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RWANDA

Acquisition and Assistance Team

Date RFA Issued: July 13, 2015
Closing Date: August 17, 2015
Closing Time: 4:00 pm local Kigali time
Date Amendment No. 1 Issued: August 6, 2015

**SUBJECT: AMENDMENT NO. 1 TO REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)
RFA-696-15-000007; SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR
EDUCATION (SCOPE)**

Dear Prospective Applicant:

The United States Government ("USG"), represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development's Rwanda ("USAID/Rwanda") hereby amends the above-referenced RFA. The changes specified immediately below include: (1) Changed Sections for the original RFA; and (2) Questions and Answers.

The RFA is amended as follows:

A. COVER LETTER

1. *Closing Date:* Delete "August 7, 2015" and replace it with "August 26, 2015."
2. *In the second paragraph, in the second sentence:* Delete "2 CFR 400 for non-Federal entities and 48 CFR 31.2" and replace it with "2 CFR 200, OMB Circular A-122 for non-profit organizations, OMB Circular A-21 for universities, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for-profit organizations."

B. SECTION IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. *Section.B.1. Merit Review Application Format (page 20):* In the first paragraph, in the 3rd sentence, add "Applications can also be printed on A4 paper".

Please note the changes indicated above. Thank you for your consideration of this USAID initiative. We look forward to your organization's continued participation.

Sincerely,

/s/ Martin Fischer

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ATTACHMENT NO.: 1 – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. RFA page 12, Table 2 – Required and Illustrative Indicators for SCOPE. Indicator 3.2.1-35 Number of learners receiving (evidenced-based) reading interventions at the primary level.

Does this definition include extra-curricular activities held at school or within the community?

Response: Yes. This indicator will measure the number of primary-level students receiving interventions designed to improve reading skills, outside of the regular classroom timetable. The Applicant may also propose additional complementary indicators at the outcome level.

2. RFA page 12, Table 2 – Required and Illustrative Indicators for SCOPE. Indicator 3.2.1-35 Number of learners receiving (evidenced-based) reading interventions at the primary level.

If this definition is limited only to interventions in the classroom, it seems more appropriate for the L3 project to collect this data. Please confirm if SCOPE is responsible for collecting data on indicator 3.2.1-35 if the definition is limited to interventions in the classroom only.

Response: Yes, SCOPE is responsible for collecting data on the number of learners receiving reading interventions designed to improve reading skills, outside of the regular classroom timetable. The Applicant may also propose additional complementary indicators at the outcome level.

3. RFA page 12, Table 2 – Required and Illustrative Indicators for SCOPE. Indicator 3.2.1-3 Number of administrators and officials successfully trained with USG support

Are head teachers and other school leaders included in this definition?

Response: Yes.

4. RFA page 12, Table 2 – Required and Illustrative Indicators for SCOPE. Project Purpose indicator “Proportion of students who, by the end of three grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text.

Recognizing that the L3 project has already conducted a national fluency and mathematics assessment (pg. 2 of RFA), please clarify what responsibility, if any, the SCOPE project has for collecting annual student performance data nationally or in target schools.

Response: SCOPE is responsible for collecting annual student performance data on this indicator. After award, the Recipient will design the annual work plan in collaboration with L3, other USAID funded activities of other development partners, and Government of Rwanda initiatives, such that the data collection done by SCOPE complements other data collection . In

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addition to indicator 3.2.1-27, the applicant is encouraged to propose additional custom indicators.

5. On page 6 of the RFA it says “Reading materials will be supplied so that students at each of these schools will have access to something appropriate to read outside of school hours.” And on page 15 it states, “Increase the availability of Kinyarwanda-language reading material appropriate for emergent and early readers. “ Is it the intention that SCOPE will procure reading material, or assure the access and availability of reading material for early readers?

Response: SCOPE is expected to ensure that early readers have access to appropriate reading material outside of school hours. Accomplishing this goal will include procurement of additional reading materials. In addition to procurement, SCOPE will take initiative to increase accessibility and use of reading material.

6. The RFA estimates that there are 2,700 head teachers of non-private primary schools nationwide. (p. 6). Is it expected that SCOPE will reach a national proportion of that number or that every Head Teacher will be supported directly to promote literacy?

Response: USAID/Rwanda is open to any sustainable training model that effectively builds the capacity of Head Teachers in the areas described in the RFA.

7. On pages 5-6 of the RFA, the results framework and development hypothesis express that improved literacy/student reading outcomes is a direct result of increased support for reading by school leaders, parents and communities. The vision statement on page 6 reinforces these statements:

“More students will be able to read at grade level with fluency and comprehension because they are participating in out-of-school instructional and practice activities that complement their in-class instructional activities.”
Is the project expected to show attribution of improved reading outcomes to project activities?

