



USAID | **CAMBODIA**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

DATE: July 11, 2024

TO: Interested Applicants

SUBJECT: Amendment No. 01
Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: 72044224RFA00004
Program Title: Bridging Education Solutions for Transformation (BEST) Activity

Background

The subject Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was issued on June 25, 2024. Questions from interested applicants were received on or before July 4, 2024. As indicated in the NOFO, answers will be posted as an amendment to the NOFO to provide all prospective applicants with the same information.

Purpose of the Amendment

The purpose of this Amendment is to extend the Application Closing Date from August 6, 2024 to August 13, 2024, make specific changes to the NOFO, and to provide answers to questions submitted by interested applicants.

Sincerely,

Francis Hall
Agreement Officer
USAID/Cambodia

Specific changes to the NOFO are stated below:

1. On the 1st page of the NOFO, Closing Date, **DELETE** “August 6, 2024” and **REPLACE** with “August 13, 2024”.
2. In section D.1, AGENCY POINT OF CONTACT, Email, **DELETE** “hsorky@usaid.gov” and **REPLACE** with “hsokry@usaid.gov”.
3. In section E.2.a, Criterion 1, **DELETE** the last bullet in its entirety and **REPLACE** with the following:
"The extent to which the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) approaches demonstrates the soundness to track progress and generate robust evidence required to achieve the goals/objectives outlined in the Program Description. Also, the MEL narrative should demonstrate the Applicant’s approach to adaptive management based on learning and measurable results or operational research conducted by the Activity or other stakeholders."
4. In section F, add section F.6, Geographic Data Submissions as following:

“In accordance with USAID ADS 201 and ADS 579, the Recipient must plan, collect, and submit locations of implementation and locations of intended beneficiaries based on the following requirements:

- **Locations of Implementation** must be reported as coordinates (latitude and longitude) or centroid of the populated place.
- **Locations of Intended Beneficiaries** must be reported, at minimum, at the Province (Admin 1) level of geographic detail or at the exact sites where the activity is implemented.
Exception: When the Location of Intended Beneficiaries is considered nationwide, collect the Location of Intended Beneficiaries at the country level.
- Ensure that Activity Location Data is collected and submitted according to [ADS 579saa, Geographic Data Collection and Submission Standards](#), in accordance with the roles, responsibilities, and required procedures defined in [ADS 579](#) that govern the collection, management, and submission of all USAID development data. This must include verifying Activity Location Data quality (see [ADS 578, Information Quality Guidelines](#)).
- Collect Activity Location Data that excludes location information that could directly identify individuals or households or other personally identifiable information (PII) (see [ADS 508.3.1](#) for definition of PII). For example, data such as an individual’s name and address that could be used to re-identify the individual.

The Recipient must consult with AOR and/or the Mission’s Geographical Information System (GIS) Point of Contact to incorporate plans for collecting and reporting activity location data into the Activity MEL Plan. Submissions of location data must be made through the USAID Development Information Solution (DIS) via Location tab, in line with the submission of the activity progress report. The Recipient may visit this [Micro-trainings site](#) for instructions on submitting location data or reach out to the AOR for guidance.”

Questions received related to NOFO No. 72044224RFA00004 and corresponding USAID answers as follows:

- 1. As per the NFO released on Jun 25: 72044224RFA00004 we are reaching out for clarification on the local organization requirement:**

Answer: USAID provides a definition of “local entity” in Section C.1 of the NOFO (page 24).

- 2. Can we apply for a small grant to implement a project to help you achieve the grant objective? If we cannot apply independently, can we join a local NGO to apply?**

Answer: Eligibility is restricted to local organizations. However, other organizations can join a local NGO to apply as part of a consortium (Section C.1).

- 3. We would like to clarify is the International NGO eligible consortium member to join with local NGO lead as Prime?**

Answer: International NGOs can join a consortium, but the lead applicant must be a local organization (Section C.1).

- 4. Would USAID consider amending the SAM registration criteria listed on page 39 of the RFA to consider applications from organizations with pending SAM registrations? This would help mitigate the challenges experienced in navigating the SAM registration process and the delays in approvals that will take longer due to summer holidays in the US.**

Answer: SAM registration is not required at the time of application. However, USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifiers and SAM requirements (Section D).

- 5. Would USAID/Cambodia consider extending the closing date beyond August 6 to accommodate the extended wait times for SAM registration approvals?**

Answer: Please see the response to Question 4 regarding SAM registration. Please refer to RFA 72044224RFA00004 “Amendment 1” for the final closing date.

- 6. On page 36, would USAID/Cambodia consider using OMB's updated de minimis rate of 15%, which will become effective October 1, 2024, around the expected start date of the program?**

Answer: The current de minimis rate is 10%. Applicants are free to use the revised 15% de minimis rate, a NICRA, a fixed amount for indirect costs, or charge directly without indirect costs.

- 7. Can we submit CVs for non-key personnel whom we consider important along with those of key personnel in the Annex of the proposal?**

Answer: The RFA specifies submission of CVs for key personnel only (Section D.5.2). Other CV's will not be evaluated.

8. Do all key personnel have to be in the priming organization or can one be shared with the key sub-partner?

Answer: Key personnel can be from either the prime organization or a sub-partner (Section D.5.2).

9. Can the deadline for proposal submission be extended?

Answer: Please see the response to question 5.

10. Will a proposal still be accepted if our SAM registration is delayed?

Answer: Please see the response to question 4.

