcomes study.” Please clarify if the “mandatory study” is the same as the “performance outcomes study.”

USAID Answer 25: Yes, the mandatory study is the performance outcomes study.

Question 26: Page 9, Footnote 5: Please provide the link(s) to the USAID studies referred to in the footnote.

USAID Answer 26: Please refer to USAID Answer # 6.

Question 27: Page 10, Objective 1 Implementation calendar:

- a. It is not clear whether the year spans are based on the USG fiscal year, the MEN academic calendar or the expected Bridge start date. We kindly request that USAID specify the starting month for the year spans (e.g., 2022-23) provided in the implementation calendars on pages 10 and 12.

USAID Answer 27a:: The dates in the timeline represent the academic calendar.

- b. Page 10, Objective 1 (Implementation Calendar): We kindly request that USAID allow applicants to propose modifications to this implementation timeline if any issues are identified during the design process.

USAID Answer 27b: During the Phase 2 Co-creation process, and in collaboration with the MEN, implementation timelines will be discussed and agreed upon with all stakeholders.

- c. Please clarify whether the implementation calendars on pages 10 and 12 call for only one year of experimentation, testing and support for each grade level interventions in the pilot schools. (i.e., Will Grade 4 and 7 intervention experimentation and support continue for three years, Grade 5 and 8 for two years, and Grade 6 and 9 for one year?

USAID Answer 27c: It is anticipated that the first year will require experimentation, testing and support for Grade 7, in addition to Grades 4, 5 and 6. The second year will require experimentation, testing and support for Grade 8, and likely additional support to grades 4, 5 and 6 to mitigate implementation challenges during previous national scale-up under the USAID's National Reading Program which ends in October 2022. During the Phase 2 Co-creation process, and in collaboration with the MEN, implementation timelines will be discussed and agreed upon with all stakeholders. The timeline in the NOFO is still notional. Partners are encouraged to use the timeline to inform but not restrict concept papers submitted in response to the NOFO.

Question 28: Page 10, Objective 2 (Arabic Language): We kindly request that USAID provide access to the “recent USAID-sponsored review of the current Arabic language curriculum for middle school.”

USAID Answer 28: Please refer to USAID Answer # 6.

Question 29: Page 11, Objective 2 (English Language): We kindly request that USAID provide access to the products developed by the USAID-sponsored consultants regarding the “2021 pilot production of 7th grade prototype thematic units, lessons, and teachers guides for middle schools.” Also, please confirm that other similar materials for Grades 8 and 9 have not been developed.

USAID Answer 29: Please refer to USAID Answer # 7.

Question 30: In footnote 6 on page 10 USAID states, “Although there is a 6th grade national exam, the results of which can be accessed through the “MASSAR” portal by individual students based on a sign-in number, those results are not available to the general public. It is also not possible either at a national level or a regional level to find data on students’ foundational skills achievement for any grade below grade 6.” Can USAID clarify what results it envisions should be accessible to the general public, and if that refers to teachers, parents, etc.?

USAID Answer 30: During the Co-creation phase, access to the results of the 6th grade national exam will be discussed with the MEN to serve the objectives of the Bridge program. Kindly note that the MEN is now engaging in a heavy reform of students’ assessment and the Bridge program will be provided with updates of these efforts during the co-creation phase.

Question 31: Page 12, Objective 2 (STEM): Please confirm that both the MEN and JICA have agreed that BRIDGE will assume responsibility for “the overall coordination of the STEM reforms.” This statement appears to differ somewhat from Footnote 9. Please clarify.

USAID Answer 31: JICA will work in parallel to the Bridge partner to develop the math modules needed for middle school instruction under Bridge. MEN will assume the overall coordination of the STEM reforms.

Question 32: Pages 13-14, Capacity Measurement and Improvement in Non-Bridge Regions, Other than providing training of trainers in the AREFs, will Bridge be responsible for building capacity of personnel and institutions? If so, please clarify.

