



USAID | MOROCCO

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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)

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 United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through its Mission in Morocco (USAID/Morocco) seeks concept papers from eligible applicants to implement the Bridge to Middle School Activity.

USAID intends to make a **single** award to the responsible applicant whose application best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this NOFO subject to a risk assessment. Eligible parties interested in applying are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and selection process. While one award is anticipated as a result of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the concept paper applications submitted. Subject to funds availability, the anticipated funding for the USAID/Morocco Bridge to Middle School Activity is \$25 million over a five-year period. Final authority for assistance awards resides with the USAID/Morocco Agreement Officer.

The USAID/Morocco Bridge to Middle School Activity will follow a “Three-Phase Merit Review” process of application selection:

- Phase 1 is the submission, review, and evaluation of a written concept paper (estimated timeframe for Concept Paper selection is December 2021). Applicants will be evaluated based on the Phase 1 (Concept Paper). The Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA) will be invited to Phase 2, Co-creation, and all other applicants will be notified that were not selected.
- Only the ASA will be invited to participate in Phase 2, Co-creation (estimated timeframe for co-creation is January 2022). For Phase 2, USAID will convene a co-creation event with USAID, the Applicant, and other stakeholders.
- If the Co-creation is successful, the Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA) will be invited to Phase 3 and requested to submit a Full Application. The ASA will develop and submit a Final Application, including a cost application, for final consideration. The Final Application will then be evaluated for determination of the award.

If the Co-creation is not successful, USAID/Morocco may consider another Co-creation process with another highly ranked applicant.

Details regarding the requirements for Phase 1 are described in this document. The requirements for Phases 2 and 3 will be provided to the ASA at the completion of Phase 1. Additional details regarding the concept paper evaluation are provided in Section D - Concept Paper Submission Information.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this NOFO. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. Potential applicants should regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the entire NOFO has been received from the internet in its entirety and USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifiers and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process, if not registered.

Please send any questions to the point(s) of contact identified in Section D. The deadline for questions is shown above. Responses to questions received prior to the deadline will be furnished to all potential applicants through an amendment to this notice posted on www.grants.gov. Eligible parties interested in submitting a concept paper are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, concept paper submission requirements, and selection process.

Issuance of this notice of funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of comments/suggestions or a concept paper. Concept papers are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Zachary Clarke
Regional Agreement Officer

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SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This funding opportunity is authorized under the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. The resulting award will be subject to 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and USAID’s supplement, 2 CFR 700, as well as the additional requirements found in Section F.

“Bridge to Middle School”/“*Le Chemin vers le Collège*”

I. Introduction & Background

In the past few decades, the Government of Morocco has made sweeping and positive changes in its education sector. Enrollments have risen, teacher qualifications have improved, important curricular reforms have been enacted, and programs like the USAID-funded “National Reading Program” (NPR) and JICA’s “Promoting Education with Equity and Quality” (PEEQ) have addressed critical gaps in instructional quality, improving students’ mastery of reading and math in the primary grades.

However, the Government of Morocco’s (GOM’s) *Education Vision 2030* commits the GOM to ensuring that “Moroccan schools...offer, to all citizens and equally, a quality education and training, based on the Nation’s supreme values and principles.” However, this ambition has not been fully realized. The World Bank estimates that 66 percent of Morocco’s primary school learners are in “learning poverty,” and therefore unable to read a simple sentence by the age of 10. On the 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Moroccan 4th graders scored the lowest of any in the MENA region in both math and science, and Moroccan 8th graders were outscored by their peers in 8 of the participating nations. Similarly, on the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Moroccan 15-year old, on average, scored next to last in reading, math, and science, with Lebanon being the only country with lower scores. Gender equity is a concern throughout the system, particularly in rural areas where girls do not have the same opportunities as their male peers to attend or complete school. By some estimates, the illiteracy rate for women in rural areas is as high as 80 percent.¹ Learners with disabilities are similarly severely disadvantaged. The devastating effects of the COVID pandemic on the education system have unleashed a wave of learning loss, and the effects of climate change on livelihoods in rural areas are making it increasingly difficult for families to prioritize school. In short, while some strong foundations have been laid for educational quality and equity for all, the GOM requires additional investment and collaboration to continue its momentum towards achieving its 2030 Education Vision.

The *Bridge to Middle School* program (“*Bridge*”) will support the GOM’s next steps in its ongoing education reforms, with particular attention to inclusion and equity, gender dynamics, the realities of education in a post-COVID environment, and the growing need for appropriate education sector responses to the challenges of climate change. Through *Bridge*, USAID will partner with the Moroccan Ministry of Education (MEN) to improve learning outcomes in Arabic and STEM subjects (grades 4-9) as well as in English (grades 7-9). In doing so, *Bridge* will better prepare the

¹ Gregory M. White, “Kingdom of Morocco,” in *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*, eds. Mark Gosiorowski and Sean L. Yom, Westview Press, 2017., p 531.

education system for a scale-up of high-quality instruction in key subject areas in both the upper primary and lower secondary grades.

II. Program Purpose & Goal

The main purpose of *Bridge* is to **build the capacity** of MEN to implement new, student-centered curricula in Arabic and selected STEM subjects (grades 4-9) as well as English (grades 7-9), in ways that have *measurable impacts on learning outcomes*.

The goal of the program is to **improve the performance** of MEN central directorates, education academies (AREFs), provincial directorates (DPs), and schools in employing evidence-based pedagogies that promote continuous learning in select content areas, emphasizing strengthened critical thinking skills.

III. Program Objectives

Bridge has three objectives jointly contributing to the achievement of the program goal:

- **Objective One:** Enhance the Moroccan education system’s ability to improve learning outcomes in upper primary (grade 4-6) Arabic, Math, and Science
- **Objective Two:** Enhance the Moroccan education system’s ability to improve learning outcomes in lower secondary (grade 7-9) Arabic, English, and selected Science subjects (physics/chemistry, taught as one subject, and life/earth sciences, (biology and geology), taught as one subject)
- **Objective Three:** Enhance the Moroccan education system’s preparedness to scale up successful practices in these subject areas and grades

IV. Program Results

Bridge is anticipated to achieve quantifiable results at both the goal and the objective levels, as follows:

- **Goal-level Result:** An increased number of institutions and actors demonstrating improved performance in implementing high quality instruction in the *Bridge* program target subject areas and grade levels.
- **Objective One Result:** In the *Bridge* experimental schools, upper primary learners achieve increases in proficiency in Arabic, Math, and Science.
- **Objective Two Result:** In the *Bridge* experimental schools, middle school (lower secondary) learners achieve increases in proficiency in Arabic, English, Life/Earth Sciences, and Physics/Chemistry
- **Objective Three Result:** Implementation of policies and practices that support scaling up of interventions proven effective during the experimental phases of the *Bridge* program.

V. Program Parameters

The *Bridge* program will operate within the below parameters.

1. Geographic Coverage

Bridge is a “proof of concept” development and testing activity that will demonstrate **how** education system actors can support a child’s transition from upper primary to middle school. *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.² If work in the experimental schools proves effective, the MEN plans to expand the use of the new curricula and materials to all 3,700,000 primary and 1,600,000 middle school students.

Priority regions for inclusion in the *Bridge* program will include those that: a) have poor outcomes on the TIMSS and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), b) are significantly rural and/or isolated, c) experience significant (i.e. above the national average) drop-out from target grade levels, d) experience particular challenges in enrolling or maintaining girls in school, and e) experience particular challenges of multilingualism. Final selection of regions and experimental schools will be made in consultation with the MEN and USAID.

2. Financial Responsibility by Program Phase

Under the pilot phase, (objectives one and two), USAID is responsible for furnishing all technical assistance, including training, and coaching the MEN working groups, printing and distributing manuals and guides, training trainers, training teachers, monitoring and evaluating the progress of the classroom work, evaluating student outcomes, and evaluating changes in institutional capacity.

As curricular implementation for each grade is scaled up, the responsibilities between the MEN and USAID will shift. In the scale-up phases, (objective three), USAID, through *Bridge*, is responsible for offering technical guidance for the scale-up process and the training of trainers in all 12 regions (Academies). However, the majority of the costs in the scale-up phases will be incurred by MEN. The table below summarizes this anticipated cost break-out for the scale-up phase.

	Ministry of Education	USAID
Institutional Capacity Assessments		✓
Technical Assistance (i.e. guidance to working groups)		✓
Printing and distribution of manuals and guides	✓	
Training of trainers (in all 12 regions)		✓
Training of teachers (in all 12 regions)	✓	
Monitoring and evaluating the progress of the work in classrooms	✓	✓

3. Collaboration and Sub-Awards

USAID has designed *Bridge* under the guidance and direction of the MEN, and it is intended to complement, not duplicate, efforts from other donors in the sector. In that spirit, the implementing partner for *Bridge* will need to be aware of and collaborate with all of the following:

² Without this relationship, gauging the strength of the “Bridge” between primary and middle school will be difficult.

