



USAID | JORDAN

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**Subject: Request for Applications (RFA) Number: RFA-278-14-000005
USAID Early Grade Reading and Math Project (USAID RAMP)**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission in Jordan is seeking applications for Assistance Agreements for funding to support a program entitled “USAID Early Grade Reading and Math Project” (USAID RAMP). The authority for the RFA is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. Please refer to the Program Description for a complete statement of goals and expected results.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Jordan intends to provide approximately \$45 million in total USAID funding for this activity to be allocated over a period of five years.

While for-profit firms may participate, pursuant to 22 CFR 226.81, it is USAID policy not to award profit under assistance instruments such as cooperative agreements. However, all reasonable, allocable, and allowable expenses, both direct and indirect, which are related to the grant program and are in accordance with applicable cost standards (22 CFR 226, 2 CFR Part 230, OMB Circular A-21 for universities, and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 31 for-profit organizations), may be paid under the Cooperative Agreement. While profit is not allowed for assistance subawards, the prohibition does not apply when the recipient acquires goods and services (procurement contracts) in accordance with 22 CFR 226.40 to 48.

Applicants under consideration for an award that have never received funding from USAID will be subject to a pre-award audit to determine fiscal responsibility, ensure adequacy of financial controls and establish an indirect cost rate.

Award will be made to that responsible applicant whose application best meets the requirements of this RFA and the evaluation criteria contained herein. Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the US Government, nor does it commit the US Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.

This RFA and any future amendments can be downloaded from <http://www.grants.gov>. Select "Browse Agencies," then select "Agency for International Development", and search for this RFA.

In the event of an inconsistency between the documents comprising this RFA, it shall be resolved at the discretion of the Agreement Officer.

All guidance included in this RFA takes precedence over any reference documents referred to in the RFA. Any clarification questions concerning this RFA must be submitted in writing to Ms. Arwa Ghanma via email at aghanma@usaid.gov by the date listed at the top of this cover letter. If there are problems in downloading the RFA from the Internet, please contact the Grants.gov Help Desk at 1.800.518.4726 or support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

The application process will be performed in two phases. There will be an initial written application phase and up to five successful applicants from this phase, at the discretion of the Agreement Officer, will be invited to present in person at USAID/Jordan for the oral presentation phase.

Applications must be received by the closing date and time indicated at the top of this cover letter. Late applications will not be considered for award. Applications must be directly responsive to the terms and conditions of this RFA. Telegraphic or fax applications (entire proposal) are not authorized for this RFA and will not be accepted.

Thank you for your interest in USAID/Jordan programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ragheda Rabie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Ragheda Rabie
Agreement Officer

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SECTION I – FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

(1) Program Description

The purpose of this project is to institute reading and math teaching and learning methodologies, policy and practices, at the school, community and government levels that focus on improving learning outcomes for reading in Arabic and math in grades K-3 in Jordan. It will be implemented in direct collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). The project will also: i) improve early grade reading and math learning materials that are integrated into every K-3 classroom in Jordan; ii) better prepare teachers and administrators to provide effective reading and math instruction through in-service, induction, and pre-service training, mentoring and supervision; iii) engage communities to participate in the education of reading and math for all children and hold schools accountable for results; and iv) support the MOE's efforts to institutionalize early grade reading and math policies, standards and assessments.

1.1 Introduction

USAID has been active in Jordan's education sector since 2003 and bases its education assistance on priorities outlined in the Jordanian Government's Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (ERfKE) program, which is a sector-wide strategy for upgrading and transforming the way Jordan's children learn. Over the past decade, USAID has been working with the Ministry of Education (MOE) to assist children and youth to acquire the necessary skills to be productive citizens. Without an adequate skill set, children and youth are not prepared to participate socially, economically and politically in a rapidly changing global environment. USAID has supported programs that work both inside and outside the school system to overcome these challenges.

The Government of Jordan's (GOJ) ERfKE program is a national priority guided by the following vision: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has the quality competitive human resource development systems that provide all people with lifelong learning experiences relevant to their current and future need in order to respond to and stimulate sustained economic development through an educated population and an educated workforce. Inherent in ERfKE's components is improving the MOE's ability to address individual student needs so that they gain twenty-first century skills along with the core competencies that allow students to thrive, remain enrolled and benefit from school. The reforms support improving schools' ability to identify at-risk students, to engage parents more effectively in educational processes and to ensure the acquisition of basic literacy skills.

While access to schools (specifically Grades 1-10) is relatively high in Jordan (reported to be about 91 percent enrolment at the primary level by the World Development Indicators Index in 2013), with female enrollment surpassing male enrollment at all levels of education, the quality of education remains uneven. This situation is evident in the results of international tests.

Jordan participated in the 2011 TIMSS (Trends in International Math and Science Study) and scored below the international benchmark (which is 500) with a score of 409 for eighth grade math (a decline from their 2007 score of 427). Girls scored significantly higher than boys on the test with an average of 420 whereas the boys' average was 392. Jordan also participated in the Program for International Assessment (PISA) in 2012 and the average score in reading for 15-year-olds was 399 points, compared to an average of 496 points in OECD countries. Girls performed better than boys with a statistically significant difference of 75 points (OECD average: 38 points higher for girls), one of the largest gender gaps in the world¹.

In support of USAID's Global Education Strategy,² which includes a goal of improving reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015, USAID funded a National Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in 2012 and found that the majority of Grade 2 students are not reading with fluency and lack the foundational literacy skills normally taught in first grade.³ USAID also funded an Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA) at the same time and found that memorization--fine for procedural tasks--plays a large role in how Grade 2 students learn mathematics in Jordan, leading to a deficit in conceptual knowledge. A student needs to be able to use conceptual knowledge to perform more advanced math.

Concern over the 2012 EGRA/EGMA results has contributed to the MOE's interest in rolling out a large-scale early grade reading and math intervention. The MOE recognizes the need to improve the quality of learning in the early grades to provide students with the fundamental skills they need for improvements in learning throughout their academic career. Leaders within the MOE agree that intensive efforts in the early grades are necessary in order for Jordan to regain its status as the region's educational success story.

The results of the assessment, triangulated with research demonstrating both the importance of basic skill acquisition in the early years and the lasting gains from a kindergarten education, underscore the need to improve reading and math outcomes in the early years – specifically grades kindergarten (KG)⁴ to 3—for long-term success in the school system. This focus on basic skills acquisition links to another priority of the MOE, supported by the Jordan Poverty Alleviation Strategy, to provide universal KG II education to its six-year olds. While the MOE has significantly increased access to KG in the past five years, only 56 percent of KG-aged children are being served by the public and private sector combined. Numerous studies, including a

¹ <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results.htm>

² *Education: Opportunity Through Learning; USAID Education Strategy*. February 2011. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACQ946.pdf

³ *Student Performance in Early Grade Reading and Mathematics, Pedagogical Practice, and School Management in Jordan*. November 2012. Research Triangle Institute. The full assessment, including the instruments used, are available in full detail in both Arabic and English at the following website: <https://www.eddataglobal.org/countries/index.cfm?fuseaction=showdir&pubcountry=JO&statusID=3>

⁴ The MOE is in the process of establishing KG programs as part of the primary education cycle nationwide. Approximately 1,000 KGs have been established and they use a uniform curriculum developed with support from USAID. In Jordan there is KG I for 5-year olds and KG II for 6-year olds. USAID RAMP will work in KG II and grades 1-3.

landmark study from Harvard University entitled “Project Star,”⁵ have shown that a quality KG education plays a significant role in learning achievement, school completion, and even earnings in adulthood.

Though having access to school is important, it is equally important to provide students with a quality education experience and opportunity to learn while there. It is well known that a major factor for achieving student learning outcomes is how well the teacher carries out his or her role with effective materials. The MOE is learning that in Jordan, at all grade levels, the curricula and teaching techniques are not adequately preparing students to participate socially, economically and politically in the modern world. In part, this is due to the lack of a focused pedagogical training instructors receive prior to entering the classroom. Only those interested in pursuing teaching as a career in the early grades have the opportunity to study educational pedagogy and even then there are disconnects between the theory taught and the realities of classrooms. In the 2012 EGRA/EGMA, fewer than half of the teachers interviewed reported receiving pre- or in-service training in how to teach reading and mathematics in the early grades.

There are other factors that will affect the implementation of USAID RAMP. The 2012 EGRA/EGMA noted that a third of all classrooms had no reading materials other than textbooks, and most students did not read at home. Community awareness of the value of education is low. Principals and education supervisors need training to do their jobs more effectively, yet staff turnover is endemic throughout the education system. Some schools’ infrastructure is below the national minimum standard. Given the multitude of potential challenges, USAID is seeking interventions that use evidence-based practices to improve reading and math learning outcomes, coupled with more innovative approaches that will need to be tested on a pilot basis during the project’s lifecycle.

USAID is the only donor currently focusing on the specific issue of improving early grade reading and math which contributes to a close working relationship with the MOE. USAID will help to pioneer this effort in partnership with the MOE, which has undergone multiple staff changes over the past few years. As a new area of focus, the program will be designed to build in research along the way to understand what works and does not work, and to learn from mistakes to make course corrections.

1.2 Relationship to U.S. Foreign Policy Interests, USAID/Jordan’s 2013-2017 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), and USAID-Wide Policies and Strategies

The interventions to be pursued under USAID RAMP will help advance USAID’s goals, as articulated in the Agency’s *Education Strategy* (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACQ946.pdf) of improving the reading skills of 100 million primary school children. USAID RAMP will also

⁵ Chetty, R., Friedman, J., Hilger, N., Saez, E., Schanzenbach, D & Yagan, D. (March 2011). *How Does Your Kindergarten Classroom Affect Your Earnings? Evidence from Project STAR*. <http://obs.rc.fas.harvard.edu/chetty/STAR.pdf>

contribute to the development objective (DO) three of USAID/Jordan's CDCS: Essential Services to the Public Improved, by directly impacting the intermediate result 3.2: Quality of Education Services Improved.

1.3 Justification

It is generally accepted that a child reads with comprehension when he or she can correctly answer 80 percent or more of the reading comprehension questions on a standardized assessment. The EGRA/EGMA found that on average 24 percent of the grade 2 and grade 3 students in Jordan were unable to read a single word of a story's text and because of this inability to read, were unable to answer any of the comprehension questions related to the reading passage. On the other end of the spectrum, approximately 20 percent of the students were able to read with comprehension. The EGRA/EGMA found that to begin reading with comprehension, grade 2 students needed to achieve an oral reading fluency of at least 30 correct words per minute, and that those students who were reading with optimal comprehension had an oral reading fluency of 45 correct words per minute or more. The EGRA/EGMA found that only 13 percent of Jordanian students were able to read 30 correct words per minute, and that girls scored consistently higher than boys.

