

South Sudan Safer Schools Support (5S)

Questions Received through Email

1. **Can USAID confirm that the only required method of submission is via email to 5SSudan@usaid.gov?**

The correct email address is 5SSouthSudan@usaid.gov, rather than the one indicated in the question. Only email submissions were accepted up until the closing date/time for questions, per pg. 3 of the RFA (Feb. 22, 2013/ 5:00 PM local time, Juba, South Sudan).

2. **Section I.B.3.3 (p. 15, “Goal”) says “See ANNEX D for 5S Results Framework”, but Annex D on page 69 is the Standard Form 424 series. Please provide the referenced results framework.**

The Illustrative 5S Results Framework has been added as the last page of this Q&A document.

3. **Section I.B.4 (p. 16, Component 1, 2nd bullet: “increase community engagement in school improvement and the promotion of safer schools”) mentions that the project may “Fund communities with schools”. Does USAID anticipate the project will work in any communities that do not yet have schools?**

Yes, applicants are encouraged to also work with communities that do not yet have primary schools/learning spaces since this cohort represents about half of South Sudan’s primary school-age population.

4. **Referencing p. 16, footnote 11, please clarify whether “local government officials” is inclusive of head teachers and school staff.**

That is correct—grant to teachers or head teachers are not permitted.

5. **Section I.B.4 (p. 18, Component 2, 3rd bullet: “Improve reading outcomes for primary grades”) discusses “home language instruction.” Please clarify whether USAID intends to support instruction using mother tongue or English language instruction at home.**

The reference to “home language” is not referring to learning language at home, but rather to mother tongue.

6. **Please clarify whether applicants should address strategies to implement activities under Component 4 in the body of their technical applications according to the points identified in Section I.4 at the top of page 21.**

Yes, applicants need to address strategies to implement activities under Component 4.

7. Please clarify whether USAID wishes to include the Grants Advisor position as key personnel as described on p. 41 of the RFA. Section II.C.b. (p. 31) and Section IV.K.2 (p. 40-42, "Application Contents", part (f) "Management Approach and Key Personnel") designate five positions key personnel (Project Director, Senior Education Advisor, Grants Advisor, Community Mobilization Specialist, and Senior M&E Specialist). Section IV.K.2.i.b (p 44, "Key Personnel") does not include the Grants Advisor in the list of key personnel positions.

Yes, all five positions listed on pg. 31 of the RFA and further described on pg. 41/42 need to be included as Key Personnel.

8. Please confirm that USAID would like applicants to organize the body of their proposal according to the evaluation criteria as detailed beginning on p. 51 to facilitate ease of review. Section IV.K.2.v. (p 39) says the "BODY OF PROPOSAL must be presented in the following order: the proposed Management Structure consisting of the Management Plan and Key Personnel; the proposed Technical Approach and Implementation Schedule; the applicant's Past Performance information, and; the applicant's draft Monitoring and Evaluation Plan", which is detailed further on p. 43-46. Yet, Section V.A (p. 51-53) instructs that "Applicants shall organize the narrative sections of their technical applications in the same order as the evaluation criteria" and lists them in the following order: Technical Approach, Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, Management Approach and Key Personnel, Corporate Institutional Capability and Past Performance.

Organize your submission according to the order of the evaluation criteria. An Amendment to the RFA will be completed to address this change.

9. Section IV.K.2.vi.(Annexes) lists the Organizational Chart as a required annex, but the detailed instructions on p. 42 (Application Contents, (f) Management Approach and Key Personnel) indicates that the organizational chart should be included in the body of the proposal, preceding key personnel position descriptions and biographical sketches. Please confirm that USAID wishes applicants to include the organizational chart as an unnumbered page in the body of the proposal with the presentation of key personnel.

The Organizational Chart should be included in the main body of the application.

10. Section [IV.K.2.vi](#). (Annexes) limits CVs to three pages for key personnel and two pages for other long-term personnel. While the detailed instructions (Section IV.K.2 part f, "Management and Key Personnel) instructs that key personnel CVs are limited to four pages. Please clarify the page limit for key personnel CVs and advise whether CVs for other named long-term personnel are requested.

Page limit for all CVs will be two pages. It is optional to include CVs of non-Key Personnel. An Amendment to the RFA will be completed to address this change.