Donor	Initiative	Relationship to Bridge
JICA	JICA has implemented two major versions of support to the MEN: a large loan program to support the Ministry's execution of its technical and budget plans, and a first phase of a smaller "off-budget" program that has piloted math and science instruction in a series of primary schools. This smaller PEEQ program is in the process of moving into its second phase, with a focus on only math instruction and on remediation. It has produced measurable improvements in student outcomes.	JICA will work in parallel to the <i>Bridge</i> partner to develop the math and IT modules needed for middle school instruction under <i>Bridge</i> . 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.
MCC	MCC's "Lycee Atahadi" program seeks to improve school infrastructure, governance, and teacher training in STEM and language in a small number of experimental schools. The MEN found the program to be highly effective and hopes to see it inform the work under the <i>Bridge</i> program. The MEN especially hopes that a "whole of school" perspective like that used in the Lycee Atahadi program might also be used in the work under the Bridge program.	<i>Bridge</i> partners should examine how to use the results of the Lycee Atahadi program in teacher training, materials digitization, and CSO and parent involvement. The ministry is anticipating a similar "whole school" approach to the work under the Bridge program as used in the Lycee Atahadi program.
EU	The European Union's PIEF program is focused on system reform, with a significant "results based financing" component offered to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education if they are able to meet certain functionality indicators for system performance.	<i>Bridge</i> partners need to be sure that <i>Bridge</i> system reform expectations complement but do not duplicate those promoted by the EU under PIEF.
UNICEF	UNICEF Morocco under its new strategy aims to improve the equity, quality, and transparency of governance in education. UNICEF supports 2nd chance schools, is developing a drop-out prevention strategy, is increasing its focus on girls' education and education for students with disabilities and plans to work on school financing and governance at the school level.	In the <i>Bridge</i> schools, especially if they overlap with zones of interest with UNICEF, applying strategies for drop-out prevention, inclusion, and transparent governance that are coherent with those of UNICEF will assist both <i>Bridge</i> and the ministry to develop scalable national approaches to improving equity, quality, and transparency.
World Bank	The World Bank finances or plans to finance several different types of support to the Ministry of Education. These include: reforms in early childhood development and pre-primary education, efforts to reinforce pre-service and in-service training (based on results based financing), efforts to improve school governance and financing (also through RBF) and plans to support school improvement planning in 300 primary schools. The Bank is also very interested in work in student assessment in grades 2, 4, and 6.	<i>Bridge</i> partners should coordinate on questions of teacher training and school improvement planning with the World Bank, particularly if any of the <i>Bridge</i> intervention schools are schools that are in common with the efforts financed by the World Bank. The World Bank's interest in assessment is also a rich opportunity for collaboration.
The British Council	The British Council produces English programming to support improved English instruction in Morocco.	<i>Bridge</i> partners could integrate use of these programs as part of a larger effort to improve English instruction in middle school in Morocco.

Bridge partner(s) are also expected to collaborate *across* the MEN departments responsible for eventual scale-up of the new education reforms. At the central level, these include MEN's senior leadership, (the Minister, Secretary General, and the Cabinet), as well as the curriculum development, teacher training, and assessment departments (please see information in the attachments on relevant initiatives in teacher training and assessment). At the decentralized level,

this includes AREFs, PDs, schools, and communities. *Bridge* partner(s) will also need to collaborate with the Initiative Nationale de Développement Humain, (INDH), a GOM program working in the education sector to improve the equality and equity of human services. **Applicants should carefully consider how to work with this wide array of local partners and propose a tailored approach to include these vital stakeholders.**

Finally, USAID prioritizes Moroccan ownership of the *Bridge* program. Therefore, USAID expects the program to include **at least one qualified local partner (Public, private, NGOs, or other Moroccan organizations)** able to significantly contribute to national education reform. As a reminder, USAID prohibits exclusive partnerships with local actors.

4. Cross-Cutting Technical Considerations

As highlighted in the RFI (Attachment 1), there are a number of cross-cutting technical considerations to take into account in the implementation of *Bridge*. These include the following:

- **Promoting gender equity and inclusion.** In all aspects of *Bridge*, USAID strongly encourages partners to test, identify, and amplify concrete approaches that are shown to improve gender equity and the inclusion of marginalized learners and to support the creation of a safe learning environment through GBV prevention and social norms change. These could include but not be limited to approaches to reduce high drop-out rates especially among girls, approaches to enable students of modest means or other constraining circumstances to participate in the program and to choose a career path based on fields of study they master and not based on their gender, and approaches to support teachers in meeting the needs of learners with disabilities. The retained applicant will be required to conduct a gender analysis at the *Bridge* activity level once the award is made.
- **Mitigating the ongoing effects of COVID-19.** USAID encourages applicants to examine the effects of the COVID pandemic on *Bridge*'s chances of success in the chosen 90 experimental schools, and to program flexibly in light of their findings, so as to identify solutions for improved learning at scale that can withstand the ongoing stressors of the pandemic.
- **Promoting the innovative AND appropriate use of technology.** One strategy for scale-up of *Bridge* interventions that interests the MEN is the use of distance education, both for teachers and for students. There are many initiatives in distance education already underway in the education sector, including the MEN's E-Takwine platform for teacher resources, MOOCs generated for teacher preparation through the USAID HEP-M program, and the TilmideTice and the Asafeer platform for supplementary reading material for students. Applicants/implementing partners have an opportunity to propose how distance learning using these and other resources can support the achievement of *Bridge* goals and objectives.
- **Integrating climate change-related instruction.** Climate change considerations are an important part of USAID education programming. Applicants are encouraged to consider innovative approaches for including climate change mitigation materials in experimental schools, and for supporting the MEN in integrating climate change information across the system during the scale-up phase.

- **Private Sector Engagement**

According to a recent USAID-funded study, "An effective approach to leveraging the power of the private sector is essentially to foster collaboration among the most innovative actors and the social-impact driven investors (MEG study)." Moroccan private sector

actors may be willing to contribute expertise in the design and implementation of this program, as they are the eventual recipients of the graduates. Actors like the major telecommunications players (Maroc TELECOM, Orange, Inwi), banks with foundations (BMCE and the Fondation Banque Populaire), the Office Cherifien de Phosphate (OCP), Microsoft, and the Société Nationale de Radio et Télévision (SNRT) could all contribute either in-kind or monetary support to *Bridge*. Partners are encouraged to propose how actors like these could: a) provide free media time (radio, TV, or mobile) to promote the implementation of the educational reforms; b) print educational materials (or provide funding to the MEN to do so); c) provide or subsidize digital supplementary materials; d) provide financial resources to subsidize orienting the school improvement planning process in *Bridge* schools towards achieving programmatic objectives; and/or e) invest in other creative ways in the *Bridge* program.

VI. Interventions

Unless otherwise noted, all interventions listed below are illustrative.

1. Objective One: Enhance the Moroccan Education System's Ability to Improve Learning Outcomes in Upper Primary Arabic, Math, and Science

Under this objective, the program will focus on developing, in the 30 pilot schools, interventions to improve Arabic reading, math, and science instruction in grades 4, 5 and 6 that the MEN can eventually take to scale nationwide. To launch work under this objective, 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 curricula³ in those subjects? This study will yield answers to sub-questions like: a) how well prepared are grades 4, 5, and 6 students to engage in a French-based curriculum⁴ for STEM instruction starting in grade 7?; and b) how much training, and support are teachers receiving⁵ for their implementation of the new grades 4, 5, and 6 curricula? **USAID is interested in applicants' suggestions of what other questions and sub-questions could help ground the work under this objective.**

Having examined the “trouble spots” in upper primary Arabic, math, and science instruction, *Bridge* partners will test and evaluate interventions to improve students' learning outcomes in the target subject areas and grade levels in the pilot schools. **USAID encourages the implementation of interventions for instructional improvement that target both individual teacher capacity and institutional capacities at the school, PD, AREF, and central levels of the education system.** Interventions could include but need not be limited to: a) improved training and support for teachers (virtual or in-person) in teaching these subjects, with a particular focus on gender equity, supporting students with disabilities, and assisting other marginalized groups, and/or b) improved training and support for subject-specific inspectors in Arabic, math, and science. Each intervention selected must be well-justified by the data from the performance outcomes study, be

³In August, 2020, the MEN released its first complete draft of a new primary school curriculum, rolling out new learning materials and teacher training for grades one through four. This included a completely new curriculum in Arabic language, based on work completed through the NPR program. The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the primary school curriculum reform process. However, the curriculum roll out for grades 5-6 is scheduled for as soon as emic conditions allow and is likely to be in process during the *Bridge* program.

⁴Morocco's recent education law transfers instruction of all science and math subjects in middle school and the upper grades of school to French, in the hopes of better preparing students for their eventual launch into a career or a profession. Monitoring of the successes and challenges of implementing these new curricula in French will be an essential part of the work under the individual program intermediate results.

⁵During the pilot phase of the new Arabic curriculum for upper primary grades, MEN and USAID-sponsored technical teams identified a number of realities. Some 3rd and 4th grade students had not fully acquired necessary decoding skills, teachers needed specific training on activities for fluency and comprehension instruction, instruction in grammar, morphology, and dictation needed to be embedded in active reading, and more opportunities were needed for practice in oral MSA. These findings are relevant to planning the *Bridge* upper primary interventions.

well-studied, and, as the program moves towards the scale-up phase, either be recommended for discontinuation or for scale-up. The calendar agreed upon with the MEN for the implementation of these upper primary interventions is as follows:

2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
Study of upper primary students' performance and of degree of curricular adoption in Arabic (reading), math, and science in grades 4,5, and 6 in the pilot schools	Piloting of select interventions to address difficulties in grade 4 instruction in the key subject areas, with a report by the end of the academic year on promising practices	Piloting of select interventions to address difficulties in grade 5 instruction in the key subject areas, with a report by the end of the year on promising practices,	Piloting of select interventions to address difficulties in grade 6 instruction in the subject areas, with a report at the end of the year on promising practices	Compilation and presentation of recommendations for interventions to strengthen grade 4-6 instruction in key subject areas at national scale (based on the efforts under the pilot) MEN to start the scaling interventions, and <i>Bridge</i> partners to provide hands-on support and mentorship/ technical support as needed.