The findings with respect to oral reading fluency and comprehension scores are not surprising given student performance on the foundational reading skill subtasks. On average, 26 percent of students were unable to respond correctly to a single item on the *Letter-sound knowledge* subtask, and 47 percent of students were unable to respond correctly to a single item on the *Invented word decoding* subtask. These subtasks assess the most foundational reading skills, and fluency with these skills is essential to becoming a strong reader.

EGMA assessed a progression of foundational skills that research has shown to be predictive of future success in mathematics. The subtasks can be divided into two groups: subtasks that deal with procedural knowledge and subtasks that deal with more conceptual knowledge. The EGMA found that although Jordanian students in general performed better on the procedural items, they were unable to use that knowledge in the conceptual items, where they did not perform as well. The grade 2 students scored 84 percent for addition and 79 percent for subtraction on the *Addition and subtraction (level 1)* subtask—a task that assesses fluency with so-called basic addition and subtraction facts. Grade 3 students had similar results. However, in the corresponding *Addition and subtraction (level 2)* subtask, where they were expected to use the basic facts from level 1, grade 2 students scored 53 percent for addition and 32 percent for subtraction, with 24 and 48 percent respectively unable to respond correctly to a single item on these parts of the subtask. For grade 3 students, the results were very similar and did not show the benefit of an additional year of schooling.

These EGMA results suggest that memorization plays a large role in the way that children know and learn mathematics in Jordan. There is a clear trend that demonstrates that students do well on the items that rely on procedural knowledge—knowledge that can also be memorized—and

markedly less well on the tasks and items that require fluency with and application of procedural knowledge (rather than memorized facts).

Finally, as part of the EGRA/EGMA, data was also gathered on socio-economic status of those surveyed, how effective school management practices are as well as how engaged parents are in their child's education. Years of school effectiveness research have shown that understanding these factors can be linked to student performance, and the combination of these school and student characteristics helps to explain why some schools are more successful than others. Jordan's MOE is highly centralized and school leaders have little decision-making power, limiting the effectiveness of school-based stakeholders. The survey results confirmed children who attended KG showed significantly stronger reading skills across all EGRA subtasks, but that there was no advantage on mathematics skill. Wealthier students with more engaged parents also performed better.

1.4 Overview of Relevant Activities

This section highlights ongoing USAID activities that are relevant to the USAID RAMP program. They are activities that are expected to be integrated into and built upon with the new project as they contribute to the knowledge-base gained over the past year in Jordan with regard to early grade reading and math. These activities include:

- EGRA/EGMA Research
- Remedial Education Research
- Cultivating Inclusive and Supportive Learning Environments (CISLE) in Jordan's Schools
- Education Reform Support Program (ERSP)
- Monitoring and Evaluation Partnership Program

1.4.1 EGRA/EGMA Research

In the wake of the EGRA and EGMA study in Jordan, the Ministry of Education (with technical support from USAID) embarked on a one-year research project. The research study involves some 12,000 children across nearly 300 grade 1, 2 and 3 classrooms in 43 schools and across 12 education districts. The approach of the research is to first do an intensive textbook and supplemental materials review based on basic literacy and numeracy benchmarks, identify gaps in the curricula and/or textbooks, and provide support to the MOE's Curriculum Directorate to develop materials for bridging any existing gaps in the curriculum and/or textbooks. The MOE then introduced a short 15-minute routine into the daily reading and mathematics lesson. The purpose of the routine is to address the gaps identified by the EGRA/EGMA in the early grade reading and mathematics skills of Jordanian students and, at the same time, expose teachers to alternate teaching methodologies and approaches without asking them to change everything that they do at once.

1.4.2 Remedial Education Research

This activity expands upon the EGRA/EGMA research to develop additional student performance assessments or classroom-based diagnostic tools for use in the early grades. The assessments or tools will identify gaps in reading and math according to grade level, and will also provide a series of remedial activities and protocols for teachers to use to close this gap. The remedial activities will include the development of supplemental materials in reading and math for both teachers and students and targeted training for teachers in remedial education. These efforts are currently underway. Starting with the 2014/2015 school year, the research will be rolled-out in 40 schools. The schools will receive materials and refresher training to address remedial education needs. An analysis will be carried out after one year to determine how many students in remediation graduated out of remediation. Learning and dissemination workshops will be held to discuss progress and results.

1.4.3 Cultivating Inclusive and Supportive Environments (CISLE) in Jordan's Schools

USAID recently awarded a grant to the Queen Rania Teacher Academy (QRTA). The first track of the project uses a teacher training package and resource materials for a 5-day training program to build the capacity of teachers in delivering quality education to Syrian refugee students. These training materials include elements of how teachers can offer psychosocial support, and use interactive teaching pedagogies, effective classroom management techniques and academic and behavioral assessment strategies to enhance students' engagement and promote safe, supportive, healthy and inclusive learning environments in schools. The psychosocial and pedagogical training will be applied in 200 schools where large clusters of displaced Syrian refugees have been absorbed by the local communities. The second track of the project incorporates a two pronged approach to further enhance the capacity of teachers by cultivating Model Community Schools (MCSs) in 20 of the 200 schools from track one. The first strategy will integrate QRTA's Arabic Reading and Writing program by developing teachers' literacy training and language arts instruction to encourage Syrian students' engagement and participation in classroom activities. Reading clubs and literary activities centering on students ability to express themselves freely will address the challenging behaviors of post trauma. The Arabic Reading and Writing program aims to build the capacity of generalist (Grades 1-3) and Arabic Language teachers by introducing teachers to the most effective methodologies of teaching reading and writing skills to students. To promote the Arabic training program, the libraries in the MCSs will be enhanced with reading materials and resources that focus on Arab culture and identity as inclusive and supportive elements uniting Jordanian and Syrian students in the schools. Furthermore, Reading Clubs will be established in all the MCSs as essential components to promote authentic reading and expressive writing to enhance student engagement in the classroom as well as confront persistent challenging behavioral problems. Reading and writing activities are recognized as effective interventions involving children in learning tasks that help them to internalize basic concepts, values and skills necessary for their intellectual, emotional and social growth.

1.4.4 Education Reform Support Program

USAID has been supporting the Ministry of Education's reform efforts through its flagship education project, the Education Reform Support Program (ERSP), since 2009. There are two main components under ERSP that are pertinent to early grade learning: Early Childhood Education, and Professional Development. Through ERSP, USAID was able to improve the quality of early childhood education in public kindergarten classrooms through a multi-pronged approach that focused not only on building the capacity of teachers and principals to better meet children's needs, but also through engaging the parents, improving the physical environment of the kindergartens and building a quality assurance system at the Ministry of Education. Professional Development worked on establishing with the MOE a comprehensive professional development system including: induction, in-service and leadership. This program succeeded in institutionalizing at the Ministry of Education effective teacher and leadership programs. To ensure the sustainability of those efforts, ERSP trained and certified approximately 450 MOE personnel as trainers. ERSP has also played a very strong role in supporting the Ministry implement and operationalize its professional development Policy Framework. An overall operational plan of the policy framework developed by ERSP will help the Ministry realize what is entailed and required in the real implementation of the professional development policies; including incentives, standards and programs. ERSP will end in June 2014.

1.4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation Partnership Project (MEP)

USAID supports the MEP project to build the capacity of the National Center of Human Resource Development (NCHRD), a quasi-governmental agency, to carry out its mandate to conduct evaluation studies for supporting the Jordanian MOE. Efforts include building monitoring and evaluation skills among NCHRD staff and improving coordination between NCHRD research and MOE policy. MEP supports a study on student assessments in Jordan which should be completed in March 2014. The study intends to examine all the different student assessments currently used in the Jordan education system to better understand various learning domains and educational consequences. MEP is also carrying out a student achievement gender gap study to assess whether the gender gap has widened over time. The study will explain why the gender gap exists and what can be done to close the gap. MEP will be ending in August 2014.

1.5 Project Goal, Objectives, Expected Results, and Activities

1.5.1 Project Goal

USAID RAMP's overarching goal is the improvement of reading and math skills for all children in Jordan in grades K-3 who attend public school. This is aligned with goal one of the Global USAID Education Strategy: improved reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015. The bulk of results within USAID RAMP will be achieved through 2019. Based on trend analysis data from Egypt's Early Grade Reading project, USAID/Jordan has concluded that a goal

of 55 percent⁶ of all grade 2 children in public schools reading at a rate of 30 correct words per minute, or better, is achievable over the lifespan of the project. Currently, 13 percent of all Grade 2 students read 30 correct words per minute or better. While this growth may seem unrealistic, evidence from multiple countries show that projects with focused goals, objectives, and activities, with high dollar per pupil funding, with commitment from the MOE, can result in extremely rapid development in short amounts of time.⁷ Within USAID/Jordan's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS),⁸ USAID RAMP will specifically help the USAID/Jordan Basic Education and Youth Office contribute towards Intermediate Result 3.2: Quality of education services improved. Additionally, USAID RAMP will be affected by three other cross-cutting considerations:

1.5.2 Gender

Jordan's CDCS includes a special Development Objective: Gender Equity and Female Empowerment Enhanced. For the purpose of USAID RAMP, there are certain gender considerations that must be acknowledged. The most glaring gender disparity in the education sector is the higher teacher and student performance and more supportive learning environment in girls' schools relative to boys' schools in Jordan. Boys' schools suffer from a shortage of teachers, low teacher motivation and engagement, violence against students perpetrated by teachers, administrators and other students, vandalism, and a lack of parental involvement. Many K-3 public schools in Jordan are coed, and then gender-segregated starting in grade 4. Grades K through 3 present an opportunity to address and lay a foundation for preventing some of the issues that boys and girls face later in their school career.

All interventions, regardless of their focus or specific objectives, will give consideration to gender disparities and the gender specific issues that need to be addressed during planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Interventions will need to take this into consideration and should offer safe spaces for girls and boys to enjoy learning. Learning materials should also take advantage of opportunities to broaden attitudes toward gender. USAID/Jordan has seen that female and male schools require different levels of effort and often need varying intervention styles and approaches. For example, the impact of USAID-supported training on female teachers' skills, knowledge, attitude and demonstrated techniques is more visibly evident than that of male teachers. Female teachers performed better on both written exams and on a classroom observation rubric used to better understand teacher performance in the classroom.

⁶ This goal has been established in tandem with the MOE

⁷ USAID/Egypt and USAID/Liberia's reading interventions provide two case studies available at: <https://www.eddataglobal.org/countries/index.cfm?fuseaction=showdir&pubcountry=EG&statusID=3> and

<https://www.eddataglobal.org/countries/index.cfm?fuseaction=showdir&pubcountry=LR&statusID=3>

⁸ Jordan's CDCS is available at:

<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1883/CDCSJordan.pdf>

Selection of implementing partners for all activities will include criteria to assess their ability and expertise to address gender challenges. Applicants will be required to describe how their interventions will include appropriate and effective approaches to reducing gender gaps and ensuring high levels of coed, cooperative participation in project activities. Monitoring plans will be required to include gender-sensitive indicators. Applicants are asked to demonstrate best practices in promoting gender equality and female leadership at the project level and through their own organizational structures and staffing.

