



July 15, 2014

**Subject: Request for Applications (RFA) Number: RFA-278-14-000005
USAID Early Grade Reading and Math Project (USAID RAMP)
Amendment No. 1**

The purpose of this Amendment is to:

1. Extend the deadline for submission of applications; and
2. Respond to questions received from potential applicants.

Accordingly, the subject RFA is hereby amended as follows:

1. RFA cover page, Closing Date and Time for Application Submission, delete "July 17, 2014 at 4:30 pm Jordan time" and replace with "August 1, 2014 at 4:30 pm Jordan time".
2. Questions from potential applicants are answered in Attachment 1 to this Amendment.

Attachment 1

Question No. 1: Is this an RFP and can we submit a proposal or are you looking for a Grant?

Answer No. 1: This is an RFA requesting submission of applications for award of a cooperative agreement.

Question No. 2: Can we submit our proposal as a Saudi company?

Answer No. 2: There are no restrictions on the entities that can apply per Section III of the RFA.

Question No. 3: Shall we have an American partner to submit or is it not necessary?

Answer No. 3: See Answer No. 2.

Question No. 4: Is there currently well-established KG curricula in math and reading in public schools adopted nationwide?

Answer No. 4: There is not. While KG is a priority for the Ministry of Education, and teachers are starting to be trained on how to teach in KG, its establishment and roll out Kingdom-wide is still in the early stages.

Question No. 5: Will the program include KGII – 1-3, or will it include KGI – 1-3?

Answer No. 5: It will include KGII, and Grades 1-3. It will not include KGI. The Minister of Education wishes to make KGII mandatory for all children in the Kingdom of Jordan, while KGI will remain optional.

Question No. 6: Would there be an additional document in English for implementation in community and private schools? (Will there be an English version as well as the Arabic version?)

Answer No. 6: There are no plans for implementation in community or private schools—USAID RAMP will work in MOE government schools only.

Question No. 7: Will the program be included in the regular reading and math curriculum, or it will be a separate entity?

Answer No. 7: The program will strengthen the existing reading and math pedagogy—including training Ministry of Education teachers; providing updated, relevant learning materials that are aligned with the Ministry's

curriculum, as well as providing supplementary support outside of the classroom (such as at the home or in the community). USAID RAMP will not be a parallel system, it will use Government resources whenever possible (teachers, materials, supervisors, etc.).

Question No. 8: Are there any restrictions or pre-requisites on the applying companies for this RFA in terms of its country of origin, type of organization (profit/non-profit), US partner required, local partner required etc...?

Answer No. 8: Please refer to the RFA cover page as well as to Section III of the RFA.

Question No. 9: Can we submit two companies together to the RFA as joint companies? We are intending to partner with another company to be able to satisfy the RFA requirements. Are there any restrictions on this? If not, are there any restrictions on the type of the relationship (Joint Venture. Prime/Sub etc.) or is it open?

Answer No. 9: There are no specific restrictions on teaming arrangements. However, please note that the arrangements must be identified and company relationships must be fully disclosed in your application or, for arrangements entered into after submission of an application, before the arrangement becomes effective.

Question No. 10: Is it possible to extend the submission deadline to this RFA? Preferably 1 month would be adequate as this is a 5 years program that needs proper planning.

Answer No. 10: Please refer to page 1 of this Amendment for the new deadline.

Question No. 11: Regarding Component I (IR1), will the curriculum development needed be merely enhancements on the existing curricula or is a new curriculum required?

Answer No. 11: It will strengthen the existing curriculum by introducing updated materials and strong teacher training. No new curricula is planned, however, USAID RAMP will be in a strong position to help with curriculum design should the Ministry of Education request it.

Question No. 12: Is it necessary to have previous experience with USAID projects to submit to this RFA?

Answer No. 12: No.

Question No. 13: Given the project's emphasis on sustainability and intent to foster local

ownership, would USAID be willing to allow reasonable flexibility regarding prior experience and advanced degrees in education for the key personnel? Provided that the overall skill mix of the key personnel is found to be adequate to implement and manage the project, this may allow for more local nationals to fill key positions.

Answer No. 13: **The key personnel qualifications are not flexible, however please be sure to identify how local nationals will be integrated into your staffing pattern if you feel this would lead to greater sustainability within USAID RAMP.**

Question No. 14: Page 36: May we include the summary organizational chart as an annex instead rather than in the management section of the narrative to allow the diagram to be a more easily viewed size?

Answer No. 14: **Yes.**

Question No. 15: Pages 34-35: The Senior Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Specialist, Senior Education Specialist and Senior Early Grade Literacy and Math Specialist are listed as reporting “directly to the COP and DCOP”. May we assume the intent was to say “COP OR DCOP”? If no, please clarify the dual reporting relationship. Who is the intended supervisor for each of these positions?