Also under Objective One, *Bridge* partner(s) will work to significantly improve assessment practices for the upper primary grades, both at the classroom and at the systems levels. Despite significant recent progress in improving the availability of student data,⁶ Morocco is still striving to build uniform and fully transparent processes for assessing and reporting on primary students' learning outcomes. Activities to achieve improved capacity in student assessment could include: a) proposing improvements to current practices in grades 4-6 assessment in Arabic literacy, math, and science that could allow for provincial and regional aggregation of student outcomes, and/or b) supporting the efforts of the central MEN evaluation department to develop a national exam at the grade 4 level. **The recipients will be encouraged to work with the MEN to develop a holistic and comprehensive approach to improving upper primary assessment, and to pilot that approach in the *Bridge* upper primary pilot schools.** The ultimate results of these efforts should be readily accessible information on grade 4, 5, and 6 student performance in Arabic (reading), math, and science in pilot schools, and personnel and institutions able to continue to produce and publish this type of information system-wide after the close of the program.

2. Objective Two: Enhance the Moroccan Education System's Ability to Improve Learning Outcomes in Lower Secondary (grade 7-9) Arabic, English, and Science (Selected Subjects)

Under this objective, *Bridge* will focus on improving Arabic, English, and certain aspects of STEM instruction in grades 7-9 in the pilot lower secondary schools. Curriculum development and roll-out for these subjects are at different stages of development.

Arabic: Moroccan middle school students study Arabic for five hours a week. The MEN is currently preparing to revise, test, and redistribute the Arabic language middle school curriculum and accompanying materials. A recent USAID-sponsored review of the current Arabic language curriculum for middle school revealed the following opportunities for improvement: a) articulation of the middle school curriculum with the new upper primary Arabic curriculum, b) improved and clarified developmental progressions in the middle school curriculum, c) a need to identify a universal set of themes or concepts to which to connect ideas and activities across grades in the

⁶ 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.

curriculum, d) inclusion of diversified activities, and e) plans for an evaluation and support system based on clear standards that show students' progress on the acquisition of key skills.

Under Objective Two, *Bridge* partner(s) will support MEN working groups to revise, pilot, and finalize the grades 7-9 Arabic curricula, taking the above findings into consideration and aligning the new proposed curriculum with the [Global Proficiency Framework](#). The new Arabic middle school curriculum should provide students with a more evidence-based, successful learning experience. Application of a similar approach as that used in the new English curricula for Moroccan middle school (see below) could assist in achieving that end result. **Applicants are encouraged to propose effective and innovative approaches for collaborating with the MEN to implement the *Bridge* pilot to create the most effective Arabic middle school curriculum possible. Detailed data collection on the experience of applying the new Arabic curriculum in the pilot schools should inform the work to scale up the curriculum in the out years of the *Bridge* program.**

English: One of Morocco's most important curricular reform initiatives of the past five years has been to progress towards teaching English in all middle schools. Most Moroccan middle school students currently study English for 2 hours a week⁷. This effort has been fast-tracked to honor His Majesty the King's promise to the nation that free English instruction will be broadly available to the entire population. USAID has supported this effort throughout 2021 with a pilot production of 7th grade prototype thematic units, lessons, and teachers guides for middle schools. These prototypes are based on the Cognitive and Academic Language Learning (CALLA) approach to English instruction. The core concept of the CALLA approach is that students need an opportunity to learn strategies for the mastery of both academic content and language functions, so that they can not only communicate but also study and work in the target language. This is a major innovation in the Moroccan education system.

Under Objective Two, the *Bridge* implementing partner will, mandatorily, support MEN working groups to revise, pilot, and finalize the grades 7-9 English curricula, using the products from the USAID-sponsored consultants as a point of departure. Approximately \$5 million of the available budget for the *Bridge* activity has been set aside to support this work. The implementing partner will assist the MEN to: a) finalize the draft standards framework for English for grades 7-9, b) finalize the scopes and sequences documents for English for grades 7-9, c) finalize the teaching and learning materials for English in grades 7-9, including model lessons, d) develop both formative and summative evaluation items, e) train trainers (inspectors) for implementation of the new curricula and materials in the *Bridge* pilot schools for grades 7-9, f) coach as needed for the piloting of the new curricula and materials, g) monitor and evaluate the implementation of the new curricula and materials, h) implement regular formative evaluation of student progress in mastering core concepts from the new middle school curricula, i) design and test remedial classwork and/or other routines to determine whether or not they build student skills, possibly through an adaptation of the TARL methodology, j) reinforce teachers' and schools' ability to track individual student progress, and k) develop and test digital or other distance learning or supplementary applications to support the implementation of the English language curriculum in grades 7-9 (given the small number of actual instructional hours for the subject).

USAID and the MEN's joint overall goal for all language curricula piloted in *Bridge* middle schools is that instruction should reinforce students' abilities to use language for discussion, debate, and analysis in **both** professional and scholastic settings. Also, all language curricula drafted in the course of this activity should provide initial indications as to how learning for

⁷ Middle school English instruction is not yet scaled nation-wide but is active in 50-60% of middle schools.. By 2026, the MEN aims to take middle school English instruction nationwide.

students with disabilities and how gender equity can be addressed. These indications can then be used in the development of teacher training and observation tools to try and enhance inclusivity and gender equity at the classroom level. **Applicants are encouraged to propose effective and innovative approaches for collaborating with the MEN to implement the *Bridge* pilot to create the most effective English middle school curriculum possible. Detailed data collection on the experience of applying the new English curriculum in the pilot schools should inform work to scale up the curriculum in the out years of the program.**

STEM: Moroccan middle school students receive two hours of instruction in life/earth sciences (biology and geology, taught as one subject), two hours of instruction in physics and chemistry (taught as one subject), 4 hours of instruction in math, two hours of instruction in technology, and two hours of instruction in computer science (in certain regions) per week. Together, these subjects comprise Morocco’s “STEM” curricula for middle school.

Under Objective Two, *Bridge* will help the MEN advance the reform of its STEM curricula for grades 7-9.⁸ USAID is not the only donor supporting this massive effort. MEN partner JICA is providing the technical expertise for the reform and piloting of the curricula in math. The MEN itself is providing the technical expertise for the reform and piloting of the curriculum in technology. The *Bridge* implementing partner’s efforts therefore will focus on: a) providing technical assistance for the overall coordination of the STEM reforms, to ensure maximum complementarity across curricula developed and tested⁹, and b) leading the working groups and piloting process for the reform of the science curricula (life/earth sciences, and physics/chemistry). In regard to the science curricula, and in accordance with the findings of a study USAID commissioned on the quality of the current middle school curriculum, the *Bridge* implementing partner will work to: a) strengthen links **across** the grade levels of the science subjects, b) incorporate reflective practice, reasoning and analytical skills, and c) close gaps between curricular documents, teachers’ guides, and student textbooks. Any and all approaches to accomplish these aims are acceptable to the MEN and USAID.

Applicants are encouraged to propose effective and innovative approaches for collaborating with the MEN to implement the *Bridge* pilot to create the most effective STEM middle school curricula possible. Detailed data collection on the experience of applying the new Life/Earth sciences and Physics/Chemistry curriculum in the pilot schools should inform work to scale up the curriculum in the out years of the *Bridge* program.

All curricula drafted in the course of this activity should provide initial indications as to how learning for students with disabilities and how gender equity can be addressed. These can then be further concretized in the development of materials for the respective grade levels and subjects. The MEN and USAID have agreed on the following calendar for the piloting and revisions of all new middle school curricula and materials:

	2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
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⁸Note that work under this sub intermediate result is anticipated to take place entirely in **French**.

⁹ The overall coordinator provided through USAID’s assistance will coordinate with his/her Moroccan counterparts to ensure, to the extent possible that the curricula in all of the STEM subjects use similar, evidence-based, problem-driven approaches to science, math, and technology instruction. The coordinator and the different curricular design teams would also be expected to work with the *Academy Science et Technique* to successfully implement these curricular revision activities.

7th-9th grade curriculum reform	Preparations; Arabic, English, and Science Curricula working groups	Pilot and monitoring; all subjects 7th grade	Pilot and monitoring; all subjects 8th grade	Pilot and monitoring; all subjects 9th grade		Revisions and final refinements to curriculum and materials
Ministry-led Scale Up			7th grade	8th grade	9th grade	

As was true for the upper primary levels, *Bridge* also offers a unique opportunity to improve assessment practices in grades 7-9 in all critical subject areas (including math), both at the classroom and at the systems levels. Under Objective Two, *Bridge* will strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders and system actors to evaluate and analyze students' performance in Arabic (reading), English, math, and science in these grades. Activities to achieve this improvement in capacity could be similar to those listed in the table on page 7 for work on assessment in the upper primary grades. **Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how they will work with the MEN to develop a holistic and comprehensive approach to improving middle school assessment, and to pilot that approach in the *Bridge* lower secondary/middle schools.** The ultimate results of these efforts should be: readily accessible information on grades 7- 9 student performance in Arabic (reading), math, and science (at least in the 60 pilot schools), and personnel and institutions able to continue to produce and publish this information after the close of *Bridge*.