1.5.3 Syrian Refugees

The Syrian crisis has had a profound impact upon the public school system in Jordan given that 80 percent of the refugee population resides in host communities⁹. The GOJ has granted access to free primary education to all Syrian refugee children which has exacerbated the existing overcrowding in high population density areas, particularly in Northern Jordan, and declining quality. It is estimated that 120,000¹⁰ Syrian refugee students are now enrolled¹¹ in Jordanian public schools. According to the MOE, this number has doubled since the beginning of the year and is expected to reach 200,000 by the end of 2014. Schools with high numbers of Syrian students often have double shifts to accommodate Syrians, with Jordanians attending morning shifts and Syrians the afternoon shifts. This effort has shortened the total time in schools for students in the double-shifted schools.

Syrian students that are enrolled in Jordanian schools have often lost up to three years of school and are behind academically, and are unfamiliar with the Jordanian curriculum. They have also suffered traumatic events and may need additional counseling and psychosocial support. This evolving situation will clearly affect USAID RAMP and will need to be taken into consideration throughout the implementation of the project. USAID RAMP will be expected to not only be inclusive for all students regardless of nationality, it will make every effort to promote cultural awareness, understanding, and acceptance. Activities that safely involve the parents of children living in the same community can be one such way at both including community members and defusing community tensions between Syrian refugees and Jordanian citizens.

1.5.4 Disabilities

USAID/Jordan's Basic Education and Youth Office has a priority to target underserved groups, including people with disabilities (PWD). It will work to minimize unintended consequences, including an increase of burden on people with disabilities at the different levels of the education system. USAID/Jordan aims to ensure that all curricula, materials and training are promoting teaching techniques known to be inclusive for all students, including those with

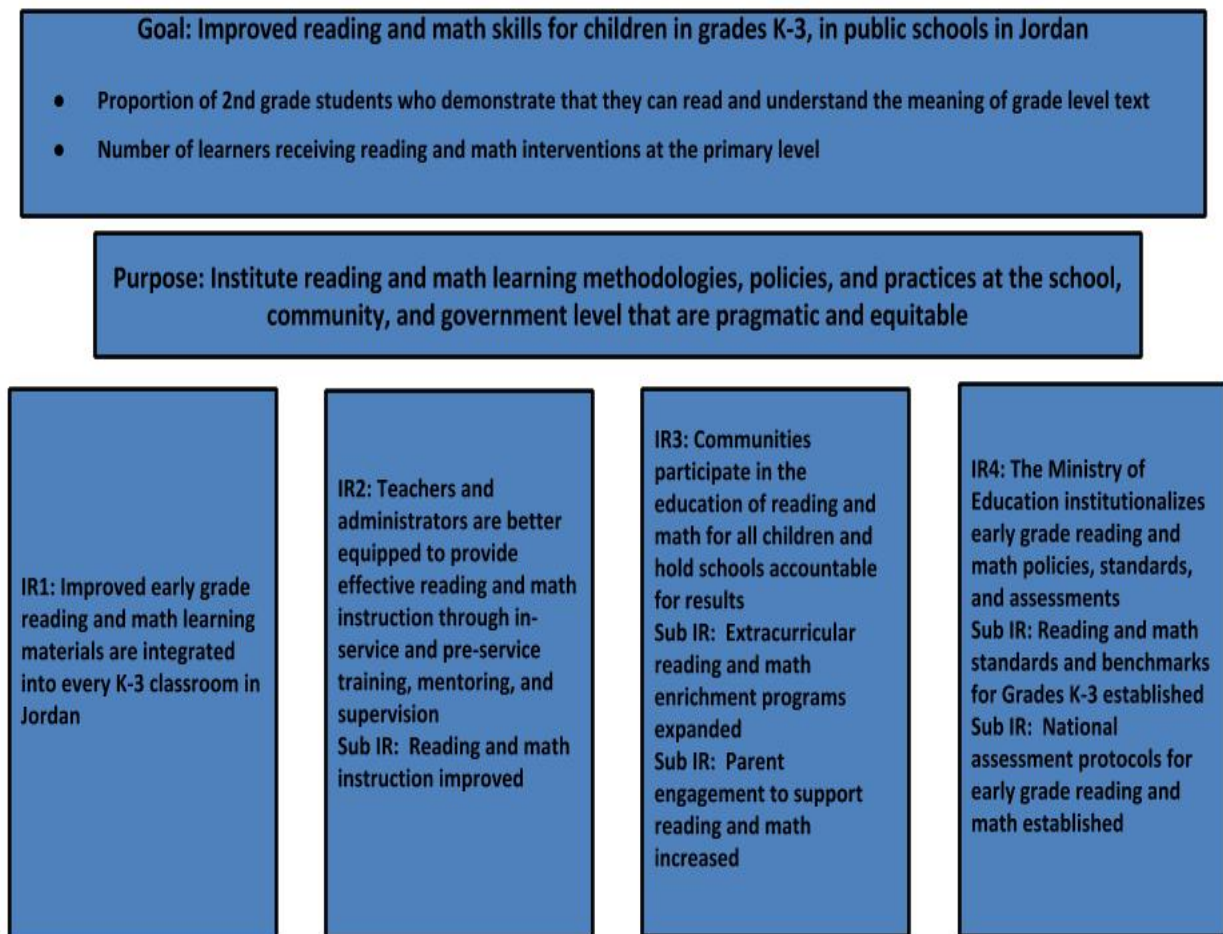
⁹ Consult UNHCR for up-to-date data: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>

¹⁰ Of whom 80% are in primary school, 20% in secondary school.

¹¹ The lack of data on actual attendance, however, makes it difficult to know the precise impact of the refugee population on the public school system.

disabilities. Every effort will be made to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities in this project. Furthermore, a disability inclusion plan specifically delineating how the project will address barriers for people with disabilities relevant to the project and ensure equal access and disability inclusive development practices will be required. Similar to gender considerations, all interventions, regardless of their focus or specific objectives, will address disparities with PWD during planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages. Interventions will consider the various forms of disability (visual, hearing, mobility, etc.) and propose interventions to improving the curricula, school services (e.g. sign-language services), teacher training on disability and inclusion, and the learning environment.

1.5.6 Results Framework



1.5.7 Project Goal: Improved reading and math skills for children in grades K-3, in public schools in Jordan

The project will aim to improve teaching and learning processes that result in more students mastering reading and math skills. Primary areas of focus will include improving teaching and learning materials, improving teacher training systems so that teachers are more effective in their jobs, increasing community participation in support of reading and math, and ensuring that the GOJ institutionalizes relevant policies, standards, and assessments that have proven to work. MOE capacity to oversee and use data for analysis will be strengthened so that knowledge gained in this project can be transferred to other areas of reform. The project will aim to test interventions and to create innovative solutions for overcoming barriers to learning outcomes in the early grades.

1.5.8 Project Objective: Institute reading and math learning methodologies, policies, and practices at the school, community, and government level that are pragmatic and equitable

The focus on improving reading and math results allows for a multitude of stakeholders to work collectively to achieve results that are sustained, and can serve as a building block for other school-based reform efforts. There is also room to tackle equity issues and to be sure that efforts are within the manageable interests and budgets of the MOE. Though there are fundamental principles for teaching reading and math backed up by evidence-based research that does not mean that a one-size fits all program is acceptable. Attention to how to make interventions effective for a range of students in certain contexts will be needed, including refugee children, children with disabilities, etc. Ultimately, the MOE, schools and communities will better understand how to use data and assessments to adjust interventions so that challenges are overcome whether on a national level or at the community level. At the school level, teachers will have access and be fluent in more granular assessments of their students, knowing precisely which sub-skills within math and reading their students are excelling and/or struggling in, as well as strategies to adjust their teaching based on their assessments. At the national level, the MOE will have tools to test a sampling of schools within the Kingdom, to better understand school progress year-to-year in improving early grade learning outcomes. Traditionally, USAID has used EGRAs and EGMA's to assess reading and math learning; however, applicants are encouraged to think through more cost-effective ways for the MOE to assess student learning to improve long-term sustainability.

1.5.9 Expected Results

The overarching goal will be measured by the following standard indicators according to the USAID Education Strategy:

- Proportion of 2nd grade students who demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text;
- Proportion of 2nd grade students who demonstrate improved mathematical skills in reasoning ability;

- Number of learners receiving reading and math interventions at the primary level

USAID is committed to measuring the learning outcomes of students at its highest level of result and impact. USAID RAMP will be measured in terms of student outcomes in reading and math. First and foremost, regular, institutionalized, reading and math assessments will be used to monitor progress and compare to baseline results to measure project effect and to track areas of weakness.¹² These assessments will be conducted both by the implementer of USAID RAMP in the initial phase, with capacity building provided to teachers, counselors, administrators, and supervisors so that they may assess students independent of an outside organization. A third party will be contracted to provide external assessments of both students within the USAID RAMP project and of the USAID RAMP project itself.

Overall impact will need to be understood, but there will also be a need to carry out experimental and non-experimental studies to understand certain interventions and their usefulness. An emphasis will be placed on using research to better understand the usefulness of certain activities before they are scaled up. Research on progress during scale up will also be needed to monitor whether the quality of interventions is being compromised during expansion.

Additionally, teacher assessments for monitoring student progress in the classroom will be developed and used to better attend to student learning needs. An important aspect of the assessments is that they will be analyzed to make informed decisions about activities, as well as shared with communities so that school performance is well-known among parents. Ultimately, awareness of and support for the importance of reading and math will be gained throughout Jordan, as will measured improvements in student learning outcomes in these subjects.

What follows is an overview of the four intended areas of focus for USAID RAMP. Each Intermediate Result includes a brief description of its intent, as well as *illustrative* activities and *illustrative* and *standard* indicators to measure the four Intermediate Results. The descriptions, activities, and illustrative indicators are by no means prescriptive or comprehensive. Due to the ambitious nature of the intermediate results, it is anticipated that applicants will use innovative management structures so that partners have the most relevant staff available for their respective areas of responsibility.