Response: The ultimate aim of SCOPE is to complement in-class instructional activities with out-of-school instructional and practice activities to lead to students’ ability to read at grade level with fluency and comprehension. SCOPE will work in partnership with other relevant initiatives, development partners, and USAID attribution of improved reading outcomes. That applicant is encouraged to propose additional custom indicators that are attributable to SCOPE activities.

8. On pages 11 and 15, it states the Recipient will work with the Rwanda Reads initiative. What is the annual budget of this initiative?

Response: Rwanda Reads is a platform that fosters synergies and networking between organizations and individuals striving to advance the culture of reading in Rwanda and so has never developed an annual budget. Financial support for the general assembly (i.e. transportation and accommodation for attendees, venue, etc.) has been provided in the past by

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MINEDUC/REB, USAID, UNICEF, NGOs, and others on an ad hoc basis. The implementer for SCOPE is expected to propose how best to contribute to a culture of reading, and to provide technical support to Rwanda Reads as described in the RFA.

9. Page 12 of the RFA: The indicator at the **Project Purpose** level is student reading performance. Is the SCOPE project expected to collect data on this indicator? Or does the project use data collected by others? What is meant by “USAID implementing partners” in column 4?

Response: See the response to question 4.”USAID implementer partner” means the implementer of SCOPE.

10. Under required activities (p. 13 of the RFA), the first required activity (bullet 1) is to conduct formative research to develop standards and best practices for literacy-focused effective school-community partnerships. What kind of “formative research” does USAID have in mind for developing these standards? Please explain.

Response: International best practices and standards for effective school-community partnership should be tailored to the Rwandan context. After award, the Recipient should conduct a rapid assessment and/or research with a short turnaround to contextualize and validate best practices and standards for Rwanda.

11. On pages 14 and 16, the RFA lists “Illustrative activities.” Are these activities optional? May the applicant propose alternative strategies and activities?

Response: Yes, illustrative activities are optional and the applicant may propose alternative strategies and activities to achieve the desired outcomes.

12. Regarding the Life of Project implementation plan, page 22: The implementation plan seems to be in lieu of a work plan. How does it differ from a work plan? In addition to the sequence and timeframe of activities (the content of a work plan), what information should it present that does not duplicate the technical narrative and the results framework? Please provide a model or example of an acceptable implementation plan.

Response: “The implementation plan” is equivalent to the work plan. “The Technical Approach” narrative should present a comprehensive yet concise summary of the proposed overall strategic and technical approach that clearly demonstrates how the applicant will achieve the objectives outlined in the Program Description. The annexed Implementation Plan will outline the specific activities anticipated. USAID will not provide a model or example of an implementation plan.

13. Annex H, Project Reference Information, requests information on 5 recently completed projects. May offerors submit project reference information on projects and programs that are still active? And please clarify if Project Reference Information must be submitted for every project mentioned in the Organizational Capacity section plus an additional 5 projects.

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Response: Yes, but applicants are required to submit information on their five most recently completed projects as specified in the solicitation. As authorized in the solicitation, applicants may also submit project reference information on projects and programs that are still active or on-going that is considered relevant. The applicant should submit Project Reference Information (a) for any project mentioned in the “Organizational Capability and Experience” section of the merit review application, and (b) for the Applicant's five most-recent completed projects. Project Reference Information must be submitted for every project mentioned in the organizational capacity section, plus the five most-recent projects if they have not already been listed.

14. RFA page 20, Section IV. Application and Submission Information, B. Content and Form of Application Submission, Annexes: Project Reference Information, states that “The Applicant shall provide reference information for...(b) the Applicant's five most-recently completed projects (contracts, task orders, cooperative agreements, grants, or other implementing mechanisms) that involved international development [if a project meeting this criteria is discussed in the Organizational Capability and Experience section of the merit review application, then this list can be less than five].”

Would USAID consider allowing the Applicant and major sub-awardees to select five projects of relevant technical scope and complexity, even if implementation is still underway? We suggest this might allow for a better assessment of institutional capacity versus reviewing projects selected based on completion date.

Response: See response to Question 13. Again, while applicants may submit information on other relevant projects, it is required to submit information on its five most recent completed projects.

15. RFA page 20, Section IV. Application and Submission Information, B. Content and Form of Application Submission, requires applications to be submitted on standard 8 ½ by 11 inch paper (letter size).
Given the difficulty of securing letter size paper in Rwanda, we kindly request the option to print the hard copy on A4 paper – with all formatting (and electronic submission) to be done in line with standard 8 ½ by 11 inch paper size.