Answer No. 15: **It should read “COP and/or DCOP”.**

Question No. 16: Page 34 b. Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) - The DCOP is first required to have a minimum of 15 years of experience working on education development and later noted to have minimum of 12 years of experience. Please confirm the minimum years of experience in education development required for the DCOP

Answer No. 16: **The correct requirement is for the DCOP to have 12 years of experience in education development.**

Question No. 17: Can USAID clarify the start date of this award?

Answer No. 17: **Please refer to the first paragraph of Section II of the RFA.**

Question No. 18: Given that the application is due on Grants.gov in less than 2 weeks, will USAID consider an extension to the submission date?

Answer No. 18: **Please refer to page 1 of this Amendment for the new deadline.**

Question No. 19 What are USAID’s expectations with respect to allocation of resources

between reading and mathematics? An equal amount? More on reading?

Answer No. 19: The goal of this project is to strengthen school quality in grades 1-3, measured by reading and math outcomes. Both subjects should reflect this goal.

Question No. 20: Would USAID consider cost sharing sources from the Jordanian government as part of the applicant's cost proposal

Answer No. 20: Criteria for cost sharing can be found under 22 CFR 226.23.

Question No. 21: Would USAID be willing to consider leveraging in lieu of cost sharing?

Answer No. 21: USAID will consider leveraging if it is in addition to the cost sharing required by this RFA.

Question No. 22: Page 39 indicates that all staff must present annual salary histories for the past 3 years. Would the 1420 suffice as evidence? Is this requirement for key personnel only?

Answer No. 22: The applicants can present this information in any form they choose. This requirement is for all staff proposed under this project.

Question No. 23: Could all offerors be provided with the findings of the EdData II textbook and supplemental materials review?

Answer No. 23: All applicants will have access to both the 2012 EGRA/EGMA dataset, as well as the endline 2014 EGRA/EMGA dataset. It is the responsibility of applicants to conduct analyses on these datasets if they wish to do so.

The data sets will be made available to applicants who request it. Applicants requesting the datasets will have to sign a statement that the data will only be used for the purpose of submitting an application in response to this RFA.

Question No. 24: We understand that preliminary findings of the EdData II pilot intervention (15-minute protocol) have been shared with the Government. Would USAID share these with all applicants?

Answer No. 24: See Answer No. 23.

Question No. 25: What is the design and status of the EdData II Remedial Education pilot?

Answer No. 25: The remedial project is not relevant for USAID RAMP project design.

Question No. 26: How will the findings of the two EdData II pilots affect the activities and the implementation of USAID RAMP?

Answer No. 26: The findings of all education-related USAID projects should be taken into account either in the design or implementation of education activities. When the findings are released, if relevant, they may be used to help strengthen USAID RAMP in ways we cannot yet anticipate. Also see Answer No. 23.

Question No. 27: We notice that many potentially design-relevant pieces of information in the EGRA/EGMA assessments were not included in the contractor's 2012 report. These include the distributions of reading scores by grade and the percent of students, by grade, with zero scores. Could all applicants be provided access to the dataset stripped of personally identifiable information?

Answer No. 27: See Answer No. 23.

Question No. 28: In proposing key staff, would USAID consider a candidate's training and experience as an equivalent alternative to a Masters degree, or is the Masters a hard and fast requirement?

Answer No. 28: USAID will not consider alternatives to a required degree.

Question No. 29: The RFA requests PPRs for all contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements for the past three years. Since, for many, this could be a long list, would USAID consider a sample of five of our most recent and relevant projects?

Answer No. 29: The list assists in establishing the depth of the applicant's past performance in similar projects. It is not in the applicant's interest to abbreviate the list. Only relevant programs should be included in this list.

Question No. 30: Are PPRs required for all subawardees as well as the applicant? Should applicants use the standard USAID short form for PPRs?

Answer No. 30: Past performance information is required for all subawardees as well as the applicant. There is no specified form for submission of this information.

Question No. 31: Would USAID please confirm that there will be budget flexibility between the Initial Cost Application and the Final Cost Application submitted as a result of the Oral Presentation?

Answer No. 31: Confirmed.

Question No. 32: With regard to IR1, could USAID please clarify whether it is in USAID RAMP's scope to print and distribute materials, and therefore the cost must be included in the project budget, or whether the Ministry of education will be responsible for printing and distribution?

Answer No. 32: USAID RAMP will help the MOE design, print, and distribute materials, as well as help with financing these activities.