USAID Answer 32: Training of trainers is the only support envisioned from Bridge.

Question 33: On page 14 USAID states, “USAID anticipates a need for internal monitoring and evaluation based on the indicators included in the table below and anticipates conducting a process evaluation of the program’s implementation, as well as an impact evaluation restricted to components of the Bridge pilot schools interventions.” Could USAID please provide more details about the subject of the impact evaluation, including what it does and does not consider “components of the Bridge pilot schools interventions”? Is this referring to the intervention packages for Objective 1 and 2 or specific interventions?

USAID Answer 33: Yes, this refers to the intervention packages for Objectives 1 and 2. By “components” of interventions USAID understands discrete areas of Bridge interventions that are developed and can be tested individually and iteratively, for example: a subject and

grade-specific curriculum, teaching and learning materials, teacher training intervention, among other interventions. Robust monitoring and evaluation following the principles of Implementation Research should focus on three areas: effectiveness of new materials and interventions developed under the Bridge program, implementability within existing systems, and costs of different models and approaches. Please refer to the MEL section of the NOFO.

Question 34: Page 15, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning: Can USAID make a distinction between the envisioned use of results from implementation research vs. the learning agenda?

USAID Answer 34: Yes. Implementation research focuses on concrete questions specific to implementation under Objectives 1 and 2 (see USAID Answer # 33 above). As stated in the MEL section, the learning agenda will address broader questions that are not directly included under Objectives 1 and 2, such as questions relating to scale up, parental involvement, youth involvement and pre-service teacher training.

Question 35: Page 15, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning: “Under this learning agenda, partners could help the MEN and USAID to, for example a) identify effective strategies for system-wide and donor-wide collaboration that can be taken to scale to facilitate curricular reform; b) identify strategies for involving parents, communities, and civil society in reforms; c) identify strategies for involving Moroccan youth; and d) identify strategies for transitioning training on all new curricula into the appropriate portions of the new B.A. teaching degree funded by USAID under the HEP-M program.”

a. (a-c) Please clarify whether USAID means that Bridge will also be expected to implement and test/assess these strategies.

USAID Answer 35a (a-c): The learning agenda workstream under the Bridge program should advance these learning priorities through the most appropriate and feasible methods within the parameters of the broader Bridge implementation. The applicant can propose strategies or approaches to advancing these learning objectives in its technical application.

b. (d) Will support for the HEP-M program be included as one the Bridge inputs?

USAID Answer 35b (d): No, the support for the HEP-M program will not be included as one of the Bridge inputs.

Question 36: On page 22 USAID states, “Concept Papers MUST be written in readable English and submitted electronically via e-mail in Microsoft Word and/or Adobe PDF.” Would USAID accept the itemized budget in an Excel spreadsheet format?

USAID Answer 36: Yes, USAID will accept the itemized budget in an Excel spreadsheet format.

Question 37: On page 32, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MELP), USAID states, “The following illustrative indicators, should be taken into consideration (at the CDCS IR level as well as at the Bridge to Middle School Activity objective levels):” please provide a list of the illustrative indicators, as they did not appear in the solicitation.

USAID Answer 37: The list of required indicators is listed in the MEL section on pages 14-15. The applicant can propose additional indicators, if applicable. The NOFO has been modified on page 32 to remove the reference to “illustrative” indicators. Please see Revised NOFO.

Question 38: Attachment 1, Bridge to Middle School RFI - Draft Theory of Change:

- a. Please clarify whether this draft theory of change supplants the Goal and Objectives/Results noted in the RFA’s Section A: Program Description. For example, it appears that the goal in the RFA narrative is different from the RFI Draft TOC.
- b. Is the information in the draft Theory of Change also intended to serve as the Bridge results framework?
- c. Is USAID seeking suggestions for revision to the draft Theory of Change? If so, we respectfully request that USAID allow applicants to submit a revised theory of change or results framework as an annex outside of the 7-page limit.