1.5.10 Intermediate Results

In order for children to demonstrate improved reading and math skills, several intermediate goals will need to be achieved. It is important to note that the bulk of assistance linked to this project will be to support the capacity of the MOE to implement, monitor and make informed

¹² While EGRA/EGMAs have been used by USAID/Jordan in the past, there are several reading and math assessments available for use, and USAID/Jordan does not wish to prescribe a specific assessment methodology at this time.

decisions about how to improve reading and math learning. Community-based activities will be used to build local organizational capacity to do the same. Though each of the Intermediate Results listed below have their own respective results and illustrative indicators, they will need to be closely coordinated. For example, all of the materials developed need to be aligned directly to national standards by grade for reading and math, and need to be linked to appropriate training. In addition, applicants are encouraged to think of the following illustrative activities as pieces of a holistic reading and math ecosystem which is interconnected. A holistic reading and math ecosystem is one where all inputs are connected to one another: in-service trainings should directly connect to the teacher manuals being used, which should directly connect to leveled learning materials and readers. These materials should directly connect to potential materials for parents who can reinforce reading and math strategies in the home. Illustrative activities listed below are not exhaustive, and are expected to be refined, expanded upon, and added to by applicants.

IR 1: Improved early grade reading and math learning materials are integrated into every K-3 classroom in Jordan.

Improving reading skills includes improving instructional materials for daily instruction as well as improving remedial instructional materials for those students not performing at standard level. Materials will be expected to be comprehensive so that they are all connected toward achieving the same learning results, and they will also need to be tested after being developed for their effectiveness. Wholesale and specific adjustments to the various materials will be expected. Materials, in addition to textbooks, could include supplementary lessons accompanied by structured lesson plans; supplementary reading materials, such as leveled fiction and nonfiction readers; teacher aids such as posters, and manipulatives. Innovative ideas to test for learning effectiveness for materials will be expected.

Illustrative activities may include:

- Work with the MOE's material development team to make adjustments to reading and math curricula according to student reading and math learning needs and MOE standards. These adjustments may include introducing the phonics approach more consistently and revisiting the scope and sequence for instruction for reading lessons and adding modules that help to deepen conceptual knowledge of mathematics.
- Work with the MOE to develop the design criteria for the teacher guide and make adjustments as needed based on assessment feedback.
- Provide technical assistance to the MOE in the development of student workbooks in reading and math by grade level.
- Develop supplemental reading and math materials according to grade level, in partnership with the MOE and private sector, for use in the classroom.
- Work with the MOE and relevant partners to develop and/or scale-up existing remedial learning materials to address the early grade learning needs of Jordanian and Syrian refugee students.
- Ensure that all materials are designed to meet reading and math standards by grade level.

- Ensure that all materials are gender sensitive and include positive portrayals of children with disabilities.
- Standard and illustrative indicators may include:
- Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials provided with USG support.
- Materials approved and distributed by GOJ.
- Number and percentage of classrooms with adequate supplies of reading and math materials (disaggregated by type-textbooks, decodable readers, leveled fiction and non-fiction text).
- MOE develops reading and math materials based on standards for grades K-3.
- Number and percentage of classrooms with libraries for use in daily instruction.

IR 2: Teachers, supervisors, counselors, and administrators are better equipped to provide effective reading and math instruction through in-service, induction and pre-service training, mentoring, and supervision.

Technical assistance for support to three types of teacher training will be provided: in-service, induction training, and university-based pre-service training. Existing primary school teachers will receive formal training sessions accompanied by in-classroom mentoring and support. Training content will draw from fundamental reading and math concepts as well as from experiences with the current pilot interventions and activities to provide teachers with the knowledge to use sound instructional strategies and practices to improve students' reading and math skills. Teachers need to become familiar with the materials at each grade level that they will be using during training because teachers need to be able to use them properly to be effective. Special importance will be placed on continuous assessment using simple tools to track student progress and to adjust instruction accordingly. Supervisors providing in-classroom mentoring will provide teachers with ongoing and immediate feedback to hone their pedagogical practices.

Until teacher preparation programs are strengthened and Jordanian universities are producing graduates that are prepared for the classroom, USAID/Jordan envisions continuing its support to the Ministry of Education in providing induction programs for new teachers assigned for the early grades (K-3rd Grade). The Ministry, with its trained and certified trainers, is well situated to continue the delivery of the foundation modules of the induction program to all newly assigned teachers, and USAID/Jordan wishes to provide more specific training to teachers who will be teaching in K-3 with emphasis on teaching reading and mathematics.

USAID RAMP will support efforts at the Ministry of Higher Education and a number of Jordanian universities to improve the existing teacher preparation programs (Early Childhood Education and Classroom Teacher programs). These efforts will include assessment and improvement of the curricula, strengthening the practicum element of the programs and achieving better alignment with the Ministry of Education professional development policies, competencies and standards. The aim is to eventually have well prepared teachers who are hired and can immediately be effective teachers at Ministry of Education schools upon graduation from university- eliminating the need to enroll in any induction programs prior or as the academic

year starts. These efforts need to be governed strategically at a policy level through a dynamic and focused Policy Steering Committee that includes USAID, the project, the relevant ministries, the participating universities, and others as seen appropriate.

All of the training modules developed, modified and supported with this program will take gender needs into consideration as well as ideas for how to include topics on being sensitive to disabilities and guidance for working with children with disabilities. Also, teacher awareness for how to be more effective for closing learning gaps for students below standards will be learned through the remedial education modules. Technology innovations to improve teacher training and absorption of information will also be expected to be tested; and integrated into ongoing teacher and administrator trainings if they prove to be effective. Technology has also proven to be effective in USAID's pilot for data collection and monitoring on the part of supervisors, and could be further explored and/or expanded upon.

Illustrative activities may include:

- Provide technical assistance to the MOE to support improved in-service teacher training activities. An emphasis on shifting away from what children learn (which encourages memorization) toward how children learn will be needed to emphasize the importance of understanding, application and reasoning as part of the learning process.
- Support the MOE to develop training modules for teachers on how to use assessment tools more effectively in the classroom.
- Work with the MOE to support teacher capacity to use assessments more effectively so that they are used for informing teaching approaches.
- Support the MOE to carry out training of trainers workshops to introduce new in-service and pre-service induction training materials.
- Increase the number of teachers in the early grades who receive specific training on early grade reading including the component skills of reading, starting with the critical phonological awareness skills and including alphabetic principles, morphology and use of context clues.
- Increase the number of teachers in early grades who receive specific training on early grade math including number identification, quantity discrimination, missing-number identification, word problem solving, addition and subtraction, shape recognition, and pattern extension.
- Support the MOE to provide training modules that address remedial learning for vulnerable Jordanian and Syrian students in reading and math for targeted teachers.
- Provide the MOE with technical assistance to support pre-service induction training for primary school teachers seeking certification that reinforces early grade reading and math concepts.
- Work in partnership with the MOHE to design early grade learning concepts and practices and integrate into existing coursework, particularly in reading and math, for Faculties of Education.
- Informal mentoring activities at the school level are initiated, so that teachers quick to "master" the trainings can mentor teachers in the same school, providing feedback and

advice.

- Standard and illustrative indicators may include:
- Early grade reading and math teacher training modules developed and/or revised by the MOE in accordance to standards
- Remedial education teacher training modules developed and/or revised by the MOE to assist students below standards
- Inclusive education modules developed and/or revised for in-service and pre-service teacher training
- Materials developed to assist teachers and teacher trainers at an appropriate level for the target audience
- Percentage of trained teachers correctly using materials in their classrooms
- Number and percent of teachers able to identify levels of achievement and interventions needed at the student level
- Number and percent of teachers trained using continuous reading and math assessment tools to improve reading and math instruction
- Number and percent of teachers using teacher guides and learning materials correctly
- Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants who successfully completed in-service training or received intensive coaching or mentoring with USG support (disaggregated by direct and indirect)
- Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants who successfully completed pre-service training with USG support (disaggregated by direct and indirect)

IR 3: Communities participate in the education of reading and math for all children and hold schools accountable for results.

There is some evidence¹³ that increasing community- and household-level engagement in reading and math strategies contributes to success in learning outcomes in schools. In addition to the school-based interventions, there will also be activities to support community-based interventions that contribute to better performance in schools. Parents play a role in their children's learning progress, and this project will make them more aware of how to support learning through evidence-based and innovative ideas. This component will also carry out research to better understand which types of interventions have an effect on helping to better prepare a child for school-based learning in Jordan. In other words, which reading and math activities outside of the classroom reinforce classroom practices and messages most effectively?

Community-based events will also advocate for and highlight the importance of reading and math and share with families ideas for how to support their children's development of these skills (such as reading stories to children). Communities and parents should also become more aware of and hold schools more accountable for reading and math performance among students. Ideas for how to effectively achieve these goals should be generated from

¹³ See "A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement" for several such examples <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

community members, as well as be based on good practices. Working with community-based organizations to sustain activities will also be an important aspect of this component.

Illustrative activities may include:

- Identify and support innovative and well-known practices for the development and roll out of community-based activities that support reading and mathematics development (e.g. bookmobiles¹⁴).
- Engage relevant stakeholders and build capacity to carry out activities that support reading and math development effectively at the community level.
- Provide community-based organizations with advocacy training, volunteer mobilization techniques training, summer programming options and other types of assistance that support the development of reading and math in the community (ex. teaching parents the importance of reading to children).
- Develop a national public reading campaign using available and effective technology.
- Support the development of extracurricular and home- and community-based activities and competitions that support reading and math development.
- Test community- and household-based interventions to understand their effectiveness on student learning in the classroom.
- Support local development of storytelling opportunities and other campaigns that emphasize the importance of reading and math.
- Develop a radio show which engages parents in their children's reading and math learning where parents are held accountable as well as increasing the amount of time the child is spending on throughout during the day.
- Develop a nationwide story competition for teachers where winning teachers are publicly recognized/ awarded for their contribution to the development of stories promoting reading and math learning.
- Standard and illustrative indicators may include:
 - Number of PTAs or similar 'school' governance structures supported
 - Number of local organizations using USG-assistance to improve internal organizational capacity
 - Number of community-based organizations (CBOs) receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions
 - Numbers of community action groups formed and active
 - Percent change in organizational capacity assessment scores of USAID-assisted community-based organizations
 - Percent increase in the number of community-based enrichment activities
 - Number of participants in community-based enrichment activities
 - Percent increase in opportunities outside school to practice reading and math
 - Numbers of innovative ideas and actions coming from communities and jointly implemented between communities and schools

¹⁴ See <http://www.fhi360.org/projects/jordan-drive-read-dtr> for more information

IR 4: The Ministry of Education institutionalizes early grade reading and math policies, standards, curricula, and assessments.

Working hand in hand with the MOE to improve reading and math instruction and practices in all schools will need to be based on appropriate guidelines, standards, benchmarks and policies. Policy dialogues based on the data generated from the project will feed into these processes, thus it is important for central and regional level MOE staff to be engaged in project research. USAID will lead all policy dialogues, with USAID RAMP partners playing key supporting role(s). Developing policies and standards for each grade level should be engaging and include key stakeholders outside of the MOE as well such as teachers' unions' representatives. Systematizing how student learning results and how to monitor student progress will be essential. Continuous assessment will help to refine standards, policies and practices.