- 11. Please confirm that USAID will accept a past performance summary table as the past performance annex rather than past performance report forms. Both formats are mentioned in Section IV.K.1 (p. 39) and Annex H includes a different format, Past Performance Questionnaires.**

On Page # 39, Section IV; K.1, first paragraph – “Table summarizing qualifications of proposed personnel, past performance summary table and past performance report forms) are not included in the 40 page limitation.”, please find the following explanation:

The “table summarizing qualifications of proposed personnel” refers to key personnel that are being proposed.

The “past performance summary table” refers to the past performance of the organization(s) submitting their application to the RFA, to include all sub-recipients named in the application.

The “past performance report forms” refers to ANNEX H – Past Performance Questionnaire (pg. 111). Section A of this form should be completed by the applicant and Section B should be completed by the “Name of Contact Person” listed in Section A. The “Name of Contact Person” should submit the completed ANNEX H to 5SSouthSudan@usaid.gov. An Amendment to the RFA will be completed to further explain this change.

- 12. Please clarify the requested number of past performance references. Page 43 states “any number” while page 45 states “a minimum of 3” and page 53 states “3-5.”**

A total of 3-5 Past Performance references are requested. An Amendment to the RFA will be completed to address this change.

- 13. Please clarify the requested timeframe for submitted PPRs. Page 43 indicates projects should be from the last three years but page 45 indicates that projects should be from the past seven years.**

PPRs should be from the last three years. An Amendment to the RFA will be completed to address this change.

- 14. Please clarify whether the Implementation Schedule requested in Section IV.K.2.ii.b. (p. 45) should be included as an annex to the technical proposal or if USAID would prefer a table imbedded in the body of the proposal as an unnumbered page.**

Include the Implementation Schedule as an Annex. This Annex should be referenced in the body of the application; therefore it will not affect the 40 page limit.

15. **Section IV.L.a.a.iv. (p. 46) states that the budget will include “all costs associated with local in-country technical assistance.” Please clarify whether USAID requires a separate breakdown of local in-country technical assistance. If USAID does require such a separation of these local TA costs, please advise whether this should also reflect the breakdown of costs, such as labor, travel, per diem, training/seminar costs, etc.**

It is not necessary to include a separate costing for this aspect. An Amendment to the RFA will be completed to address the two changes on page 46.

16. **Section IV.L.a.e. (p 47, “Training Costs”) requests that training costs be clearly identified. Does USAID require that training costs be detailed as they would be in a contract (per ADS 253 Participant Training regulations)?**

No, please see the amended language in the RFA.

17. **Section IV.N. (p. 49) states that “the grants portion of 5S must total at least \$40 million for the five-year cooperative agreement.” Does the funder anticipate competitive grants with an RFA cycle, non-competitive grants with GoSS input, a mix of the two, or is this at the applicant’s discretion?**

Since these grants are intended for school community groups, a RFA cycle is not appropriate. The other factors are part of applicants’ technical approach.

18. **Section V.A.3.d (p. 52) requires that applicants include local personnel “in key technical and leadership positions”. Please clarify which positions are considered “key technical and leadership positions.”**

This is the choice of applicants and may vary depending on the needs related to supervising activities. USAID/South Sudan encourages the use of local personal to the maximum extent practicable in all areas of the program.

19. **Considering the guidance against applying cost share to the pass-through grants, please clarify USAID’s intention. Does this guidance suggest that although cost share is calculated on the total anticipated funding amount, the cost-share distribution may not be bundled with any pass-through grants to increase the total value of those pass-through grants?**

The cost share should be applied to the total amount of the award, minus the amount attributed to pass through grant (at least \$40 million).

For example (*Note: Your approach may be different*): Not taking the program modifier into account, there will be an estimated total of \$90 million. When \$50 million are going to be used for pass-through grants, then there is \$40 million. In this example, cost share of 5% will be applied to only \$40 million.

20. On Page 53, the RFA states ‘Cost share *may not* be applied to the portion of funds budgeted by applicants as pass-through grants earmarked for direct management by community groups, including the SMC/PTAs to fund school improvement grants activities.’ Please clarify that cost share is required on the award amount of \$105 million but that cost share should not come from recipients of the \$40 million earmarked grants.

See the response to question #19.

21. Section V – Application Review Information, page 53 states: “Cost share may not be applied to the portion of funds budgeted by applicants as pass-through grants earmarked for direct management by community groups, including SMC/PTAs to fund school improvement grants activities.” Question: Would USAID provide further clarity on what constitutes grants that are “direct management by community groups” and therefore exempt from cost share?