Question No. 33: Page 32, Section IV.1 instructs that the Technical Approach must include a monitoring plan that adequately evaluates performance and provides information for project planning. Please confirm that applicants are required to submit only a narrative overview of the proposed M&E approach as part of the written technical applications and are not required to submit draft performance monitoring plans, given that applicants will present details regarding their planned performance monitoring and evaluation during the oral presentations stage of the procurement.

Answer No. 33: A narrative is sufficient for the written application.

Question No. 34: Page 33, Section IV.2 states that resumes for all Key Personnel must be no longer than two pages, and each resume must include three references. Please confirm that the references are not included as part of the two page limit for resumes.

Answer No. 34: References may be included in an annex.

Question No. 35: Page 33, Section IV.2 references a staffing plan. Please confirm that the staffing plan may be submitted as annex, and is not counted in the page limit.

Answer No. 35: The staffing plan is counted in the page limit. The staffing plan annexes (resumes) are not counted in the page limit.

Question No. 36: Page 34, Section IV.2 (b), first paragraph states that the DCOP must have a minimum of 15 years of experience working in educational programs whereas the list of qualifications that follows instructs that the minimum is 12 years of experience working on educational development. Please confirm that proposed DCOP candidates qualify with 12 years of experience.

Answer No. 36: See Answer No. 16.

Question No. 37: Page 35, Section IV.3 notes that applicants must provide records of relevant

technical and managerial resources and expertise to design and implement the described project. On Page 36 of the same section, it is noted that applications shall include an Annex listing of all of its relevant contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements.

a) Please confirm that the request for the listings of relevant contracts, grants or cooperative agreements is the same as the records of relevant technical expertise.

b) Please indicate whether a listing of relevant contracts, grants or cooperative agreements is also requested for proposed sub-award recipients.

Answer No. 37: a) The records of relevant past performance that demonstrate evidence of organizational capacity and relevant technical and managerial resources and expertise are different from the listings of relevant awards. However, it is expected that these two will have significant overlap and it is up to the applicant to decide how best to communicate both. Please note that the first is included in the page limit, while the listings are to be included in an annex.

b) Yes.

Question No. 38: Page 36, Section IV.4 references an organization chart. Please confirm that the proposed project organization chart may be included as an annex.

Answer No. 38: The organizational chart is to be included in an annex.

Question No. 39: Page 36, Oral Presentation section states that up to five technically acceptable applicants will be invited to present their applications orally, yet if fewer than three applicants are found to be technically acceptable, then only those applicants will be invited. Could USAID please clarify how many applicants will be invited to the oral presentation and provide further clarification regarding the difference in numbers?

Answer No. 39: The Agreement Officer has the discretion to limit the number of applicants invited to the oral presentations to that number that permits an efficient competition among the most highly rated applications. This number may be up to five. However, only the applications that are considered the most highly rated will be invited to the oral presentations, even if those are less than three.

Question No. 40: Page 8 and 16: Please provide the analysis and results of the EGRA/EGMA research, specifically pertaining to the “intensive textbook and

supplementary materials review”, the curriculum review, the gap analysis, plans for bridging the gap in the curriculum and the actual materials developed.

Answer No. 40: **See Answer No. 23.**

Question No. 41: 10. Page 8 and 16: Please provide the 15 minute routine to address the gaps in EGR and EGM, as well as associated teacher guides, manuals, and instructional materials.

Answer No. 41: **See Answer No. 23. No additional materials will be provided.**

Question No. 42: 11. Page 8 and 16: Please provide the research results of the EGRA/EGMA research pilots to date.

Answer No. 42: **See Answer No. 23.**

Question No. 43: 12. Page 9, Section 1.4.2: Please provide the additional diagnostic tools developed for use in the early grade for the Remedial Education research program, as well supplemental materials and training program

Answer No. 43: **The remedial education pilot is not relevant for the design of USAID RAMP.**

Question No. 44: Page 9, Section 1.4.2: Please confirm that the student performance assessments or classroom-based diagnostic tools include kindergarten stage.

Answer No. 44: **A means for measuring student performance in kindergarten will be expected, so that standards may be created at the kindergarten level Kingdom-wide. The form this assessment(s) takes will be the responsibility of the MOE and USAID RAMP working together.**

Question No. 45: Page 9, Section 1.4.3 discusses the second track of CISLE as having a two-pronged approach and describes the first strategy.

a) Please provide information regarding the second strategy of the two-pronged approach.

b) Please provide the teacher training package and resource materials for the CISLE Program developed by the Queen Rania Teacher Academy.

Answer No. 45: **The design of USAID RAMP should be a unique proposal by an applicant, independent of other work performed. After the award of USAID RAMP,**

best practices and materials from other USAID activities may be used to improve project implementation.