3. Objective Three: Enhance the Moroccan Education System's Preparedness to Scale Up Successful Practices in these Subject Areas and Grades

Objective Three focuses on data collection and systemic planning and intervention beyond the classrooms of the *Bridge* pilot schools. Under this objective, the *Bridge* partner(s) will accomplish tasks that "pave the way" for successful scale-up of the interventions and curricula trialled under objectives one and two.

Policy Studies and Reform: Under this objective, the *Bridge* implementing partner will collaborate with the MEN to review, and, as need be, update plans and policies that have to be firmly in place in order for a successful scale up of piloted and proven interventions. These include, but are not limited to policies about: a) language of instruction for STEM in middle school (including whether this should be either French or English), b) the production, distribution, and replacement of books and materials (the analysis of which may benefit from a supply chain analysis), c) procurement and use of technology (which likely should be studied before a full-scale expansion of the STEM innovations in the curriculum), d) teacher recruitment and professional development for critical subject instruction in upper primary and middle school, and e) national level student assessment and data analysis in the *Bridge* target subjects and grades. Applicants may also wish to consider how policy reform related to financial planning and budgeting might be required in order to best prepare the MEN and education system as a whole for a scale-up effort for *Bridge* interventions. USAID anticipates setting an annual "policy analysis" agenda with the MEN and the *Bridge* team over the life of the *Bridge* program, to ensure that planning for scale-up and sustainability of *Bridge* activities is underway from the outset of the award. **Applicants are encouraged to propose an effective process for this annual policy analysis agenda-setting that will identify and address the biggest policy barriers to successful scale-up of the *Bridge* reforms.**

Capacity Measurement and Improvement in Non-Bridge Regions: Sustaining a system-wide reform to impact student outcomes requires a high level of capacity. Central directorates have to

be able to provide vision, direction, and supervision. AREFs have to be able to provide coordination and regional implementation. Provincial directorates have to be able to provide technical support and direction to schools. Schools have to be able to coordinate and implement with their teaching staff. While piloting of key interventions is occurring in the *Bridge* regions, in select **non-Bridge** regions the program will provide capacity assessment services to the MEN to help the Ministry identify where its own personnel and practices need reinforcement in order to adopt and sustain the “Bridge” reforms. And, as the scale-up of the middle school reforms continues, *Bridge* implementing partner staff will provide the training of trainers in all twelve AREFs per subject and grade level to catalyze the roll out of the new middle school curricula and materials. Detailed annual plans for this capacity building will need to be established between the *Bridge* team, the MEN, and USAID to ensure that it is taking place from the inception of the award. **Applicants are encouraged to propose an effective process for this annual capacity building planning that will leverage proven tools and metrics to measure and improve institutional capacity.** By the close of the program, a detailed picture of the MEN’s capacity to sustain the upper primary and middle school instructional reforms should be available, and trainers from across the twelve AREFs should be ready to roll-out the full scale up of all the *Bridge* interventions in grades 4-9 nationwide.

Development of Distance Learning Strategies for Supplementing Arabic, English, Math, and Science Instruction: In a post-COVID, climate-stressed environment, it will be difficult for the MEN to reach all its potential upper primary and middle school learners without utilizing distance learning. In order to prepare for scale-up of the *Bridge* interventions, the *Bridge* team has an opportunity to use the “Toolkit for Developing a Comprehensive Strategy for Distance Learning” recently produced by USAID to support the MEN in making a long-term plan for delivering distance learning in the key subject areas addressed under *Bridge*. This work could include: a) Reviewing past and present distance learning initiatives and lessons learned, including vis-a-vis the use of the ASAFER platform and the i-Takwine platform, b) Identifying potential current and possible future distance learning partners and opportunities, c) Developing and validating a comprehensive distance learning strategy for student instruction in upper primary and middle school. **Applicants are encouraged to propose an effective 5-year process for the development and eventual start-up of this comprehensive distance learning strategy.**

VII. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

As a “proof of concept” design, *Bridge* offers rich opportunities for data collection on the efficacy of both products and processes. 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, **conducted by *Bridge***, as well as an impact evaluation restricted to components of the *Bridge* pilot schools interventions **conducted by an external evaluator contracted by USAID**. The applicant is expected to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the developed models. Data related to activities and services provided under *Bridge*, should not only be disaggregated by sex but should demonstrate how the interventions have positively/qualitatively impacted the beneficiaries according to their respective gender. The indicators should also be disaggregated by youth age groups, urban/rural, and disability, as feasible.

Required Indicator	Indicator Type	Program Level/Inputs
Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved	Outcome, standard	Goal Level. Analysis of the functionality of the AREFs, provincial directorates, and schools working with the program in the pilot zones should contribute data to this indicator

performance (CBLD-9) ¹⁰		
Percent of learners receiving USG assistance with improved proficiency in a <i>Bridge</i> program key subject (disaggregated by subject, grade level, gender, ability, rural/urban)	Outcome, adapted/custom	Obj. 1 & 2: Relies on collection of data on student performance in <i>Bridge</i> pilot upper primary and lower secondary schools
Percent of education institutions (national departments and regional academies) using national-approved benchmarks effectively to measure student progress	Outcome, adapted/custom	Obj. 1 & 2: Relies on collection of data about institutions' abilities to assess students in key <i>Bridge</i> subjects. Approximately one third of the work under each of these objectives is targeted towards improving assessment. Intensive work with AREFs and provincial directorates to analyze the middle school pilots and to improve evaluation systems will contribute to these indicators.
Education data system strengthened through USG assistance	Outcome, supplemental	
% of participants in USAID-sponsored training who demonstrate improved instructional practices, based on criterion-based assessments (custom)	Outcome, adapted/custom	Obj. 1 & 2: Data on teacher practice in the target subject areas and pilot schools will provide the information for this indicator.
Education system strengthened through USG-assisted policy reform (new standard)	Outcome, supplemental	Obj. 1, 2, 3: The development of the new curricula and materials, as well as the proposals for general policy improvements that are anticipated under Obj. 3, will contribute towards this indicator.
# of learners in primary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance	Output, standard (ES1.3)	Obj. 1: Students in the pilot school zones would be counted towards this indicator whenever they were involved in the grade 4-6 pilots.
# of learners in secondary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance	Output, standard (ES.1-4)	Obj. 2: Students in the pilot school zones using the new grade 7-9 curricula would be counted towards this indicator.
# of educators who complete professional development activities with USG assistance	Output, standard (ES.1-6)	Obj. 1, 2, 3: Staff trained to implement the program in the pilot zones would be counted towards this indicator, as would staff trained under the capacity building efforts under objective three
# of education administrators and officials who complete professional development activities with USG assistance	Output, standard (ES 1-12)	Obj. 1, 2, 3: Staff trained to implement the program in the pilot zones would be counted towards this indicator, as would staff trained under the capacity building efforts under objective three
Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations. (GNDR 8) ¹¹	Output, supplemental	Obj. 1, 2, 3: Staff receiving gender-specific training related to program implementation would be counted towards this indicator, as would staff trained under the capacity building efforts under objective three

Applicants are encouraged, as a function of their designs, to propose other indicators as appropriate for the monitoring and evaluation of the *Bridge* program. All indicator and program data should assist the MEN, USAID, and the *Bridge* partners to [collaborate, learn and adapt](#) (CLA) together to create the most effective curricula and interventions possible in the chosen subject areas for grades 4-9 in the pilot schools. The [Implementation research](#) conducted throughout *Bridge* should focus on the questions of (a) effectiveness of the *Bridge* interventions in producing improvements in instruction and student learning, (b) implementability within existing systems of interventions, (accounting for system constraints), and (c) cost of different models/approaches, to provide necessary data for future planning and implementation at scale by the MEN. As the MEL and CLA plans are developed, USAID may request inclusion of additional indicators, such as ES.1-2 ; ES.1-45-CUST (representation of diverse populations), ES.1-5-CUST, and STIR 10 (Number of innovations supported through USG assistance).

In addition to indicator-based M&E and a robust CLA effort, the program will develop and implement a Learning Agenda to explore additional parameters and questions relative to the eventual success of the scale-up of interventions. Under this learning agenda, partners could help the MEN and USAID to, for example: a) identify effective strategies for system-wide and donor-

¹⁰ DDI/EDU is funding the development of sectoral guidance for this indicator: <https://www.edu-links.org/resources/pirs-cbld-9-improved-performance>

¹¹ Other applicable indicators for work in gender can be found at: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/205.pdf>

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 (refer to this link. **Applicants are encouraged to propose priority items for a learning agenda which afterwards can be examined, revised, and eventually adopted by the MEN, USAID, and the *Bridge* team.**

VIII. Award Administration

The authorizing legislation for this award is the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and it will be subject to 2 CFR 700 - and 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

Note: The term “program” as used in 2 CFR 200 and this NOFO is typically considered by USAID to be an Activity supporting one or more Project(s) pursuant to specific Development Objectives. Please see 2 CFR 700 for the USAID specific definitions of the terms “Activity” and “Project” as used in the USAID context for purposes of planning, design, and implementation of USAID development assistance.