At least \$40 million should be used for pass through grants is to ensure sustainability and local capacity development so that the program can be run by local organizations after the life of the project (LOP). It is also to keep the focus on the community level since that’s where educational access can be scaled up with the highest levels of effectiveness. Regarding cost share, see the response to question #19.

22. V.B. (p. 53, “Notes on Cost Sharing”) indicates that some grants should be designated as “pass-through grants” (not administered by the grantee). Please clarify whether the full \$40M grants fund should be designated as pass-through grants and therefore directly managed by community groups.

See the response to question #19.

23. Please confirm that USAID’s Youth Policy guidelines, defining the upper age limit for youth program participants at age 29 applies to program participants enrolled in AES. As such, can applicants assume that youth program participants enrolled in AES within the USAID Youth Policy age guidelines will be considered as part of the 5S total increase in enrollment?

Overall educational access figures are based on the P1-8 system in South Sudan rather than AES’ variety of models, including the Accelerated Learning Program. This does not preclude applicants from proposing to work with AES, however the main focus of 5S is really primary education.

Also, please refer to the USAID Youth Policy:

http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/policy_planning_and_learning/documents/Youth_in_Development_Policy.pdf

24. **Please confirm that the grants fund may be used for grants administration costs in addition to the direct costs of the grants.**

The grants fund (at least \$40 million) should not include the administration costs. These administrative costs should be budgeted separately.

25. **Please clarify the requirement in Section III.C (p. 34) that “applicants which apply to this solicitation provide a cost-sharing plan.” Does USAID have a preferred format for the cost-sharing plan, such as 1) a stand-alone document or 2) a section of the budget narrative?**

Both formats are suitable.

26. **Please confirm that South Sudan is considered a ‘special R&R’ post. If yes, please confirm that international staff posted to projects in South Sudan are eligible to receive regional rest breaks and/or post rotations out of country periodically in addition to normal R&R and home leave. If yes, please also provide details on USAID/South Sudan’s relevant practices (e.g. one post-rotation/RRB every 60 days).**

For a 12 month tour in South Sudan, our internal policy is that employees are eligible for two R&Rs during the tour and home leave after the 12 month period. Regional rest breaks are not included in the South Sudan policy.

27. **Section 1 – Funding Opportunity Description, page 19 provides the scope for Component 3, which includes “Establish policy framework that promotes equitable access.” Question: Can USAID provide further clarity on what it means by “establishing” policy frameworks, since this is usually the purview of the central government, and this project will be primarily focused at the local levels? Question: Can USAID please clarify the role the 5S Project recipient is expected to have in policy implementation?**

Your technical approach can devise a range of different strategies for working on policy development. USAID in South Sudan has a long history of collaborating closely with the Ministry of General Education and Instruction on formulating suitable policies.

Although 5S is primarily focused on the local level, it is necessary to ensure that the gains made in working with communities are reflected in national policy formulation. Nonetheless, the policy element is not anticipated to be a major part of 5S.

28. **Section IV – Application and Submission, page 37 states that “Applications in the English language must be received no later than March 28, 2013, 5:00 PM Local Time, Juba, South Sudan at the address indicated below.” Furthermore, the section states that “Applicants must submit one copy of the technical application and one copy of the cost application.” However, page 3 of the RFA states: “Hard Copy and Facsimile submission of applications is not authorized and will not be accepted.” On page 37, it also states that “All applications must be submitted via email to 5SSouthSudan@usaid.gov.” Question: Would USAID please confirm that both technical and cost applications must be submitted via email and not in hard copy?**

Yes, only email submissions will be accepted (not hard copies). Please see the amendment to the RFA.

29. **Section IV – Application and Submission, page 37 provides guidelines for electronic submission. Question: Would USAID consider increasing the email size limit of 5 MB to 10 MB?**

No, this is beyond our control and cannot be changed. Break everything down and submit various emails with attachments.

30. **Section IV – Application and Submission, page 42 states: “Two references shall be provided for each proposed key personnel and shall be included in the annex, following the resume and the letter of intention for that person.” Question: Would USAID please confirm that the references are not counted against the resume/CV page limit?**

Yes, this is correct.

31. **Section IV – Application and Submission, page 43 states: “Contract/grant name and number, if any annual amount received for each of the last three years and beginning and end dates.” Question: Would USAID please confirm that it is sufficient to provide the total award amounts for each contract/grant instead of the annual amounts?**

Yes, the revised language for c) is “Contract/grant name and number, total estimated cost/total estimated amount, and the corresponding beginning and end dates for those awards within the last three years.” Please see the amendment to the RFA.