Illustrative activities include:

- Mainstream IR1 and IR2 activities pertaining to the development of learning materials; teacher training and mentoring; and assessments into the MOE to ensure sustainability.
- Create a financially sustainable assessment tool for yearly monitoring of progress in early grade reading and math.
- Create and/or build upon existing non-financial incentive models for teachers, supervisors, and counselors to effectively implement early grade reading and math activities.
- Increase principal and district pedagogical advisors understanding of the concepts for how to improve early grade reading and math.
- Work with the MOE to improve principal and advisor training so they support new teaching methodologies and practices, and are able to communicate the rationale behind these changes in teaching style to the community and parents.
- Work with the MOHE to integrate effective reading and math pedagogy into existing university-level curriculum for teachers in grades K-3.

Standard and illustrative indicators may include:

- Number of laws, policies, regulations, or guidelines developed or modified to improve primary grade reading and math programs or increase equitable access
- Percent increase in reading and math instructional time mandated by MOE policy or directives
- Standards and benchmarks for Grades K-3 established in reading and math with USG assistance
- Number and percent of MOE staff trained on reading and math concepts
- Number and percent of MOE staff trained on using standards and benchmarks
- Policies created and adopted based on the research, results and best practices related to the early grade reading and math surveys and subsequent interventions
- Transfer of policy directives into actionable items reflected in plans and priorities of the GOJ at the national and local levels
- Transfer of policy to school level including an increase in students' scores on early grade

reading and math assessments

1.6 Relationships, Target Beneficiaries, and Geographic Focus

1.6.1 Relationships

USAID RAMP will work in partnership with the MOE and MOHE, as well as with community-based organizations, parents, parent-teacher associations, and Jordanian NGOs and is expected to foster good working relationships among these groups. USAID will lead the relationship process at the Ministerial level, with USAID RAMP partners supporting USAID at the more technical levels within the GOJ. The Ministry level staff will be the primary partners in this effort, and the goal is for them to be able to take over and sustain activities by the end of the project. The MOE will need cost feasible solutions to sustain efforts. It is important to engage key stakeholders throughout the process of implementation to develop mutual understanding of project component purposes and results, as well as to improve collaboration and results and to ensure sustainability of successful activities. The MOE has begun to carry out revisions in early grade reading and math materials and the project will build off the existing resources in country, including at the community level as well. The project can help encourage full participation of parents and community members and foster a proactive PTA that understands the benefits of its investment for the children and the role that they can play in improving their children's reading and math skills.

USAID has been working with the MOE in Jordan for several years on understanding and addressing the low achievement of students in grades K-3 in reading and math. Both the MOE and USAID understand the absolute urgency in addressing the learning gaps in basic skills starting as early as kindergarten. The MOE has taken several initiatives to improve early grade learning in reading and math, and is currently in the process of developing a new curriculum for grades 1-3 based on several key issues raised in the 2012 EGRA USAID funded. USAID is encouraged by the MOE's desire to better understand and address the issues with real, systemic change.

The MOE has requested USAID to provide technical, logistical and programmatic support to their efforts. The MOE is ultimately responsible for reforming early grade reading and math in Jordan and will work with USAID and other donors to achieve a sustainable and successful model. USAID will continue to support the efforts of the MOE in the coming five years, and, through USAID RAMP, will be able to provide the MOE with excellent data, technical support, materials development support and assistance in teacher development. USAID RAMP supports the MOE's desired target of at least 55% of children in grade 2 reading at comprehension levels of 80%. USAID RAMP will also help USAID assist the MOE in developing a sustainable approach to the teaching and learning of math and reading in the early grades.

1.6.2 Target Beneficiaries

USAID RAMP will benefit public school students, teachers, mentors, counselors, supervisors, principals, parents, communities, teacher trainers, and field directorate and central MOE and MOHE staff. By the end of the project, it is expected that all public school students in grades K-3 in Jordan, approximately 300,000 according to 2013 MOE figures,¹⁵ will receive improved reading and math instruction. In addition, private school students and teachers will indirectly benefit from the project through curriculum improvements at the school and university level, pre-service training, and the revised policies, standards, and assessments under IR4. Outside of the school system, parents and community members will benefit from direct opportunities to become more engaged in school-based activities, as well as in support for community-based initiatives. Students with disabilities as well as students needing remedial education will also benefit.

Selection of beneficiaries for training should always be based on a strategic approach to the overall project to facilitate implementation and sustainability of the capacity building efforts.

1.6.3 Geographic Focus

USAID RAMP will have a national focus and is expected to reach all public MOE schools in all Governorates in Jordan. The implementation plan for IR1, IR2, and IR3 shall ensure that roll-out of program activities occurs equitably between the northern and southern governorates. The national scope of the project will include working in communities that are hosting Syrian refugees and responding to the situation by double shifting schools. This context adds dimensions to programming that may need to be taken into consideration, such as the need for remedial reading and math programs given the loss in years of schooling, tensions in communities given the situation as well as the impact of double shifting schools which cuts into the total hours a child is in class.

1.7 Implementation, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

USAID RAMP will be implemented using a phased-in approach based on evidence-based data to inform progress, which by year three of project implementation will result in national-level roll-out of activities integrated into all public school classrooms in grades K-3. Phasing in of schools and/or grade levels will be necessary for implementation to ensure fidelity, as well as provide the implementer room to course-correct if activities are failing to meet their milestone objectives. In addition, another benefit of phasing-in will be that it will be a less financially burdensome than starting a national program in year one.

USAID requires an implementation plan that phases in schools in a way that a) scales up gradually to not burden the MOE; and b) uses scientific testing of different activities to find the most cost-effective ways to improve early grade student reading and math outcomes in Jordan.

¹⁵ Though in reality higher due to the influx of Syrian refugee school-age children.

As part of the implementation, experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental research techniques will be used to monitor progress. The research will be varied and appropriate for the level of information needed. For example, not every intervention will require randomized control trials with counterfactuals in order to progress and make adjustments as interventions move to scale. There are opportunities and challenges for all types of research and decisions about which types of research need to accompany which aspects of the project being implemented should be discussed and analyzed with the MOE throughout the project to build their capacity to link research to reform implementation. Topics such as problems with sample attrition, insufficient precision, limits of generalizability and limits on understanding mechanisms should be part of the discussions. The end goal is to build in an approach *with multiple research opportunities*, so that the relative impact of various activities can be measured, whether against a counterfactuals or relying on existing data to find an answer to outstanding research questions. This approach will allow USAID to understand scientifically which activities are most cost-effective for improving the reading and math skills of early grade learners, and will be vital to the sustainability of USAID RAMP long after USG support has ended.

USAID/Jordan has learned from the experience of other USAID missions the crucial importance of communicating why a phased-in plan with control and treatment groups is being done, to avoid any ill-will on the part of the Government or of communities initially assigned to be part of the control group. One technique that has shown to mitigate this potential negative reaction is greater transparency in the randomization process, with MOE stakeholders, both central and local, invited to watch the actual randomization take place, ensuring there are no claims of favoritism. Clearly research and data collection need to be well coordinated in the project. In consulting with the MOE, they have offered to help the randomization process using data already collected on schools throughout the Kingdom of Jordan.

The implementation plan will also include an exit strategy to demonstrate how activities will be sustained. In a sense, the exit strategy for the project is a work plan for the MOE, MOHE and community-based organizations to continue their work on improving reading and math results in the early grades and increasing of awareness for the importance the focus on these efforts as well as continuing to engage key stakeholders on the subject to monitor progress.

A monitoring and support system will be needed to realize the multiple objectives of the project. Given the desire to use research and data to drive implementation choices, there will need to be a strong monitoring and evaluation system in place. Reports of monitoring visits by the project staff will be collected and synthesized to assess challenges, problems and successes and then consolidated reports will be submitted to USAID. The monitoring system shall include ways to monitor curriculum experts, teacher trainers, and teachers involved in the project and innovative primary grade level reading and math curriculum design approaches, programming, etc. and share lessons learned with other stakeholders such as the MOE, donors, schools and community-based organizations, families, and among non-project communities. Data collection and verification strategies will be needed to ensure reliability and accuracy of progress towards expected results. Collaboration with relevant stakeholders in monitoring efforts to assure that

monitoring and evaluation systems are as cost-effective as possible will be required. Further, a project baseline will be needed and the data needs and indicators will be agreed upon at the commencement of the project.

1.8 Project Sustainability

In addition to the improved reading and math outcomes among early grade students, a primary objective of USAID is to build stakeholders' ability to carry out the work and build off it in the future. The targeted beneficiaries, in particular the MOE, need to be able to identify problems and devise local solutions by the end of the project. A one-off training or workshop on sustainability does not ensure sustainability. Furthermore, uncertainty over government commitment and lack of an explicit plan for transferring responsibility put education projects' sustainability/initiatives at risk. Other aspects that affect sustainability are:

- If there is no official agreement among stakeholders or plan to maintain the results of the project interventions/initiatives;
- Frequent staff turnover at the MOE school levels result in interruption of project activities and decelerate the momentum generated;
- Transfer of core personnel (teachers, curriculum experts, etc.) affect maintaining the skills and knowledge acquired through the project;
- If training materials are not made available for future reference; and
- If orientation for new staff on the overall project principles, objective, practices/process and understanding that foster sustainability do not exist (if new staff assume responsibility without catch-up training on project activities).

Sustainability needs to be achieved through building the capacity of local actors to continue the work begun in the project. The project will focus on building essential skills of key actors in the education system to produce results in the short-, medium- and long-terms. Innovative ideas for building capacity beyond workshop-based learning are welcome. Project needs and activities will be led by the MOE and other stakeholders, so capacity-building activities need to be relevant and put into practice immediately. It will also be oriented toward strengthening existing systems and practices. A participatory process should be embedded throughout the project to generate the buy-in required to ensure sustainability.

USAID RAMP will need to do the following to contribute to the success and sustainability of the project:

- Develop an effective organization and management in-service structure/system;
- Plan activities at a regional level such that district-level supervisors can have control over their own development;
- At the MOE level, foster sustainability through the design and implementation of policy that integrates the principles and practices of the project into everyday MOE work plans;
- Work with the MOE to allocate adequate recurring budgets to support and sustain in-service activities at the MOE for training, supervision, equipment maintenance, etc;

- Establish a system of accountability through supervision and evaluation;
- Establish an incentive system such as recognition and certificates or points that will have implications for promotions or position upgrading;
- Strengthen the capacity of MOE staff to actively participate in developing new curriculum materials -conducting needs assessment, training, carrying out follow up support; and
- Assign capable and responsible personnel (coordinators, supervisors, school principals) for organizing trainings and analyzing curricular materials; etc.