[END OF SECTION A]

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SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

Subject to the availability of funding and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID/Morocco intends to provide **\$25,000,000** in total USAID funding and anticipates supporting one (1) Cooperative Agreement over the course of five (5) years pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity.

2. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The period of performance anticipated herein is five (5) years. The estimated start date will be upon the signature of the award, which is anticipated **on or about March 28, 2022**.

3. Substantial Involvement

Consistent with 2 CFR 200.24 Cooperative Agreement and the USAID Automated Directive Services (ADS) 303.3.11 Cooperative Agreements and Substantial Involvement, USAID/Morocco anticipates having substantial involvement throughout the implementation of the USAID Bridge to Middle School Activity.

USAID has designated an Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) for this cooperative Agreement. The role of the AOR is to assist in the programmatic monitoring and administration of the award.

The Agreement Officer (AO) may delegate the approval listed in the items below to the AOR, except for authority to change the program description, the period of performance, the approved budget, and key personnel that require AO approval.

USAID's substantial involvement under the award is expected to be as follows:

1. Approval of Annual Implementation Plans (i.e., workplans);
2. Approval of the detailed Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL Plan);
3. Approval of Key Personnel and any changes in Key Personnel; and
4. Approval of the Recipient's subawards, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.308(c)(6), managed through the award.

4. Title to Property

Property title under the resultant agreement shall vest with the recipient in accordance with the requirements of 2 CFR 200.310-316.

5. Authorized Geographic Code

The geographic code for this program is 937 (the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries other than advanced developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source) for the procurement of commodities and services, per ADS 310.3.1.1.

6. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the Bridge to Middle School Activity which is authorized by Federal statute.

The successful Recipient will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The Recipient will assume responsibility for administering Federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award. The Recipient, using its own unique combination of staff, facilities, and experience, has the primary responsibility for employing whatever form of sound organization and management techniques may be necessary in order to assure proper and efficient administration of the resulting award.

7. Other Information

Award will be made to a responsible Applicant(s) whose Concept Paper and Full Application best meet the requirements of this NOFO and the selection criteria contained herein. Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a Concept Paper or Full Application. In addition, final award of any resultant award cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated, allocated, and committed through internal USAID procedures. While it is anticipated that these procedures will be successfully completed, the potential applicant is hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for award. The Application is submitted at the risk of the Applicant; should circumstances prevent an Award from being made, all preparation and submission costs are at the Applicant's expense.

[END OF SECTION B]

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SECTION C: CONCEPT PAPER ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. **Eligible Applicants**

Eligibility for this NOFO is not restricted, except individuals and governments.

The Applicant must have established financial management, monitoring and evaluation processes, internal control systems, and policies and procedures that comply with established U.S. Government standards, laws, and regulations. The successful Applicant(s) will be subject to a positive risk assessment by the Agreement Officer (AO).

A positive risk assessment means that the applicant possesses or has the ability to obtain the necessary management competence to plan and carry out the assistance program to be funded, and that the applicant will practice mutually agreed upon methods of accountability for funds and other assets provided by USAID.

2. **Cost Sharing or Matching**

There is no cost sharing requirement anticipated under this award.

3. **Fee/Profit**

While for-profit firms may participate, pursuant to 2 CFR 200.400(g), it is USAID policy not to award Fee/Profit to prime recipients and subrecipients under assistance instruments. However, while Fee/Profit is not allowed for sub-awards, the prohibition does not apply when the recipient acquires goods and services in accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 -326, "Procurement Standards." Forgone profit does not qualify as cost-share.

4. **Limitations on submissions**

Concept Paper

Each applicant is limited to one Concept Paper submission under this NOFO as the prime Applicant. There is no limitation on being included as a potential sub-awardee across multiple applications. The use of exclusive teaming arrangements is discouraged.

Full Application

The Full Application shall be submitted by invitation only. USAID/Morocco will issue a Request for Application (RFA) with complete instructions for the submission and review process to the Apparently Successful Applicant.

[END OF SECTION C]

SECTION D: CONCEPT PAPER SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Agency Point of Contact

Only the Agreement Officer is authorized to make commitments on behalf of USAID. The Agreement Officer is listed below:

Mr. Zachary Clarke
Regional Agreement Officer
USAID/MERP
zclarke@usaid.gov

The Point of Contact (POC) for information on this NOFO is:

Ms. Salya Yacoubi
Supervisory Acquisition & Assistance Specialist
USAID/Morocco
syacoubi@usaid.gov

The above contact information is only for informational purposes. The NOFO itself and any subsequent amendments can be found at www.grants.gov. All Concept Papers must be submitted according to instructions contained in this NOFO.

In order to maintain a fair and transparent funding opportunity, USAID maintains strict guidelines on who within USAID may be contacted regarding applications or questions about the opportunity. Applicants may only contact USAID via the email address provided in this NOFO. Failure to comply with the USAID points of contact guidance mandated in the NOFO may disqualify the Applicant(s).

2. Questions and Answers

Questions and requests for clarification regarding this NOFO should be submitted by email to syacoubi@usaid.gov with a copy to usaidmoroccocontracts@usaid.gov no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter. The subject line must read “**Bridge to Middle School 72060822RFA00001**”.

Any information given to a prospective Applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective Applicants as an amendment to this NOFO on www.grants.gov, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicant. Please check www.grants.gov for any amendments.

3. Concept Paper Applicants responsiveness

All Concept Papers received by the closing date and time will be reviewed for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in these guidelines and the Concept Paper

application format. Section E: Concept Paper Review Information addresses technical merit review criteria. Applicants must review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to do so may lead to the disqualification of a Concept Paper. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that all necessary documentation is complete and received on time.

No addition or modifications will be accepted after the submission date. PDF documents are the preferred file format, though MS Word documents will be accepted, if necessary.

4. Application Process

In accordance with 5 CFR 1320, which implements the Paperwork Reduction Act, USAID requires an electronic submission of the application.

USAID/Morocco will follow a three-phase process. Additional information about each phase is provided below:

Phase 1: Concept Paper

Participation in Phase 1 is mandatory. Failure to participate in Phase 1 will preclude further consideration of the Applicant. Phase 1 will be the Concept Paper submission only. The Concept Paper is a reduced and condensed format of application with a reduced number of pages and Annex requirements, as compared to the Final Application. If submissions exceed the page number limitations, only the pages up to the limit will be reviewed, and pages exceeding the limit will not be considered. Initial Applications that do not meet the requirements of this NOFO will not be considered.

USAID will acknowledge the submission of Concept Papers within three (3) business days and will review Concept Papers against the merit review criteria detailed in the NOFO.

The deadline for submission of Concept Papers is **November 22, 2021 at 4:00 PM.**

Concept Paper submission

A Concept Paper is a short document in which the applicant(s) provides an overview of its idea, following the requirements stated below. Further guidance on format of the Concept Paper is included at the end of this section and a Concept Paper template is also provided (See Attachment 2).

USAID/Morocco anticipates two possible results from the Concept Paper merit review process:

- **Identification as the Apparently Successful Applicant - Invited for Co-Creation:** The applicant that submits the most highly rated Concept Paper (i.e. the Apparently Successful Applicant), as determined by the review of the Concept Papers, will be invited to participate in Phase 2, the co-creation process. If the co-creation process is successfully concluded, USAID/Morocco will request submission of a full application.

- **Rejection:** If the Concept Paper is not the most highly rated, it will not be considered further. USAID/Morocco will reject the Concept Paper and will send a letter of notification to the applicant ending its participation in this NOFO process.

Concept Paper Format and Content

This section presents guidance for the structure of the Concept Paper. To facilitate the competitive review of the Concept Papers, USAID/Morocco will only consider Concept Papers conforming to the format prescribed below.

Concept Papers **MUST** be written in readable English and submitted electronically via e-mail in Microsoft Word and/or Adobe PDF. Concept Papers shall not exceed seven (7) pages, using standard pages (i.e., A4 size paper), one-inch margins with 12-point font. Applicants must use the template attached to this NOFO (see Attachment 2). Clarity and specificity are important as is ensuring that the Concept Paper narrative addresses the points USAID/Morocco will use to review the Concept Paper (outlined in Section E of this document). During the Concept Paper merit review process, USAID/Morocco is likely to reject those Concept Papers that are vague or merely restate NOFO language. The approximate page lengths are provided as a rough guide and are not mandatory, as long as the entire Concept Paper does not exceed 7 pages. When a Concept Paper has more than 7 pages, the additional pages will not be evaluated. Figures, graphics, and tables may have less than Times New Roman 12-point font and must be easily legible.

Any Concept Paper not adhering to the format in Attachment 2 will not be evaluated. Any additional information or reference material pages not requested by the NOFO may be removed prior to evaluation and may adversely affect an applicant's evaluation/review.

Note: If a Concept Paper submission includes any proposed resource or technical partners, USAID/Morocco may meet, at its sole discretion, with the Concept Paper Applicant and any proposed resource or technical partner(s) to understand their role in the activity.

The Concept Paper and all required supporting information should be submitted by email to Salya Yacoubi at syacoubi@usaid.gov with a copy to usaidmoroccocontracts@usaid.gov as specified on the cover page of this document. The email subject line should follow this naming scheme: ***“Applicant Organization Name - Bridge to Middle School Concept Paper Submission”***. No additions or modifications will be accepted after the submission date. Concept Papers that are submitted late or incomplete will not be considered for the co-creation phase.

USAID/Morocco will acknowledge receipt of Concept Papers submission.