32. **Section IV – Application and Submission, page 44 states: “At least two of the positions must be based within the five states where the project is focused, preferably in Kwajok, capital of Warrap State.” Question: Would USAID consider having Key Personnel based in another location, such as Malakal, which benefits from having better transportation and communication links to the other target states?**

Please refer to other answers regarding Kwajok. Trend research demonstrates that the major states which have the highest level of need in terms of educational access are

centered closer to Kwajok than to Malakal. Although Malakal has good international flight connections and other amenities, this is not the primary purpose of having 5S staff based in the field.

33. **Section VIII – Other Information Annexes, page 107 provides general grade level guides. Question: Would USAID please provide the FSN pay scale and Local Compensation Plan for South Sudan?**

The Local Compensation Plan (LCP) for South Sudan will be added as “ANNEX I” in the amendment to the RFA. Please note that USAID/South Sudan is using the Sudan Local Compensation Plan currently, so don’t be alarmed that it says “AMERICAN EMBASSY, KHARTOUM, SUDAN”. This is the correct LCP and it is denominated in US dollars.

34. **Please confirm that an education intervention under this RFA must be for the primary education level and non-formal education, and that no secondary education activities will be funded under this RFA.**

No, secondary education activities will also be funded under this RFA.

35. **In the Program Overview section on page 14, the RFA states “*The focus of the project’s activities will be in Warrap, Jonglei, Upper Nile, Northern Bahr El-Ghazal, and Unity States*”. It will not be possible to cover 100% of payams in each State under this RFA, given the large geographic scope. What percentage of coverage of payams per state does USAID expect through this project?**

There is no specific percentage of payams coverage that USAID will be specifying.

36. **On page 15 of the RFA, USAID indicates that “*Applicants are expected to develop a project that will achieve the following results: (See ANNEX D for 5S Results Framework)*”. However, ANNEX D contains only the Standard Form 424 Series. Could USAID please provide the Annex containing the 5S Results Framework?**

The Illustrative 5S Results Framework has been added as the last page of this Q&A document.

37. **Component 1, on page 16, includes improving school conditions and infrastructure. Could USAID please clarify whether all improvements to school conditions and infrastructure (IR1) must align to government standards or whether applicants may propose alternatives such as semi-permanent structures?**

Bear in mind the amounts of funding available per site and the push in 5S toward larger magnitudes of access as opposed to what could be afforded through permanent school construction. Each community is unique and has varying needs or expectations; however 5S is intended to reach deeper into rural areas since that’s where many out-of-school children are located. Also, see footnote 20 in the text of the RFA (pg. 49).

38. **Some PTA groups are operating unofficially, particularly in pastoral areas where mobile schools and alternative education are more common. Do PTAs/SMCs, and similar groups such as mothers groups, need to be officially registered or recognized by the state in some capacity in order to be eligible recipients for small grants under Component 1?**

No, groups do not need to be registered in order to participate in 5S. As indicated, in most cases they are not/will not be registered. In addition, they cannot be government structures in order to be eligible.

39. **In some remote areas of South Sudan, procurement can be challenging and logistically expensive. Could USAID please clarify whether grants to PTA/SMC-type organizations (under Component 1) may be in the form of gifts in kind, with community organizations selecting the materials they need?**

Yes, should you choose this to be part of your technical approach. USAID recognizes the absence of banking, microcredit institutions, and money transfer facilities in most areas. Notwithstanding, elements of organizational development, financial transparency, and management of funds can still be integrated even if this approach is selected.

40. **On page 16, the RFA requires that the project ensures at least 50% women's participation in school management committees and other school-related support and governance structures. Additionally, on page 21 the RFA notes that most PTAs are at present unrepresentative of pupils' families. In light of the fact that many PTAs are functioning as an executive grouping rather than a mass movement, does USAID expect that the 50% participation will be achieved only through SMCs, or through both SMCs and alternative structures and/or governance interventions?**

As mentioned under section 4, second bullet, on page 16 of the original RFA, USAID expects that awardees will ensure at least 50% women's participation in school management committees and other school related support and governance structures. In all cases, a minimum of 50% female participation will be required in training, increasing accountability/transparency mechanisms, grants management, and other activities.