Question No. 46: Page 9: Please confirm whether USAID expects and/or requires QRTA to be included in the implementation of USAID RAMP.

Answer No. 46: Applicants are at liberty to choose who to partner with.

Question No. 47: Please clarify whether local organizations—such as the QRTA—who are delivering USAID program are permitted to form exclusive relationships with bidders.

Answer No. 47: Any organization forming a partnership with an applicant must be exclusive. No proposed subawardee can team up with more than one applicant in response to this RFA.

Question No. 48: Reference to page 12, please confirm that work with Syrian refugees under USAID RAMP is limited to K-3.

Answer No. 48: Confirmed.

Question No. 49: On page 13, the sub-results in the Results Framework appear incomplete. Please confirm that the bidder may revise and develop sub-results.

Answer No. 49: Confirmed.

Question No. 50: Page 15: can you confirm that a new baseline will be established under USAID RAMP, and the earlier EGRA/EGMA results do not constitute the baseline.

Answer no. 50: Confirmed.

Question No. 51: On page 15, what is meant by “the initial phase”. Will the applicant be responsible for carrying out assessments there after?

Answer No. 51: Yes. The technical approach of subsequent assessments after the initial baseline is up to the applicant to propose in the USAID RAMP design.

Question No. 52: The RFA refers to standards and benchmarks, but it is unclear to what extent they have been developed or if they exist by grade. Please clarify, and if they have been developed with USAID assistance, please provide the standards and benchmarks.

Answer No. 52: To date, no benchmarks or standards have been decided upon by USAID

or the Ministry of Education.

Question No. 53: On page 17, the RFA states that USAID RAMP teacher training efforts will draw on “experiences with the current pilot interventions and activities.” Please provide the teacher training program, associated guides and materials, analysis and results to date from these pilot interventions.

Answer No. 53: See Answer No. 45.

Question No. 54: Please provide reports on the analysis and results on the use of technology from USAID’s pilot for data collection and monitoring (page 18).

Answer No. 54: USAID/Jordan currently has no findings from the usage of technology in data collection and monitoring. As per the RFA, applicants are encouraged to think through methods of using technology that will help USAID RAMP best achieve its goal.

Question No. 55: Page 21, IR4, the RFA states that USAID will lead all policy dialogues, with USAID RAMP partners playing key supporting roles. Could USAID please clarify and expand on what “lead” and “supporting roles” mean exactly in the context of project implementation and management?

Answer No. 55: USAID is taking a leading role in promoting early grade reading and math, partnering with the Ministry of Education to improve early learning outcomes. USAID RAMP will be expected to help support these efforts. Exact definitions of “lead” and “support” change over time and partners will be expected to show flexibility and diplomacy within a fluid environment.

Question No. 56: On page 22, Section 1.6.1, the RFA states that USAID RAMP will work with the Ministry of Education (the primary GOJ counterpart) as well as the Ministry of Higher Education. Can USAID please clarify to what extent the Ministry of Higher Education has been consulted in the preparation of the project’s scope of work, and what assurance USAID has of the Ministry of Higher Education’s willingness to be a committed partner in the implementation of USAID RAMP?

Answer no. 56: One of USAID RAMP’s early objectives will be to develop a strong relationship with the Ministry of Higher Education, so that results requiring this partnership can be achieved.

Question No. 57: Page 23: Please clarify what USAID intends by this statement: “...by year 3 of project implementation will result in national level roll-out of activities integrated into all public school classrooms in grade K-3.” Is USAID

directing applicants to either begin the national roll-out in year 3 of the program or to have completed the national roll-out by year 3 of the program?

Answer No. 57: To have completed the national roll-out by year 3 of the program.

Question No. 58: On page 23, the RFA refers to a “phased” approach. Please specify what is meant by “phased.” Does it mean a gradual national roll-out over the life of the project? Does it mean that different elements of the project will be rolled out gradually?

Answer No. 58: Gradual national roll-out over the first three years, culminating in all elements rolled out nationally by year 3.

Question No. 59: Page 49, Section VI, 8 (f) states that the recipient shall submit all reports, evaluations of training activities, training materials, instructional materials, etc. developed to USAID/Jordan for prior approval before their use.

a) Please confirm that USAID will review the developed training materials and instructional materials in Arabic.

b) Please advise what USAID/Jordan’s response time for review and approval will be, so that applicants may factor that into the timeline for implementation.

Answer No. 59: a) USAID will NOT review the developed training materials and instructional materials in Arabic.

b) USAID and the recipient will jointly decide on a reasonable review period. For the sake of this project design, please assume a 10 working day review period.