USAID RAMP will draw from stakeholders to identify and document best practices of the project to provide for sustainability and to scale up a primary grade level reading and math program. The technical assistance provided should build the capacity of the Jordanian MOE to develop similar learning materials appropriate for primary classroom instruction and teacher training that are focused on helping students learn to read and do math.

1.9 Financial Sustainability

A critical part of sustainability is to ensure that the MOE has the financial resources available to take over and scale up activities once the project has ended. Financial assessments better understand the affordability of interventions will be carried out with education planners at the MOE. USAID RAMP partners will need to map out costs for various interventions before they are launched so that they are clear about what costs they will be able to absorb once the project ends. The project will have built-in exit strategies that allow the MOE to absorb project costs through a phased approach agreeable to the MOE before the start of the project to ensure the MOE commitment and ability to absorb such costs and thus sustain project results. The project will also take advantage of other projects that offer an opportunity for a multiplier effect and interaction between interventions.

1.10 Innovation

USAID encourages applicants to be innovative in their approach to a potential partnership. Innovation can include science and technology, local partnerships, and creative methods of helping USAID RAMP achieve its objectives. For an outline of USAID innovations, consult USAID/Forward¹⁶.

(2) The authority for this RFA is found in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the applicable sections of USAID regulation 22 CFR 226.

(3) Program Eligibility Requirements: Types of entities which may apply are described in Section III.

(4) Award Administration: For U.S. organizations, 22 CFR 226, OMB Circulars, and the Standard Provisions for U.S., Nongovernmental Recipients will apply. For non-US

¹⁶ <http://www.usaid.gov/usaiddforward>

organizations, the Standard Provisions for Non-U.S., Nongovernmental Recipients will apply. Copies of these regulations can be found at the following addresses:

22 CFR 226 - <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&SID=9f75d4e10320fd4750035a91400010b3&rgn=div5&view=text&node=22:1.0.2.22.23&idno=22#22:1.0.2.22.23.1.48.1>

OMB Circulars - http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default

Standard Provisions for US NGOs -

<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303maa.pdf>

Standard Provisions for Non-US NGOs -

<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/303mab.pdf>

(5) Outreach and Communication

The Agreement Office Representative (AOR), together with the Development Outreach and Communications team, will work with the Recipient to develop a Communications Plan that takes full advantage of the opportunities presented, including use of traditional and social media. The Recipient will appoint a Communication Specialist for the development and implementation of the outreach and communication plan.

The project offers opportunities to explore potential partnerships with private sector, mobile carriers and media outlets on ways to deliver the messages promoting reading and math learning throughout the Kingdom.

Furthermore, all four components of the project offer opportunities for USG visibility, in terms of branding and marking but also with regard to events and other direct engagement. The implementer must seize opportunities for signing ceremonies and engagement with the MoE, CBOs, NGOs and their target audiences throughout the course of the project; in addition to community-based events, PPPs etc.

All four components offer opportunities for branding and marking either through commodities, and/or print/broadcast/electronic materials.

SECTION II – AWARD INFORMATION

USAID/Jordan expects to award one Cooperative Agreement based on this RFA to the responsible applicant whose application offers the best value to the U.S. Government. Subject to the availability of funds, USAID/Jordan intends to provide approximately \$45,000,000 to be allocated over a period of five years with an anticipated start date of October/November 2014.

Substantial Involvement

The Recipient must be aware of the importance of coordinating this program with other USAID Mission programs and US foreign policy objectives. USAID will be substantially involved during the implementation of this Cooperative Agreement in the following ways:

1. Approval of the Recipient's Implementation Plans.

- a. Approval of annual workplans
- b. Approval of the Final Report

2. Approval of Specified Key Personnel.

The following positions have been designated as key to the successful implementation of the program objectives of this Cooperative Agreement. In accordance with the Substantial Involvement clause of this award, these personnel are subject to the approval of the Agreement Officer:

- Chief of Party
- Deputy Chief of Party
- Senior Education Specialist
- Senior Early Grade Reading and Math Specialist
- Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist

3. Agency and Recipient Collaboration or Joint Participation.

- a. Collaborative involvement in selection of advisory committee members.
- b. Concurrence on the substantive provisions of sub-awards.
- c. Approval of the Recipient's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plans.
- d. Agency monitoring to permit special kinds of direction or redirection because of interrelationships with other USAID programs, alignment with US foreign policy

objectives and USAID/Jordan's Country Development Cooperation Strategy.

USAID will monitor program implementation to ensure activities are supporting strategic objectives, to share best practices and capture lessons learned. This monitoring will be conducted through the quarterly work plans, related program meetings, the M&E System, the Environmental Compliance System, and through site visits (conducted by USAID and other USG personnel). USAID has awarded a third-party M&E contract to assist USAID in monitoring this program. The Recipient must cooperate with this M&E contractor within the guidelines of the Mission's M&E plan. The AOR may request additional ad hoc reporting to facilitate coordination among USAID Mission programs and rapidly evolving situations.

e. Communications with GOJ officials.

USAID presence in all meetings with government level officials at the minister and secretary general level is required. All communication with GOJ officials must be made by the Chief of Party and coordinated with the USAID AOR.

f. Approval of the Recipient's Outreach and Communication Strategy.

4. Agency authority to immediately halt a construction activity.

USAID retains the authority to immediately halt any construction undertaken under this program.

For purposes of this program, "construction" means: construction, alteration, or repair (including dredging and excavation) of buildings, structures, or other real property and includes, without limitation, improvements, renovation, alteration and refurbishment. The term includes, without limitation, roads, power plants, buildings, bridges, water treatment facilities, and vertical structures.

Any construction activities undertaken under this Cooperative Agreement will be expressly stated and approved in the Agreement and explicit in the budget.

Authorized Geographic Code

The authorized Geographic Code for procurement of goods and services under this award is Code 937.

SECTION III – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

- (1) Eligible Entities:** Applicants who are eligible to apply are US, international or national organizations, faith-based and community organizations, or educational institutions, who are able to respond in person through oral applications.

To be eligible for award of a Cooperative Agreement, in addition to other conditions of this RFA, organizations must have a politically neutral humanitarian mandate, a commitment to non-discrimination with respect to beneficiaries and adherence to equal opportunity employment practices. Non-discrimination includes equal treatment without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and political affiliation.

Applicants are reminded that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. It is the legal responsibility of the Recipient to ensure compliance with these Executive Orders and laws. This provision must be included in all sub-awards issued under this Cooperative Agreement.

- (2) New Partners:** USAID encourages applications from potential new partners.
- (3) Cost Sharing:** A cost sharing of 5% is required. This could be achieved through encouraging volunteerism and contributions from local organizations, the private sector and other sources. Criteria for cost sharing can be found under 22 CFR 226.23.

SECTION IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

All questions relating to this RFA should be submitted to Ms. Arwa Ghanma at aghanma@usaid.gov via email no later than the due date and time for questions shown on the cover page of this RFA. Unless otherwise notified by an amendment to the RFA, no questions will be accepted after this date. Applicants must not submit questions to any other USAID staff.

Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this RFA. Failure to do so will be at the applicant's risk.

There will be two phases to the application process. The first phase is a written technical application and a summary budget phase. The second phase is oral presentations. The best technically acceptable applicants from the first phase, not to exceed five, will be invited to present their applications orally in person at USAID/Jordan. This in-person oral presentation is a condition of award as technical discussions will also occur at this stage. After discussions have concluded, the apparently successful applicant will be required to submit a revised technical application, if necessary, and a full cost application.

Applications shall be submitted electronically at www.grants.gov in two separate parts: (a) technical application and (b) summary budget application, and should be prepared according to the structural format set forth below. Technical applications must not make reference to pricing data in order that the technical evaluation may be made strictly on the basis of technical merit. Applications must be submitted no later than the closing date and time for application submission indicated in the cover letter accompanying this RFA unless the RFA is amended to extend the deadline. Applications, which are submitted late or incomplete, run the risk of not being considered in the review process. Late applications will be considered for award only if the Agreement Officer (AO) determines it is in the Government's interest.

All applications received by the deadline at www.grants.gov will be reviewed for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in these guidelines. Section V addresses the technical evaluation procedures for the applications.

Proprietary Information: Applicants which include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purposes, should:

- Mark the title page with the following legend: "This application includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the U.S. Government and shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed - in whole or in part - for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, a cooperative agreement is awarded to this applicant as a result of - or in connection with - the submission of this data, the U.S. Government shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting agreement. 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 pages ____; and”

- Mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following legend: “Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application.”

Technical Application Format

The technical application must be organized so that it follows the technical evaluation factors listed in Section V. Applicants are to present detailed information only when required by specific RFA instructions. The technical application must not exceed 12 pages in length (including graphics and charts but excluding annexes). The pages that exceed this page limitation will NOT be evaluated. Any additional annexes not required by this RFA will not be evaluated. Applications shall be submitted in Word format, written in English, single-spaced, using Times New Roman font size 12 with each page numbered consecutively, and have at least one inch margins on the top, bottom and sides.

Applications must include:

1. Technical Approach

The technical approach must provide a clear and succinct picture on the political, social and cultural environment, the main stakeholders targeting by the program and methods of engaging and the method of achieving the outlined objectives, taking into account the social, political and cultural sensitivities related to gender. The technical approach must also provide a clear strategy on how to engage the main stakeholders. It must also include a monitoring plan that adequately evaluates performance and provides information for project planning. The technical approach must demonstrate how gender disparities within Jordanian students will be addressed via USAID RAMP activities and engagement with stakeholders. Activities within the technical approach should directly link to achieving the intermediate results as defined in the Program Description. Potential partnerships with community organizations, local NGOs, international NGOs, and the private sector are encouraged in the technical approach. These partnerships should illustrate their added value to USAID RAMP, including but not limited to innovation, creativity, technology, community engagement, and national awareness. The technical approach should include a blueprint for how the top-line goal of 55% of 2nd graders reading at an 80% comprehension level will be achieved.

2. Key Personnel

The applicant must propose individuals for key personnel positions that are highly qualified and are able to fulfill the responsibilities as described below. The staffing plan and its annexes (i.e. resumes) should clearly show how the individuals as well as the proposed

staffing mix are appropriate for achieving the program's objectives and supporting the implementation at all levels. Key personnel must have sufficient managerial as well as technical capacity, expertise and experience to effectively manage and support the overall project and its staff as outlined in the responsibilities below. The applicant must include resumes for all Key Personnel (no longer than 2 pages each) to be included in an annex. Each resume must include three (3) references with telephone numbers and email addresses. The applicant must include a letter of commitment for each Key Personnel in an annex.