USAID Answer 38: The Goal and Objectives/Results in the NOFO supersede the Draft Theory of Change attachment. USAID is not looking for applicants to develop full theories of change for Concept Paper submissions, as a critical element of Phase 2 Co-creation is a joint (all stakeholders) development and finalization of the program’s TOC. Applicants can share thinking on TOC and RF elements in their concept notes, but should recognize the intent to use Co-creation for TOC/RF development.

Question 39: Attachment 2, Concept Paper Template, Page 1 SECTION II – PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ALIGNMENT WITH OBJECTIVES requires applicants to “Provide a general organizational structure and describe how the project will be coordinated.”

- a. We kindly request that USAID allow applicants to submit an organizational chart as part of SECTION VI – SUPPORTING INFORMATION, excluded from the 7-page limit.
- b. On page 8 USAID states, “Applicants should carefully consider how to work with this wide array of local partners and propose a tailored approach to include these vital stakeholders.” Given the number of these vital stakeholders, we kindly request that USAID allow applicants to submit a coordination plan in the form of a table as part of SECTION VI – SUPPORTING INFORMATION, excluded from the 7-page limit.

USAID Answer 39: No, USAID will not allow applicants to submit an organizational chart and a coordination plan in the form of a table as part of SECTION V (ex SECTION VI) – SUPPORTING INFORMATION, excluded from the 7-page limit.

Question 40: Attachment 2, Concept Paper Template, Page 1: We request that USAID clarify the differences between following requirements: in SECTION II – PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ALIGNMENT WITH OBJECTIVES “all proposed activities, including rationale, planned inputs, and anticipated outputs” and “how each of the proposed activities map onto the program objectives outlined in Section A” and the requirement in SECTION IV – CORE OBJECTIVES AND SUSTAINABILITY to describe “how the proposed activities and/or overall project respond to each of the core objectives described in Section III.” Please clarify how they are

different and provide further explanation of what is needed. We suggest that the noted requirement in SECTION IV – CORE OBJECTIVES AND SUSTAINABILITY be dropped.

USAID Answer 40: The only difference between SECTION II- PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ALIGNMENT WITH OBJECTIVES AND SECTION IV- CORE OBJECTIVES AND SUSTAINABILITY is the emphasis of sustainability in SECTION IV. The ‘core objectives’ and ‘program objectives’ as outlined on page 5 are the same. The NOFO Attachment 2 has been modified to remove Section IV and incorporate the sustainable language into Section II of the Concept Paper Template (Attachment 2). The numbering of the Sections has been modified to reflect this change too.

Question 41: Attachment 2, Concept Paper Template, Page 1 SECTION III – PARTNERS AND CAPACITY: Please clarify whether we can list non-core partners in addition to core partners in SECTION III – PARTNERS AND CAPACITY.

USAID Answer 41: Yes, you can list non-core partners in addition to core partners but this will not impact the merit review process.

Question 42: Attachment 2, Concept Paper Template, Page 1, SECTION IV – CORE OBJECTIVES AND SUSTAINABILITY: We are unclear what Section III is being referred to in this sentence--“Describe how the proposed activities and/or overall project respond to each of the core objectives described in Section III.” Please provide the page number for the Section III in question. Alternatively, please confirm that the instructions are referring to Section A: Program Description of the RFA.

USAID Answer 42: Please refer to USAID Answers # 10 and 40.

Question 43: Attachment 2, Concept Paper Template, SECTION VI – SUPPORTING INFORMATION, A. Partner Information: We kindly request that USAID allows us to use 50 words to describe each partnering organization, rather than 50 words for “local partners” and 50 words for “other partners.”

USAID Answer 43: Yes, the Applicant may use up to 50 words to describe each partnering organization. The Concept Paper Template has been modified to incorporate this change. In addition, the numbering of the Concept Paper Template Sections has been modified. Please refer to USAID Answer # 40.