11. Do all subawards to partner agencies need to be named in the proposal or can a global amount of funding be reserved for subawards competitively awarded to other LNGOs, as yet unnamed?

Answer: Please refer to section D.6.f of the RFA. All sub-awardees do not need to be determined in the applications, however they would need to be approved prior to the subward being made. If future subgrants are envisioned, this should be clearly incorporated as relevant to the technical approach and management plan.

12. Can we use USAID funds under this award to buy motorcycles or a vehicle?

Answer: This award does not restrict the purchase of motorcycles or vehicles, but such purchases should align with the project objectives, technical application and budget justifications (Section D.6.d.5).

13. Can we use USAID funds for renovation of school-buildings (i.e. to improve the library or Computer Lab)?

Answer: Construction as defined in [USAID's ADS 303maw policy](#) as of 2023 is not authorized under this award (see Section D.6.d.7).

14. Does USAID have in mind a minimum number of provinces/schools in mind for this award? What would be the maximum number of provinces/schools for the award to give applicants some idea of a possible range when setting the scope of the activity?

Answer: Target provinces/schools will be defined in consultation with MoEYS as part of the work plan development (Section A.5). The selection of BEST target schools will be based on the 3

categories of schools as mentioned in Section A.5. The technical approach should specify an appropriate estimated number of target schools and provinces the applicant deems feasible, sufficient and necessary to fulfill the objectives of BEST.

BEST is expected to test the new revised package in a sufficient number of schools addressing target populations and geographies outlined in the Program Description, and to achieve the results expected under IR3 regarding generation of evidence to inform scale-up. In addition to its main target intervention schools, BEST will support the MoEYS to successfully fulfill the completion of the Khmer grade 4 pilot in select schools, which could be in different provinces/regions.

15. Is DSA for MoEYS staff attending training provided under the BEST activity considered an eligible cost?

Answer: Yes, DSA at the current approved government DSA rate for MoEYS staff attending training is an allowable cost, but is subject to USAID approval.

16. What happens in case the prime does not have NICRA but the sub-recipient does? (as per D.6.d.6 “The subrecipient budgets must align with the same requirements as the applicant’s budget, including those related to fringe and indirect costs”).

Answer: In the case where the prime applicant does not have a NICRA but the sub-recipient does, the sub-recipient’s budgets must still align with the same requirements as the applicant’s budget, including those related to fringe and indirect costs. This means that the sub-recipient can use their NICRA for their portion of the budget, while the prime applicant may use a different method for their indirect costs, such as those outlined in the response to question 6.

17. On page 33 it said, “Applicants are not required to submit a draft MEL plan supporting the technical approach. However, applicants will need to provide a narrative on how they will monitor, learn, adapt and evaluate the BEST activity. The successful applicant will develop the MEL plan in consultation with USAID at the work plan stage after the award,” but then on page 47, the merit review section included “the extent to which the draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plan presents clearly defined key indicators and provides targets that demonstrate the Activity’s progress/results toward goals/objectives outlined in the Program Description and the extent to which the draft MEL plan demonstrates the Applicant’s approach to adaptive management based on learning and measurable results or operational research conducted by the Activity or other stakeholders.” Is the MEL plan required in our application submission?

Answer: A narrative on the MEL approach is required in the application per section D.5. 4. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan. The full MEL plan will be developed post-award (Section D.5). The last bullet in criterion 1 (Section E.2.a) is revised in Amendment 1 to be consistent with section D.5.4.

18. Have MoEYS senior leadership expressed or confirmed interest/plans to revise the Grade 4 textbook? If so, could USAID advise who at MoEYS has confirmed this?

Answer: Yes, there have been discussions on the plan to revise the current core textbooks including grade 4 textbook among the MoEYS and development partners with respect to the BEST solicitation.

19. Is the training we provide under SO2 supposed to include training on the new grade 4 textbook? Or just training teachers on the supplementary materials which are aligned to the revised textbook?

Answer: BEST will support the MoEYS to test the revised textbook and also implement the new literacy packages, including the revised textbook in target schools.

20. Could USAID please provide more clarity on the Opportunity module?

Answer: USAID expects \$2.5 million to be available for the implementation of this activity, but may consider an expansion of work under the Opportunity Module Fund for up to \$500,000 where applicable and subject to funding availability. If the Opportunity Module is funded, the total estimated cost (TEC) of BEST will be \$3 Million.

21. Could USAID provide clarity around the budget, and whether the \$3 Million includes a ring fenced amount for the Opportunity module? Page 12: "Subject to further funding availability, USAID may expand the activity through the use of the Opportunity Module to address additional priorities that are identified during implementation that contribute to any of the three objectives.", Page 20: "Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide up to \$3 million in total USAID funding (including the opportunity module) over a three-year period".

Answer: Please see question 20.

22. Section A.5: Could USAID please provide more clarity on this: "In addition, the activity will also support the MoEYS to test the revised textbook which may occur in the same or different schools/geographic areas. A specific number of schools and geographic areas for testing textbook will need to be defined in consultation with MoEYS as part of the work plan development, following the award."

Answer: Please see the response to question 14.

23. Can 15% de minimis be applied per USAID's most recent update?

Answer: Please see the response to question 6.

24. Is a certification of compliance required if a local organization does not have one?

Answer: Please submit a copy of your Certificate of Compliance if your organization's systems have been certified by USAID/Washington's Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA). It's not required for a local organization that does not have one.

End of Amendment #1