The applicant may propose a maximum of five Key Personnel. Of those five positions, the following positions must be proposed and their qualifications must meet or exceed the qualifications described below:

- a. Chief of Party
- b. Deputy Chief of Party
- c. Senior Education Specialist
- d. Senior Early Grade Reading and Math Specialist
- e. Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist

The responsibilities for each position are described below:

a. Chief of Party (COP):

The nature of the program demands strong leadership, program, organizational management and communication skills, and a unique understanding of the Jordanian social and political context. The COP has overall responsibility for management of and reporting on the Recipient's activities; making key decisions and solving problems in short timeframes while ensuring operational and program quality and integrity; and serving as the Recipient's first point of interface with USAID on routine and strategic matters.

Qualifications:

- A minimum of 15 years of experience working on education development, at least five years of which have been spent in COP or Deputy COP (DCOP) positions, or their equivalents.
- Demonstrated experience and knowledge in establishing systems and overseeing project start-up.
- Experience hiring and supervising personnel and ensuring they acquire the necessary training and skills to meet evolving program needs.
- Experience working for large donor organizations such as USAID is preferable.
- Advanced degree (Masters or Doctorate) in an education-related field.
- Prior work in the MENA region is highly desirable.
- Fluency in English is required.

- Proficiency in Arabic is required. If the DCOP is proficient in Arabic, then proficiency in Arabic for the COP is preferred.

b. Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP)

The DCOP will report directly to the COP and will be considered Acting COP in his/her absence. The DCOP must have a minimum of 15 years of experience working on educational programs, and ideally have a firm understanding of the Jordanian educational context.

Qualifications:

- A minimum of 12 years of experience working on education development, at least three years of which have been spent in DCOP positions, or their equivalents.
- Advanced degree (Masters or Doctorate) in an education-related field.
- Prior work in the MENA region is highly desirable.
- Fluency in English is required.
- Proficiency in Arabic is required. If the COP is proficient in Arabic, then proficiency in Arabic for the DCOP is preferred.

c. Senior Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Specialist

The Senior M&E Specialist will report directly to the COP and DCOP, and will have extensive experience monitoring and evaluating education interventions. S/he will be in charge of not only evaluating the work of USAID RAMP, but ensuring that the dissemination of results reaches stakeholders at multiple levels outside of USAID—for example helping design systems so that parents are better informed of their children's progress in school.

Qualifications:

- A minimum of 10 years of experience measuring and evaluating education-related programming.
- A minimum of 5 years of experience assessing early grade reading and math learning outcomes.
- Advanced degree (Masters or Doctorate) in a social science related field or an education-related field.
- Fluency in English.

d. Senior Education Specialist

The Senior Education Specialist will report directly to the COP and DCOP, and will be one of two lead technical advisors for USAID RAMP. The Senior Education Specialist is expected to be highly skilled at designing, implementing, and tracking multiple kinds of

educational activities, including but not limited to: teacher training; material development; community outreach; host country capacity building; student assessments; curriculum reform and/or development; and advising host-country governments on education policy, reform, and best practices.

Qualifications:

- A minimum of 10 years of experience in international education development.
- Advanced degree (Masters or Doctorate) in an education-related field.
- Prior work in the MENA region is highly desirable.
- Fluency in English is required.
- Proficiency in Arabic is desirable but not required.

e. Senior Early Grade Literacy and Math Specialist

The Senior Early Grade Literacy and Math Specialist will report directly to the COP and DCOP, and will be one of two lead technical advisors for USAID RAMP. The specialist will be expected to have a strong background in early grade reading and math (as evidenced by the candidate's CV), particularly in: the development of early grade reading and math materials; the design of early grade reading and math teacher trainings; the measurement of early grade reading and math learning outcomes; the implementation of early grade reading and math activities; the piloting and scaling up of early grade reading and math activities; the building of early grade reading and math sustainability within host country governments; the piloting and/or testing of innovations in improving early grade reading and math learning outcomes and; building community and host country government awareness regarding the importance of early grade learning outcomes.

Qualifications:

- A minimum of 10 years of experience in international education development, five of which were spent working on early grade reading and math interventions.
- Advanced degree (Masters or Doctorate) in an education-related field.
- Prior work in the MENA region is highly desirable.
- Fluency in English is required.
- Proficiency in Arabic is desirable but not required.

3. Past Performance

Applicants must provide records of relevant past performance that demonstrate evidence of their organizational capacity and relevant technical and managerial resources and expertise to design and implement the described project. This section should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Evidence of experience in similar early grade reading and math projects.
- Evidence of experience in working with a broad range of stakeholders including but not limited to government entities, registered organizations, community-based organizations and informal groups and networks.

The application shall include an Annex listing of all its relevant contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs during the past three years that required the placement of long-term key personnel. The reference information for these awards must include the performance location, award number (if available), a brief description of the work performed, and a point of contact list with current telephone numbers and email addresses.

USAID reserves the right to obtain past performance information from other sources including those not named in the application.

4. Management

The overall management approach should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to manage a project that will often function in highly sensitive situations. The management approach is encouraged to:

- Include a summary staffing plan and summary organizational chart which, together, show the totality of positions proposed for all components of the implementation plan, inter-staff relationships and lines of communications.
- Include a narrative that helps explain the staffing plan and organization chart(s) and describes the advantages of the management approach.

Initial Cost Application Format

The initial cost application must be submitted separately from the technical application.

The initial cost application shall consist of a summary budget, in US dollars, which provides a breakdown by major cost element, the anticipated costs under this Cooperative Agreement using Standard Form 424 – Application for Federal Assistance, 424A – Budget Information – Nonconstruction Programs, and 424B – Assurances – Nonconstruction Programs.

Oral Presentation

Based on USAID's evaluation of applications, only the best technically acceptable applicants – up to five - will be invited to present their applications orally in person at USAID/Jordan through a PowerPoint Presentation. If less than three applicants are found to be technically acceptable, then only those applicants will be invited to the Oral Presentation Phase. Applicants who will be called to the Oral Presentation Phase will be notified of the date of their scheduled presentation within approximately four weeks of submission of applications. Those applicants

should anticipate to have a one-week notice of their presentation date. Applicants who will not be called to the oral presentation phase will also be notified within that timeframe.

USAID/Jordan will provide the conference room and media presentation equipment. The presentation will be made to the Technical Evaluation Committee who will be making their evaluation during the presentation. The Senior Acquisition Specialist and the Agreement Officer will also attend. The evaluation criteria for the oral presentation Phase will be different than those used for the written application Phase (see Section V).

The presentation must cover the following areas:

- A detailed summary of the applicants technical approach to the implementation plan, directly addressing all four intermediate results as well as the ultimate goal of reaching 55% of all 2nd graders reading with 80% comprehension in Jordan.
- A step-by-step roadmap of implementation for the first 90 days, including topics such as start-up, scalability, community and government engagement, innovation and technology, gender and disability inclusion, sustainability, and results.
- A detailed explanation of how the technical approach will be measured and evaluated and how these findings will help inform USAID RAMP throughout the five years, as well as serve stakeholders at every level.
- An M&E plan that not only informs USAID but helps MOE personnel, schools, parents, and students, learn what is working inside the classroom to improve early grade reading and math learning outcomes.

The applicant is limited to six attendees, five of which must be the proposed COP, DCOP, M&E Specialist, Education Specialist, and the Early Grade Reading and Math Specialist. The sixth attendee should not be part of the presentation, but may interject to key personnel's responses to questions in the discussion portion, if relevant. There will be no conference call-ins for the presentation. All six attendees must be present in person on the date and time specified for the presentation at the location specified in Amman/Jordan and all key personnel attending must be presenters for at least part of the presentation. The presentation must last no more than one hour to be followed by Government deliberations. After that, there will be a two-hour question and answer period where the applicant will respond to questions related to their presentation as well as to any other questions arising from their written application. This will be followed by Government deliberations and then up to a two-hour discussion period to resolve technical issues, if possible, or to raise issues for the applicant to address in their final technical proposal.

After the presentation has been evaluated, USAID will continue budget discussions with the apparently successful applicant.

USAID will provide initial items for discussion based on evaluations of written applications at least five days prior to the presentation date.

The presentation must be in PowerPoint format and sent by email to aghanma@usaid.gov at least three days prior to the scheduled presentation. The order of presentations among the applicants will be determined randomly by the Agreement Officer.

Final Cost Application Format

After discussions have concluded, the apparently successful applicant will be requested to submit a final cost application in accordance with the following section.

While there is no page limit for this portion, the applicant is encouraged to be concise, but still provide the necessary detail to address the following:

- a. A summary budget: It must provide a breakdown by cost element, by year, for the anticipated costs under this Cooperative Agreement.
- b. A detailed budget must be submitted in US dollars for the applicant and all subcontractors/subgrantees. It must be in Excel format with unlocked formulas. An accompanying budget narrative must be submitted in Word, text accessible, for the prime applicant and all sub-awardees and must provide in detail the total costs for implementation of the program that the applicant is proposing. The budget narrative must provide detailed budget notes and supporting justification of all proposed budget line items. It must clearly identify the basis of all costs, such as market surveys, price quotations, current salaries, historical experience, etc.

The detailed budget must include:

- The breakdown of all costs associated with the program according to costs of, if applicable, headquarters, regional and/or country offices;
- The breakdown of all costs according to each subcontractor/subgrantee involved in the program;
- The costs associated with external, expatriate technical assistance and those associated with local in-country technical assistance;
- The name, position, annual salary, and expected level of effort (in days) of persons charged to the activity. Furthermore, 260 days equals one year of labor.
- If not included in an indirect cost rate agreement negotiated with the U.S. Government, the applicable fringe benefit rates for each category of employees, and an explanation of the benefits included in the rate;
- A breakdown of allowances by specific type and by person, and they must be in accordance with the applicant's policies;
- Travel, per diem and other transportation expenses detailed to include number of trips, expected itineraries, number of per diem days and per diem rates;
- Separate cost line items for other direct costs such as supplies, communication costs, visas, passports, and other general costs;

- A fund for \$1,000,000 budgeted annually under a line item called Opportunities Module for activities that are more cross-cutting in nature or do not programmatically fit into USAID projects under other Development Objectives (DOs).
 - Cost-sharing amount
- c. Information regarding work experience and annual salary history for the three most recent years for all staff proposed under this project.
- d. A copy of the latest Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), for the applicant, if applicable.