41. **For Component 2, on page 19, the RFA states "*Applicants will also present ideas for the design of a pilot and a study on improved reading and numeracy intervention.*" In addition, on page 11, the RFA states that "*(I)n addition, this program will pilot activities on a limited scale to improve learning outcomes in literacy at the primary grades, generating lessons learned and evidence that will inform future efforts in similar contexts.*" Could USAID please clarify whether the early grade reading results are expected to be achieved through a pilot alone?**

Yes, the references to a literacy/numeracy/reading pilot are only intended to be of a limited scale and not to be reflected as major aspects of the overall program. The history of reading results in South Sudan is described in the [Education Status Report](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/06/28/00033303820120628035809/Rendered/PDF/705950PUB0EPI0067902B09780821388914.pdf) (<http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2012/06/28/00033303820120628035809/Rendered/PDF/705950PUB0EPI0067902B09780821388914.pdf>).

Note that at present there are still concerns around measurability since in many cases schools are not able to provide the minimum level required to be able to score on early grade reading tools. Hence, the focus on access, but with strides to be made in the direction of future activities going further in the direction of the initial pilot.

- 42. For Component 2, on page 19, the RFA states “Applicants will also present ideas for the design of a pilot and a study on improved reading and numeracy intervention.” Please confirm numeracy needs to be addressed under this RFA.**

This is at the discretion of applicants. Numeracy and literacy need to be considered side-by-side in order to offer a comprehensive set of activities. USAID’s Education Strategy Operational Guidance also provides global guidance on these matters.

- 43. Presumably, an emergency affecting education would affect other sectors. How does Component 4, page 20, feed into a larger declaration of emergency?**

Yes, the sectors are expected to have inter-related decisions that would be taken in the event of the emergency increasing. However, the overall trigger would primarily be considered on a sector-by-sector basis.

- 44. Who is involved in deciding when Component 4 is triggered?**

Overall, the trigger factors are related to a range of factors outside the manageable interest of both applicants and of USAID. However, USAID will decide when/whether Component 4 will be used.

- 45. Does USAID already have criteria for the “trigger” under Component 4, or would the decision be based on criteria established by the Government or Education Cluster? If not, could applicants propose criteria?**

See the response to question #44.

- 46. Given the context and likelihood of continued localized conflict, refugees/IDPs/returnees, and impact of natural hazards, it is presumed preparedness activities will be incorporated into IRs 1 to 3. Can contingency stocks be budgeted under IRs 1 to 3?**

Yes, this can be part of your technical approach if you feel it would contribute to enhancing the program.

47. In Section B.5.1. Gender, on page 24, the RFA states: *“To provide greater focus on gender equality in the project, a Gender Action Plan will be prepared by the project that will include the following considerations.”* Please confirm that a Gender Action Plan will be required after award and not at the time of submission.

All applications should reference gender to the maximum extent practicable. However, the Gender Action Plan will be required after the award.

48. In Section B.5.3. Inclusive Development on page 26 of the RFA, USAID indicates that *“(T)he 5S project Recipient shall include a minimum of 5-10% children and adults with disabilities in all activities, which must be specifically outlined in the budget”*. Could USAID please clarify the expected presentation of this information in the budget and/or the technical application?

The intention is to ensure that education services will reach people/children with disabilities. Numbers of beneficiaries will also be tracked over the life of the project. As a result, disaggregation of activity beneficiaries and budget figures are necessary.

49. In Section B.5.4. Partnering, Linkages, and Coordination on page 27 of the RFA, USAID indicates that *“(T)he Recipient will, however, obtain the input of key stakeholders, beneficiaries and partners in finalizing the details of the work plan, including MoGEI. This includes obtaining a consensus on the school improvement plan templates and grants applications, disbursement and reporting processes.”* Please confirm that consensus on these items is to be confirmed after award and not at the time of submission.

These are to be confirmed after award.

50. On page 41, Applicants are encouraged to have at least 1 key personnel based at a field site outside of the capital city of Juba and closer to the area of focus, such as the town of Kwajok in Warrap State. On page 44, (b) Key Personnel it states at least 2 positions must be based within the 5 states where the project is focused, preferably in Kwajok, capital of Warrap State. Please clarify the number of key that must be based outside of Juba, and if at least one of them must be based in Kwajok. May applicants place key personnel in other sites outside of Kwajok?

A minimum of two key personnel need to be based outside of Juba, at least one of the two should be located in Kwajok.

51. On page 42 of the RFA, it states *“Bio-data sheets with salary information will be attached to the cost application, not the technical application.”* Please confirm that 1420s are required for each key personnel.

Signed and completed 1420s are required for each Key Personnel.

Illustrative 5S Results Framework