Response: The hard copies of the application can be printed on A4 paper. The RFA has been revised to correct this.

16. RFA page 32, Section IV. Application and Submission Information, B. Content and Form of Application Submission, 1. Submission, Marking and Copies, requires the Merit Review Application Body to be submitted in Microsoft Word.
Please confirm this Microsoft Word portion is limited to the 25-page technical proposal and cover (also to be submitted in PDF as part of full application, per the preceding requirement in bullet a.).

Response: Yes, the word portion of the merit review application is limited to 25 pages, excluding annexes, the table of contents, and the cover page as specified in Section IV.B.1.

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17. Page 1 of the RFA references 2 CFR 400; was this intended to reference 2 CFR 200? As 2 CFR 400 is applicable to Department of Agriculture programs, we request that the reference be removed or that USAID clarify the reason for inclusion.

Response: The RFA intended to reference 2CFR 200. The RFA has been revised to correct this.

18. Would USAID kindly provide the local compensation plan for Rwanda in order to allow applicants to propose comparable rates for CCN staff?

Response: USAID/Rwanda will not disclose the local compensation plan as it is not directly relevant to costs incurred under a USAID cooperative agreement.

19. Section IV (B)(2)(e), on page 28 of the RFA, states “the applicant must include funds with the budget to contract an audit, with the Statement of Work approved by USAID.” Please confirm that if the applicant conducts an annual audit in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F and such costs are included in the applicant’s indirect costs, the applicant is not required to budget.

Response: If the applicant has an annual Single Audit per OMB Circular A-133 and 2 CFR 200.514, the applicant need to budget funds in the cost application for an additional audit of its organization. However, it is possible that sub-award audits could be required depending on the partners involved and other factors and a program specific audit could be required by USAID/Rwanda pursuant to standard provisions in any resulting cooperative agreement.

20. Section IV (B)(2) (l), on page 29 of the RFA, requests the information on the applicant’s capacity and resources. Is this information also required from proposed sub recipients and subcontractors?

Response: Yes, this information is also required from major subrecipients and subcontractors.

21. Page 30 of the RFA requests Certifications – are these required from proposed subrecipients and subcontractors as well?

Response: Certifications are required from proposed major subrecipients and subcontractors.

22. Page 31 of the RFA notes that the applicant must be registered in SAM and provide a DUNS number. Is this only required for the applicant or is it also required for proposed subrecipients and subcontractors to be registered at the time of submission of the application?

Response: No, it is not required for subrecipients and subcontractors to be registered in SAM at the time of submission

23. Page 32 states of RFA: “The Cost application in Adobe Acrobat portable document format (.pdf)....and All Spreadsheets in unprotected Microsoft Excel format (must also

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include subcontractor spreadsheets).” Please confirm whether or not the entire cost proposal, with the exception of the Excel workbook(s), needs to be combined into a PDF file(s) or if USAID would find it acceptable to submit the cost proposal in several numbered attachments (Word, Excel, and PDF).

Response: The RFA requires the entire cost proposal to be submitted as a PDF file, although it can be submitted in parts if necessary. In addition, the spreadsheets must be submitted in unprotected Microsoft Excel format.

24. Annex 1 includes the certifications entitled “Prohibition on Assistance to Drug Traffickers for Covered Countries and Individuals (ADS 206)” and “Key Individual Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking” and “Participant Certification Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking.” As Rwanda is not a covered country in accordance with ADS 206, we request that these be removed or that USAID clarify the reason for inclusion.

Response: USAID/Rwanda will not remove these required certifications requirements. The applicant may state “Not Applicable” where it applies.

25. We respectfully ask that USAID make available relevant reports from the L3 project to ensure all bidders have equal access to relevant information. Specifically, the following reports are requested to be made available via the grants.gov website for this opportunity:
- Evaluation report of the pilot phase
 - Fluency Assessment of Reading Skills (national baseline)
 - Report details about recent family reading campaign

Response: USAID/Rwanda will not disclose any such documents at this time.

26. Is there a reason the turnaround time is so tight from the release to the due date?

Response: The closing date for receipt of applications has been extended to August 26, 2015. The RFA has been revised to change this. .

27. The grant states that the impact of the program proposed must be national in scope...does that preclude a regional or smaller scale program?

Response: Yes it does. Applications that are not national in scope and do not fully meet the requirements in the Program Description and elsewhere in the solicitation may not be considered.

28. There is a component of this proposal that seeks to create and maintain a program to involve parents in their children’s literacy and reading progress. Would your agency consider a proposal that focuses on that piece of the program alone?

Response: No.