Phase 2: Co-creation

Co-creation is a design approach that brings people together to collectively produce a mutually valued outcome, using a participatory process that assumes some degree of shared power and decision making. Co-creation is a time-limited and highly participatory process where partners, potential implementers, and end-users define a problem collaboratively, identify new and existing solutions, build consensus around action, and refine plans to move forward with programs and projects. Under this NOFO USAID/Morocco intends to

apply a co-creation approach that involves discussions with applicants selected for Phase 2 to inform the final program description and other sections of the award, as needed.

Selected applicants will be invited by the Agreement Officer (AO) or his representative from USAID/Morocco to a co-creation workshop. Participation in the Co-creation process is mandatory for the applicant prior to submitting the Full Application.

Other participants in the co-creation process may include: USAID, JICA, the MEN, potential private sector partners, and other donors and stakeholders.

Phase 3: Request for Application (RFA)

Upon completion of the co-creation process, USAID/Morocco will issue a Request for Application (RFA) with complete instructions for the submission and review process to the Apparently Successful Applicant.

The full Application will include two parts: a Technical Application, primarily consisting of a detailed Program Description, and a Business (Cost) Application.

Note: Request for Full Application is NOT a commitment to funding. USAID/Morocco reserves the right to make no award under this RFA at any stage of the process at no cost to the USG.

[END OF SECTION D]

SECTION E: CONCEPT PAPER REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Concept Paper Merit Review Criteria

The Concept Paper Merit Review Criteria prescribed here are tailored to the requirements of this particular NOFO. The Applicant should note that these criteria serve to:

- (a) identify the significant matters which the Concept Paper Applicant should address in the application, and
- (b) set the standard against which the Concept Paper will be evaluated.

Technical and other factors will be evaluated relative to each other, as described here and prescribed by the Technical Application Format. The Technical Application will be evaluated by a Merit Review Committee (MRC) using the ratings described in this section.

2. Review and Selection Process

a) **Rating**

USAID will conduct a merit review of Concept Papers received that comply with the instructions in this NOFO. The Concept Papers will be reviewed and evaluated using an adjectival rating system (Exceptional, Very Good, Satisfactory, Marginal, Unsatisfactory) in accordance with the definitions below:

Adjective	Merit Review Criterion
Exceptional	An Exceptional Concept Paper has the following characteristics: • A comprehensive and thorough Concept Paper of exceptional merit. • Concept Paper meets and fully exceeds the Government expectations or exceeds NOFO objectives and presents very low risk or no overall degree of risk of unsuccessful performance. • Strengths significantly outweigh any weaknesses that may exist.
Very Good	A Very Good Concept Paper has the following characteristics: • A Concept Paper demonstrating a strong grasp of the objectives. • Concept Paper meets NOFO objectives and presents a low overall degree of risk of unsuccessful project performance. • Strengths significantly outweigh any weaknesses that exist.
Satisfactory	A Satisfactory Concept Paper has the following characteristics: • A Concept Paper demonstrating a reasonably sound response and a good grasp of the objectives. • Concept Paper meets NOFO objectives and presents a moderate overall degree of risk of unsuccessful project performance.

	• Strengths outweigh weaknesses.
Marginal	A Marginal Concept Paper has the following characteristics: • The Concept Paper shows a limited understanding of the objectives. • Concept Paper meets some or most of the NOFO objectives, but presents a significant overall degree of risk of unsuccessful project performance. • Weaknesses equal or outweigh any strength that exists.
Unsatisfactory	An Unsatisfactory Concept Paper has the following characteristics: • The Concept Paper does not meet the NOFO objectives or requires a major rewrite of the Concept Paper. • Present an unacceptable degree of risk of unsuccessful project performance. • Weaknesses demonstrate a lack of understanding of the Government's needs. • Weaknesses significantly outweigh any strength that exists.

b) **Merit Review**

The Concept Papers will be reviewed in accordance with the three (3) merit review criteria set forth below.

Each of the merit review criteria is equally important:

- (1) The degree to which the applicant demonstrates ability to iteratively develop and test interventions for efficacy and effectiveness in a country context similar to Morocco.
- (2) The degree to which the applicant outlines a coherent, feasible, context-appropriate, evidence-based, efficient, and innovative approach to accomplishing all three objectives of the *Bridge* program. All three objectives are of equal importance, and the applicant's approach should elucidate and build upon the logical connections between the three, and should demonstrate how, based on the applicant's intervention, the MEN will achieve increased capacity to scale up the proven *Bridge* interventions according to the calendars outlined.
- (3) 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, and cross-cutting issues such as gender, technology, private sector engagement and climate change.

3. **Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates**

Based on the NOFO issue date and considering that no submission extensions will be granted, and no delays in the review/evaluation process, USAID anticipates having an award in place by **March 28, 2022**.

[END OF SECTION E]

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SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

Award of the agreement contemplated by this NOFO cannot be made until funds have been appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, the potential applicant is hereby notified of these requirements and conditions for the award.

The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed Agreement or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

The Cooperative Agreement signed by the Agreement Officer is the authorizing document, which shall be transmitted to the Recipient for countersignature to the authorized agent of the successful organization(s) electronically.

2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The Agreement Officer will use applicable policies and standard provisions in the administration of the resulting award. No deviations are currently contemplated to the standard provisions for the Cooperative Agreement resulting from this NOFO. The standard provisions to be used will be the Mandatory Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental Recipients or the Mandatory Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Recipients.

For U.S. organizations, the resulting federal award will be administered in accordance with the following policies and regulations: [ADS 303](#), [2 CFR 700](#), [2 CFR 200](#), and [ADS 303maa](#). Standard Provisions for U.S. NGOs are applicable. For complete copies of 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700, please also see [ADS 303.4](#).

For non-U.S. organizations, [ADS 303mab](#), Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. NGOs will apply.

This NOFO only contains provisions that are required at this stage. Final provisions will be incorporated in the final award as applicable to the selected Recipient.

3. Reporting Requirements

Program Reports shall be in accordance with applicable USAID Standard Provisions. All written documentation must be submitted in professional-level English. The reports listed below are the initial reports that USAID anticipates requiring from the successful recipient. Based on the evolving nature of the agreement, USAID may provide modified reporting requirements.

Note: USAID's fiscal year starts on October 1 and ends on September 30. Four fiscal quarterly periods begin on October 1, January 1, April 1, and July 1.

a. Financial Reporting:

Financial Reports shall be in accordance with applicable USAID Standard Provisions.

Quarterly Financial Report: Quarterly Financial Reports shall be due within 30 days following the end of each quarter corresponding to USAID’s fiscal year from October 1 through September 30.

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.327, Standard Form 425 (SF-425) and SF-425A are used to report accrued expenditures. Reporting periods are calendar quarters. Quarterly financial reports are due no later than 30 days after the end of each calendar quarter (January 30, April 30, July 30, and October 30).

Quarterly Accruals Reporting: Accruals are the estimated cost of the liability recognized during the period for goods and/or services received but not disbursed, or goods and/or services invoiced but not recorded.

USAID performs a quarterly accrual exercise at the end of each quarter; i.e. December 31, March 31, June 30, and September 30. The Recipient is expected to submit four quarterly accrual expenditures reports 15 days before the end of a quarter per year. The Recipient must submit a spreadsheet showing cumulative disbursements and estimated (un-disbursed) accruals to the AOR.

Final Financial Report: The Final Financial Report shall be due within 90 days following the expiration of the award. Financial Reports shall be in accordance with 2 CFR 700. USAID requires recipients to use the Standard Form 425 or Standard Form 425a, Federal Financial Report, or such other forms authorized for obtaining financial information as may be approved by OMB.

Financial reports shall be submitted as follows: Financial Analyst, Office of Financial Management (email: RabatFM@usaid.gov) and the AOR.

Foreign Tax Reports: Reporting of foreign taxes under this agreement shall follow the standard provision entitled “Reporting Host Government Taxes (December 2014)” of this award document.

Host government taxes are not allowable where the Agreement Officer provides the necessary means to the recipient to obtain an exemption or refund of such taxes, and the recipient fails to take reasonable steps to obtain such exemption or refund. Otherwise, taxes are allowable in accordance with the Standard Provision, “Applicability of 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 (December 2014),” and must be reported as required in this provision.

The Recipient must include this reporting requirement in all applicable sub-agreements, including subawards and contracts.

b. Performance Reporting and Plan Requirements:

The Recipient shall be responsible to USAID/Morocco for all matters related to the execution of the agreement. Specifically, the Recipient shall report to the Agreement Officer (AO) and to the Agreement Officer’s Representative (AOR), who will be designated by the AO prior to award.

The Recipient will be expected to provide the following reports. All approved quarterly, annual reports, implementation plans, MEL plans, and technical reports shall be posted to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) as appropriate.

All reports listed below shall be submitted by the specified due dates, electronically via email for approval by the USAID AOR unless otherwise agreed upon with the AOR. Recipients will consult the AOR on the format and expected content of reports prior to submission. The Recipient should always be ready for revision in program indicators and reporting requirements.

All reports listed below shall be submitted by the specified due dates, electronically via email for approval by the USAID AOR unless otherwise agreed upon with the AOR. The Recipient will consult the AOR on the format and expected content of reports prior to submission. The Recipient should always be ready for revision in program indicators and reporting requirements.