Question 44: Please define feeder schools. Is it anticipated that some middle schools will be selected that do not have an associated primary feeder schools involved in the project?

USAID Answer 44: A feeder school is loosely defined as a primary school in which a significant majority of students matriculate to the associated middle school due to history, relationship, geography and/or other factors. Since an *implicit* goal of the project is for upper primary students to successfully transition to middle schools, then all primary schools must feed into one (or more) of the 60 targeted middle schools. Each middle school should have an associated primary school, however, this will be discussed during the Co-Design Phase II and III.

Question 45: How is local partner being defined? What are the limitations?

USAID Answer 45: Please refer to USAID Answer # 1.

Question 46: In Part 5, there is a request that the project find partners that are willing to pay for or provide funds to the MEN to pay for educational materials. What materials are being referenced?

USAID Answer 46: The materials being referenced includes printing and distribution of manuals and teachers' guides in the scale-up phase.

Question 47: In the NOFO the importance of STEM is identified throughout and defined as the sciences - chemistry/physics and life/earth sciences, math, computer science and technology - should engineering be considered and incorporated?

USAID Answer 47: Yes, technology includes engineering at middle schools in Morocco.

Question 48: There are mentions of using online and distance learning but we have heard some teachers and students will not have internet access and the technology necessary, should we assume they do in the proposal or acknowledge that they may not have an alternative?

USAID Answer 48: It should be acknowledged that there will be technology gaps. Solutions to minimize these identified gaps should be proposed in the concept paper.

Question 49: Given recent changes in government personnel it may be that priority efforts or policy could also change direction. How should contractors take this into consideration?

USAID Answer 49: Per the merit review criteria on page 25, the applicant must address "The degree to which the applicant's approach is likely to achieve measurable progress against the required indicators, and to support collaborating, learning, and *adapting*..." The applicant should plan for government engagement around the objectives of this NOFO; should priority efforts or policy change, the applicant should address how it will adapt, broadly speaking given space limitations, to new policies or ministry of education personnel changes.

Question 50: What is USAID's rationale for suggesting more middle schools than primary schools? Given the focus on improving the transition between primary and middle schools, 30 primary schools in 3 regions will likely feed into only 30 middle schools (or fewer, as often several primary schools feed into a single middle school). What is the intended program focus for the remaining 30 middle schools?

USAID Answer 50: The rationale for suggesting more middle schools than primary schools is that in middle schools, new approaches will be developed, tested to introduce them in the new curriculum compared to the primary schools where the new approaches were already developed, tested and the new curriculum was implemented. The Bridge program will look into the challenges of implementation of the new curriculum at the primary schools since the technical expertise was provided to the MEN, the MEN capacity was built, teaching and learning materials were developed under USAID's National Reading Program (NRP). The 30 pilot primary schools will serve as a model for ensuring an alignment between what has been developed under NRP in the new primary school curriculum and what should be reflected in the teaching practices inside classrooms.

Question 51: Could USAID better explain what they mean by 'proportional split between public and private schools'?

USAID Answer 51: The proportion of private schools included in the Bridge implementation will depend on the percentage of the private schools in the regions chosen and should reflect such representation. For example, if there are 30 percent of private schools in a given region, then 30 percent of the targeted schools in that given region must be private. Similarly, they should be reflected in the MEL work implemented under Bridge.

Question 52: To ensure USAID's ability to receive the best services is not limited, will the use of exclusive Letters of Commitment for Key Personnel be discouraged?

USAID Answer 52: Yes, the use of exclusive Letters of Commitment for Key Personnel is strongly discouraged.

Question 53: Would USAID share the current Local Compensation Plan (LCP)?

USAID Answer 53: Yes, USAID may share a copy of the current generic reference chart for the USAID/Morocco's pay scale on request. Please submit your request to syacoubi@usaid.gov

[END OF NOFO 72060822RFA00001 - AMENDMENT 000001]

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