TYPE OF REPORT	DUE DATE (Counted from Effective Award Date)	DISTRIBUTION
Quarterly Performance Reports	Within 30 calendar days after the end of each quarter. [English and a summary in Arabic, soft copy]	AOR or A/AOR. Acceptance will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.
Annual Implementation Plan	Within 60 calendar days of the date of award. By September 15 of each subsequent year. [English and Arabic, soft copy]	AOR or A/AOR. Approval will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.
Grants Manual	Within 90 calendar days of the date of the award [English, soft copy]	AOR or A/AOR and AO
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MELP)	A full MELP is expected to be submitted within 90 calendar days of the date of award. Updates to the MELP will be submitted by October 30 for subsequent years. [English, soft copy]	AOR and A/AOR. Approval will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Reporting	Twice annually as part of the 2nd Quarterly Performance Report and the Annual Report. Geospatial (geo-referenced) data will be submitted or updated for each project site. [English, soft copy]	AOR and A/AOR Approval will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.
Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP)	With submission of the first Annual Implementation Plan, within 60 calendar days of the date of the award. Updated and submitted at least once per year using USAID/Morocco's template. [English, soft copy]	AOR and MEO (Mission Environment Officer). Approval will be provided in writing after AOR and MEO review and revisions made by Recipient.
Gender Analysis and Action Plan	Within 90 calendar days of the date of award. [English, soft copy]	AOR or A/AOR. Acceptance will be provided in writing after AOR review and revisions made by Recipient.
Final Report	90 calendar days after completion of the award. [English and Arabic, soft copy] No page limit.	AOR, AO and DEC (Reference to M.21) AO approval after AOR review and approval after revisions made by Recipient.
Closeout/Demobilization Plan	120 calendar days prior to award completion date.	Approved, in writing, by the AO.
Other Reporting	Submitted upon request [English/Arabic, soft copy]	AOR
Project Fact sheet	Submitted 90 days after award using the USAID/Morocco template. It will then be updated at least quarterly. [English/Arabic]	AOR

Highlights & Success Stories	Submitted regularly during the project lifetime, and at a minimum three highlights and/or success stories per each quarter. [English]	AOR
Reporting reference in Standard Provisions		
Reporting of Foreign Taxes – Reference to RAA13. Reporting Host Government Taxes	The recipient must annually submit a report by April 16 of the next year.	FMO/AOR/AO
Participant Training (TEAMS)	Within 30 days after the end of each Federal Fiscal year quarter. Recipient is responsible for submitting data into TEAMS directly. [English]	AOR, A/AOR and Mission R-2 Verifier

The Recipient will allow at least 10 business days for review and comments from the AOR on any draft report submission. All reports and plans are subject to written approval by the AOR, except for the Closeout Plan and the Property Disposition Plan, which are subject to Agreement Officer's approval.

- **Quarterly Performance Reports:**

The Recipient will report performance progress for the program under the award and monitor and track indicators as reviewed and agreed to with USAID on a quarterly basis, by submitting a quarterly report. Quarterly performance reports will be submitted **30 calendar days** after the end of each quarter and contain the following information:

(1) A comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives established for the period, including up-to-date figures for indicators identified in the Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Plan (MELP). Whenever appropriate, and the output of programs or projects can be readily quantified, such quantitative data should be related to cost data for computation of unit costs.

(2) Reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate.

(3) Other pertinent information including, when appropriate, analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs.

A general quarterly performance report template, in addition to the indicator reporting, will be provided by the AOR. The Recipient must submit via email a copy of quarterly,

annual, and final performance reports to the AOR in accordance with 2 CFR 200.328. The Quarterly Performance Plan must be in English and a summary must be submitted in French and/or in Arabic.

The timing, format and other instructions will be agreed by the AOR and the Recipient's Key Personnel at the outset of implementation.

- **Annual Implementation Plan:**

Submitted annually to the AOR for approval, the first Implementation Plan, including activity planning and timeframe, **is due 60 calendar days of the date of the award**. For the subsequent years, the implementation plan will be submitted for approval by **September 15 of every year**. The plan shall include subcontract and sub-grants planning.

Annual Implementation Plans are to be submitted in English and French to the AOR and Alternate AOR via email.

- **Grants Manual:**

The Recipient shall submit a Grants Manual to the AOR and the Agreement Officer **within 90 days of the date of the award**.

- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MELP):**

The applicant will be responsible for developing and tracking activity targets, outputs and impact, and overall activity indicators in the application which gauge individual program activities and program effectiveness. Within 90 days following the award, the implementing partner must submit the first annual implementation plan. In addition to the initial implementation plan, the recipient will develop and submit a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MELP). The MELP must adequately track and document progress against activity components. The MELP also reflects the award progress over the life of the program and is a critical tool for planning, managing, documenting, and evaluating performance. The MELP will be reviewed and validated annually and revised if appropriate.

The Recipient shall submit the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan **within 90 days of the date of the award** to the AOR for approval. It is the AOR responsibility to review, collaborate on any necessary changes and finally approve the MELP. An updated MELP report is due by October 30 of every year. The performance year is identified as October 1- September 30 of each year.

Indicators: The applicant's MELP shall propose indicators that are realistic, attainable and that will be effective as guides to management and reporting; and explain how the MELP will be implemented and applied as a management and evaluative tool. The following indicators, should be taken into consideration (at the CDCS IR level as well as at the Bridge to Middle School Activity objective levels):

For each indicator, the MELP must include a [Performance Indicator Reference Sheet](#) which provides a precise definition, information on disaggregation, the data source,

frequency of data collection, collection method, the party responsible for data collection, when baseline information will be collected, and expected annual/outyear targets. Indicators should be disaggregated by gender, youth age groups, urban/rural, and disability, as feasible.

USAID's website contains further background on [USAID's MEL approach](#) as well as more detail on [developing a MELP](#).

In line with the Agency's recent directives on agency-wide implementation of the Development Information Solution (DIS), USAID/Morocco will likely transition to the DIS during the life of this activity, potentially in the first or second year of implementation. In anticipation of this transition, the Recipient should review publicly available information

(<https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/resources-for-partners/development-information-solution>) and be prepared to transition to data entry into the DIS should it be required by USAID in the future.

The Recipient is responsible for oversight of the operations of the supported activities. The Recipient must monitor its activities under this Agreement to assure compliance with applicable Federal requirements and performance expectations are being achieved. Monitoring by the Recipient must cover each program, function, or activity. Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates that have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, the Recipient must immediately notify the AOR and the AO as soon as the following types of conditions become known:

- ❖ Problems, delays, or adverse conditions which will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the award. This disclosure must include a statement of the action taken, or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation.
 - ❖ Favorable developments which enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned. Notifications must include a statement of actions taken and / or any assistance needed to resolve the situation.
- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Reporting:**

The Implementation Plan will also apply geospatial methods using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to support USAID's effort to incorporate geographic data and analysis into USAID's overall development planning, design, and monitoring & evaluation. The Recipient is not expected to purchase or utilize GIS software unless it is relevant for implementation of their activities. The Recipient can utilize any of the GIS tools publicly available. When geographic data is acquired through data use or ownership agreements with the host-country government or other entity, the Recipient must ensure that the agreement makes it permissible for the geographic data to be submitted to, and used by, USAID and other U.S. Embassy agencies. Please refer to the USAID [link](#) for more details.

The Recipient shall provide geographic location or coordinate data twice annually as part of the 2nd Quarterly Performance Report and the Annual Report for all USAID-supported sites as follows:

A. Activity Location Data

The Recipient must collect and submit Activity Location Data (ALD) and Location of Intended Beneficiaries according to the following four requirements:

1. Level of Geographic Detail

At a minimum, the location(s) where the activity is implemented must be collected at the Exact Site Level, unless otherwise specified by USAID. The Location of the Intended Beneficiaries shall be collected at least at the Administrative Unit 1 Level (i.e., Region), and where possible/appropriate at the Administrative Unit 3 Level (i.e., Commune) or at the Administrative Unit 2 Level (i.e., Province).

2. Activity Location Data Collection Standards

Activity Location Data must be collected according to the standards provided by USAID, such as the use of standard names, boundaries, and locations in Latin script.

3. Activity Location Data Submission Method and Frequency

Activity Location Data must be submitted twice annually as part of the 2nd Quarterly Performance Report and the Annual Report to an Agency approved reporting tool or in a digital format according to the standards and procedures provided by USAID. If the Activity Location Data has not changed since the previous data submission, it must be indicated when the data is submitted.

4. Activity Location Data Risk

Activity Location Data must exclude personally identifiable information. If the Activity Location Data collected by the Recipient requires protection from unauthorized access to mitigate data risk, the Recipient must notify USAID before submitting the Activity Location Data to USAID and implement mitigation techniques to protect the data from unauthorized access in consultation with USAID.

B. Geographic Data Assets

Geographic data assets are primary or derived data assets that are developed or utilized during a project. All geographic data assets must be submitted in accordance with the special clause or provision “Submission of Datasets to the Development Data Library (DDL)” per ADS 302.3.5.21.

NOTE: Activity Location Data (ALD) and geographically disaggregated indicators are not considered geographic assets. ALD should be submitted as reported in accordance with section “A. Activity Location Data” sub-section “3. Activity Location Data Submission Method and Frequency” above.

1. Geographic Data Files

- a. Both primary and derived Geographic Data Files must be submitted.
- b. Geographic Data Files must be submitted in Shapefile (.shp), GeoTIFF (.tif), CSV (.csv), or GeoJSON (.geojson) file formats.

- c. In addition to fulfilling the submission requirements noted above, Geographic Data Files that are stored in other file formats that may be useful to end users can be voluntarily submitted in those file formats. For example, Geographic Data Files stored in a File Geodatabase (.gdb) or as a Web Map Service (WMS) can also be submitted.
- d. Geographic Data Files that are stored in Shapefile (.shp) or GeoTIFF (.tif) formats will include metadata that follows ISO 19115 using the ISO 19139 XML implementation schema.
- e. Geographic Data Files that are stored in a CSV or GeoJSON format and contain latitude/longitude coordinates will include supplementary information regarding the:
 1. Method used to create the latitude/longitude coordinates;
 2. Spatial reference used to generate the latitude/longitude coordinates; and
 3. Geographical precision of the latitude/longitude coordinates using the International Aid Transparency Initiative standards. For example, a latitude/longitude coordinate may represent an exact location, the center of a populated place, or the center of a subnational administrative unit. This information must be included in addition to the actual CSV dataset.
- f. Geographic Data Files that are stored in Shapefile (.shp), GeoTIFF (.tif), or GeoJSON (.geojson), JSON (.json) file formats will use the Geographic Coordinate System World Geodetic System 1984 (GCS WGS 1984) spatial reference. If the use of a different spatial reference was required for an analysis, the spatial reference that was used must be indicated elsewhere in the metadata.

2. Geographic Data Processing and Analysis Files

- a. Geographic Data Processing and Analysis Files that are written in programming languages will include a description of the language they are written in (e.g., a Python file would be .py, a Javascript file would be .js, etc.), the intended purpose of the file, use limitations, and execution instructions.
- b. Geographic Data Processing and Analysis Files will include descriptive comments and relative pathnames to enable efficient and effective use by an end user.
- c. Geographic Data Processing and Analysis Files are stored in an online repository, such as GitHub, these files can also be submitted as a clone of the repository.

3. Geographic Data Visualization Files

- a. Geographic Data Visualization Files created using desktop GIS software will be submitted in Esri Map Document (.mxd) or QGIS Project (.qgs) file formats.
- b. Geographic data visualization products that are finalized in separate desktop software or stored in a different file format can also be submitted if they may be of use to an end user. For example, when a data visualization product is stored as a Map Package or is finalized in Adobe Illustrator, the Map Package (.mpk), or Adobe Illustrator (.ai) file can be additionally submitted.
- c. Geographic Data Visualization Files written in a programming language and used to generate web-based data visualization products will include an indication of the programming language (for example, a Python file would be .py, a Javascript file would be .js, etc.)

- d. Geographic Data Visualization Files will reference relative pathnames to the source of all Geographic Data Files that are displayed in the data visualization product.
- e. When products created with the Geographic Data Visualization Files are included in documents that are submitted to the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), such as a report that includes a map created with a Geographic Data Visualization File, the URL that links to the location of the document in the DEC must be provided.

- **Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP):**

Submitted annually to the AOR and MEO for approval, the first Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) is **due 60 calendar days of the date of the award**, with submission of the first Annual Implementation Plan. For the following subsequent years, the Recipient shall update and submit at a minimum once per year using USAID/Morocco's template.

Refer to Section Environmental Compliance Requirement for complete details.

- **Gender Analysis and Action Plan:**

The Recipient shall submit a Gender Analysis and Action Plan **within 90 calendar days of the date of the award** to the AOR for approval.

The Recipient will conduct a gender analysis that assesses context and gender gaps and needs, including access, time constraints and participation limitations. This analysis will inform a subsequent gender action plan, which will be developed in collaboration with the USAID management team and finalized within 90 calendar days of the award. The gender action plan will inform the Activity's technical approach as it relates to gender throughout the life of the Activity. It also will be used to inform the design of activities that seek to reduce opportunity gaps between men and women and or address power differentials to promote gender equity. The gender action plans should be developed in conjunction with the Activity's monitoring, evaluation and learning plan, and progress should be reflected in annual work plans and performance reports.

- **Final Report**

The Recipient must prepare and submit the final report required by this Agreement to the Agreement Officer's Representative in English and French **within 90 calendar days** after completion of the award and to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) at <http://dec.usaid.gov>.

Refer to Standard Provisions Section M.21 Submissions to the Development Experience Clearinghouse and Publications (June 2012).

The final performance report should contain, but not be limited to the following information:

- ❖ Executive summary
- ❖ Describe the methods of assistance used and the pros and cons of these methods

- ❖ Brief description and mapping of the results of the program
- ❖ How this program assisted USAID in meeting targets
- ❖ Success stories
- ❖ Problems and how they were overcome
- ❖ Cost-effectiveness
- ❖ Final-year (and/or final fiscal year) as well as cumulative life-of-activity indicator reporting
- ❖ Lessons learned, and
- ❖ Recommendations for USAID's future interventions

- **Close out/Demobilization Plan**

In order to efficiently close-out this activity and reduce time and costs for both parties, USAID/Morocco requests that, **120 calendar days prior to award completion**, the Recipient shall submit a closeout/demobilization plan for AOR approval. The closeout/demobilization plan shall include:

- a) a draft property disposition plan,
- b) plan for the phase-out of operations,
- c) delivery schedule for all reports or other deliverables required under the agreement, and
- d) timetable for completing all required actions in the demobilization plan, including the submission date of the final property disposition plan to the Agreement Officer.

- **Other Reporting**

During the life of the award, the Recipient may be required to prepare and submit other special reports concerning specific activities and/or analyses as directed by the AOR or other USAID Officials in English, French and/or Arabic. These requests will be in writing and will specify the due date.

4. Program Income

Program income is not anticipated.

5. Environmental Compliance

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered, and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201.5.10g and 204 (<https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agency-policy/series-200>), which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities.

Environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this NOFO. In addition, the recipient must comply with host country

environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter shall govern.

No activity funded under this NOFO will be implemented unless an environmental threshold determination, as defined by 22 CFR 216, has been reached for that activity, as documented in a Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE), Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), or Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO). IEE ME 20-73 received concurrence from the Middle East BEO on September 08, 2020, and is valid until September 30, 2024, for activities under this NOFO.

Specifically, the activities envisioned in this NOFO fall into the following classes of action:

- Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)
- Analyses, studies, academic or research workshops and meetings
- Document and information transfers

In case of a sub-grants component, the recipient will be required to use an Environmental Review Form (ERF) or Environmental Review (ER) checklist using impact assessment tools to screen grant applications to ensure the funded applications will result in no adverse environmental impact, to develop mitigation measures, as necessary, and to specify monitoring and reporting. Use of the ERF or ER checklist is called for when the nature of the grant applications to be funded is not well enough known to make an informed decision about their potential environmental impacts, yet due to the type and extent of activities to be funded, any adverse impacts are expected to be easily mitigated. Implementation of sub-grant activities cannot go forward until the ERF or ER checklist is completed and approved by USAID. The recipient is responsible for ensuring that mitigation measures specified by the ERF or ER checklist process are implemented.

The recipient will be responsible for periodic reporting to the USAID Agreement Officer Representative, as specified in this NOFO.

USAID anticipates that environmental compliance and achieving optimal development outcomes for the proposed activities will require environmental management expertise. Respondents to the NOFO should therefore include as part of their application their approach to achieving environmental compliance and management, to include:

- The respondent's approach to developing and implementing an environmental review process for a grant fund and/or an EMMP.
- The respondent's approach to providing necessary environmental management expertise, including examples of past experience of environmental management of similar activities.
- The respondent's illustrative budget for implementing the environmental compliance activities. For the purposes of this NOFO, applicants should reflect illustrative costs for environmental compliance implementation and monitoring in their cost application.

As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the recipient, in collaboration with the USAID Agreement Officer Representative and Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this NOFO to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.

If the recipient plans any new activities outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation, it shall prepare an amendment to the documentation for USAID review and approval. No such new activities shall be undertaken prior to receiving written USAID approval of environmental documentation amendments.

Any activities found to be outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation shall be halted until an amendment to the documentation is submitted and written approval is received from USAID.

[END OF SECTION F]

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SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

The Agreement Officer for this Award is:

Mr. Zachary Clarke
Regional Agreement Officer
USAID/MERP
zclarke@usaid.gov

The Acquisition and Assistance Specialist for this Award is:

Ms. Salya Yacoubi
Supervisory Acquisition & Assistance Specialist
USAID/Morocco
syacoubi@usaid.gov

[END OF SECTION G]

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SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

- USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. Any award and subsequent incremental funding will be subject to the availability of funds and continued relevance to Agency programming.
- Applications with Proprietary Data

The Applicant who includes data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purpose, should mark the cover page with the following:

“This application includes data that must not be duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, an award is made as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government will have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting award. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government’s right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets {insert sheet numbers}.”

Additionally, the applicant must mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following:

“Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application.”

- Other relevant information:
Links to applicable regulations and references:
 - Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) / Systems for Award Management (SAM)
<http://www.dnb.com> and www.sam.gov
 - ADS Series 300 Acquisition and Assistance
<https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/agency-policy/series-300>
- Further background on USAID’s Gender can be found here:
Gender: [Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment](#) and [ADS Chapter 205 - Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle](#).

[END OF SECTION H]

[END OF NOFO 72060822RFA00001 – AMENDMENT 000001]