If the applicant does not currently have a NICRA from their cognizant agency, the following information shall be required:

- Copies of the applicant's financial reports for the previous 3-year period, which have been audited by a certified public accountant or other auditor satisfactory to USAID;
 - Projected budget, cash flow and organizational chart;
 - A copy of the organization's accounting manual.
- e. Required certifications, assurances and other statements. These can be found at <http://inside.usaid.gov/ADS/300/303mav.pdf>. Please note that these certifications are required for both the applicant and all subgrantees whether US or non-US organizations.
- f. The Optional Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants found at the end of this Section.
- g. Applicant and subgrantees, if any, must submit additional evidence of responsibility they deem necessary for the Agreement Officer to make a determination of responsibility. The information submitted should substantiate that the applicant:
- i. Has adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain such resources as required during the performance of the Cooperative Agreement.
 - ii. Has the ability to comply with the Cooperative Agreement conditions, taking into account all existing and currently prospective commitments of the applicant, nongovernmental and governmental.
 - iii. Has a satisfactory record of performance. Past relevant unsatisfactory performance is ordinarily sufficient to justify a finding of non-responsibility, unless there is clear evidence of subsequent satisfactory performance.
 - iv. Has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics.
 - v. Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a Cooperative Agreement under applicable laws and regulations.
- h. If the applicant has never received a cooperative agreement, grant or contract from the U.S. Government, the applicant will be required to submit a copy of its accounting manual.

- i. The applicant must have an active registration in www.sam.gov.
- j. The applicant must state that the application is valid for 120 days.

Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants

OMB No. 1890-0014 Exp. 1/31/2006

Purpose: The Federal government is committed to ensuring that all qualified applicants, small or large, non-religious or faith-based, have an equal opportunity to compete for Federal funding. In order for us to better understand the population of applicants for Federal funds, we are asking nonprofit private organizations (not including private universities) to fill out this survey.

Upon receipt, the survey will be separated from the application. Information on the survey will not be considered in any way in making funding decisions and will not be included in the Federal grants database. While your help in this data collection process is greatly appreciated, completion of this survey is voluntary.

Instructions for Submitting the Survey: If you are applying using a hard copy application, please place the completed survey in an envelope labeled "Applicant Survey." Seal the envelope and include it along with your application package. If you are applying electronically, please submit this survey along with your application.

Applicant's (Organization) Name: _____

Applicant's DUNS Number: _____

Grant Name: _____ **CFDA Number:** _____

1. Does the applicant have 501(c)(3) status?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. How many full-time equivalent employees does the applicant have? (Check only one box).

☐ 3 or Fewer ☐ 15-50
☐ 4-5 ☐ 51-100
☐ 6-12 ☐ over 100

3. What is the size of the applicant's annual budget? (Check only one box.)

☐ Less than \$150,000
☐ \$150,000 - \$299,999
☐ \$300,000 - \$499,999
☐ \$500,000 - \$999,999
☐ \$1,000,000 - \$4,999,999
☐ \$5,000,000 or more

4. Is the applicant a faith-based/religious organization?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Is the applicant a non-religious community based organization?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Is the applicant an intermediary that will manage the grant on behalf of other organizations?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Has the applicant ever received a government grant or contract (Federal, State, or local)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Is the applicant a local affiliate of a national organization?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Survey Instructions on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants

Provide the applicant's (organization) name and DUNS number and the grant name and CFDA number.

1. 501(c)(3) status is a legal designation provided on application to the Internal Revenue Service by eligible organizations. Some grant programs may require nonprofit applicants to have 501(c)(3) status. Other grant programs do not.
2. For example, two part-time employees who each work half-time equal one full-time equivalent employee. If the applicant is a local affiliate of a national organization, the responses to survey questions 2 and 3 should reflect the staff and budget size of the local affiliate.
3. Annual budget means the amount of money our organization spends each year on all of its activities.
4. Self-identify.
5. An organization is considered a community-based organization if its headquarters/service location shares the same zip code as the clients you serve.
6. An "intermediary" is an organization that enables a group of small organizations to receive and manage government funds by administering the grant on their behalf.
7. Self-explanatory.
8. Self-explanatory.

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1890-0014. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average five (5) minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. **If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to:** U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4651.

If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to: Joyce I. Mays, Application Control Center, U.S. Department of Education, 7th and D Streets, SW, ROB-3, Room 3671, Washington, D.C. 20202-4725.

SECTION V – APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The criteria presented below have been tailored to the requirements of this particular RFA. Applicants should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant matters which applicants should address in their applications and (b) set the standard against which all applications will be evaluated. To facilitate the review of applications, applicants must organize the narrative sections of their applications in the same order as the Evaluation Criteria.

The technical applications will be evaluated in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria set forth below. Thereafter, the initial cost applications of applicants who will be invited to the oral presentations will be opened and costs will be evaluated for general reasonableness. An award will be made to the responsible applicant whose application offers the greatest value to the Government, cost and other factors considered. The final award decision is made by the Agreement Officer.

Evaluation Criteria for the Written Application Phase:

The following evaluation criteria, which are further described below, will be the basis of evaluation for all technical applications. All criteria are listed in descending order of importance.

1. Technical Approach
2. Key Personnel
3. Past Performance
4. Management

1. Technical Approach:

Applicants will be evaluated on how well they are able to demonstrate their experience and capacity to improve early grade reading and math learning outcomes in Jordan. This will be evaluated by reviewing applicants' proposed technical approaches in addressing the four intermediate results: Improved early grade reading and math learning materials are integrated into every K-3 classroom in Jordan; teachers, supervisors, counselors, and administrators are better equipped to provide effective reading and math instruction through in-service and pre-service training, mentoring, and supervision; communities participate in the education of reading and math for all children and hold schools accountable for results and; the Ministry of Education institutionalizes early grade reading and math policies, standards, curricula, and assessments. These four elements will in turn be evaluated based on their ability to collectively help the MOE reach its goal of 55% of 2nd graders reading at an 80% comprehension level.

In addition, applicants will be evaluated on the potential methods proposed for closing gender disparities; methods of ensuring that Syrian refugee students living in host communities have the same level of access to USAID RAMP interventions, including potential supplementary

activities that respond to their unique position in Jordanian society; how USAID RAMP activities will have sustainability built in to their implementation, moving beyond simply “building capacity” within the Ministry of Education (though this too is important); potential partnerships that bring real added value to USAID RAMP, such as innovation, creativity, technology, local and/or national awareness, and cost-savings. Finally, applicants will be evaluated on the degree of innovation used in the technical approach and the efficiency of the suggested method.

2. Key Personnel:

In assessing this factor, the Technical Evaluation Committee will consider:

- The relevance of the education and technical and managerial experience of proposed Key Personnel to the positions for which they are nominated;
- The collective knowledge and experience of Key Personnel of the current social, political, and economic situation in the Middle East and Jordan specifically;
- The collective knowledge and experience of Key Personnel in the implementation of early grade reading and math interventions.
- Evaluation of references obtained for key personnel including information obtained from other than the sources provided by the applicant.

3. Past Performance:

All applicants will be subject to a past performance review for demonstrated successful past performance in previous and/or existing projects and will take into account the following:

- The quality of performance demonstrated by the applicant based on references provided by the applicant and other references as determined by USAID.
- Experience in managing similar early grade reading and math interventions
- Experience in working with a broad range of sub-grantees including but not limited to government entities, registered organizations, community-based organizations and informal groups and networks.

4. Management:

Applicants will only be evaluated for the general viability of their management approach. The management approach will be substantially evaluated in detail during the oral presentation phase.

Evaluation Criteria for the Oral Presentation Phase:

During the oral presentation phase, the following factors will be evaluated:

1. The technical approach to the implementation of USAID RAMP

2. A detailed M&E presentation
3. A sustainability plan

These evaluation criteria are of equal importance.

1. The technical approach to the implementation of USAID RAMP.

In assessing this factor, the Technical Evaluation Committee will consider the applicant's ability to clearly and concisely present a USAID RAMP implementation plan, addressing all four intermediate results as well as the ultimate goal of reaching 55% of all 2nd graders reading with 80% reading comprehension in Jordan.

2. A detailed M&E presentation

In assessing this factor, the Technical Evaluation Committee will consider the applicant's ability to present a sound methodology for monitoring and evaluating USAID RAMP, which informs USAID but helps MOE personnel, schools, parents, and students learn what is working inside the classroom to improve early grade reading and math learning outcomes.

3. A sustainability plan.

In assessing this factor, the Technical Evaluation Committee will consider the applicant's capacity at moving beyond simple capacity building within the Ministry of Education, and evaluate the applicant's ability to creatively and soundly recommend measures within USAID RAMP that will ensure the sustainability of key activities.

Evaluation of Cost:

Following the evaluation process, a final cost application will be requested from the apparently successful applicant. Cost has not been assigned a score but will be evaluated for general reasonableness, and cost-effectiveness. The applicant's cost application will be evaluated to ensure it is a realistic financial expression of the proposed project and does not contain estimated costs which may be unreasonable or unallowable.

Cost negotiations will only be conducted with the apparently successful applicant. If a mutually satisfactory award cannot be negotiated, the Agreement Officer will notify the applicant that negotiations have terminated and the Agreement Officer will initiate negotiations with the second most technically acceptable applicant. This procedure shall continue until a mutually satisfactory award has been negotiated.

Determination of Award

Following the recommendation of the Technical Evaluation Committee, the Agreement Officer will make an award determination.

The Agreement Officer's decision regarding funding of an award is final and not subject to review. Any information that may impact the Agreement Officer's decision shall be directed to the Agreement Officer.

SECTION VI – AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. The Government plans to award one Cooperative Agreement resulting from this RFA to the responsible applicant whose application conforming to this RFA offers the greatest value to the U.S. Government. The Government may reject any or all applications, accept other than the lowest cost application, accept alternate applications, and waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received.
2. The Government may award one Cooperative Agreement on the basis of initial applications received, and may not conduct discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application must contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. As part of its evaluation process, however, USAID may elect to discuss technical, cost or other pre-award issues with one or more applicants. Alternatively, USAID may proceed with the award selection based on its evaluation of initial applications received and/or commence negotiations solely with one applicant.
3. A written award mailed or otherwise furnished to the successful applicant within the application's validity time as specified either in the application or in this RFA (whichever is later) shall result in a binding Cooperative Agreement without further action by either party. Before the application's specified validity expiration time, the Government may accept an application, whether or not there are negotiations after its receipt, unless a written notice of withdrawal is received by the applicant before award. Negotiations or discussions conducted after receipt of an application do not constitute a rejection or counteroffer by the Government.
4. Applicants must set forth full, accurate and complete information as required by this RFA. The penalty for making false statements to the Government is prescribed in 18 U.S.C. 1001.
5. Neither financial data submitted with an application nor representations concerning facilities or financing, will form a part of the resulting Cooperative Agreement unless explicitly stated otherwise in the agreement.
6. USAID reserves the right to perform a pre-award survey which may include, but is not limited to: (1) interviews with individuals to establish their ability to perform agreement duties under the project conditions; (2) a review of the prime recipient's financial condition, business and personnel procedures, etc.; and (3) site visits to the prime recipient's institution.
7. Authority to Obligate the Government: The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditures of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Cooperative Agreement may be incurred before receipt of

either a fully executed Cooperative Agreement or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

8. Deliverables throughout the life of the project:

The Recipient shall be responsible for delivery of the following items:

- a) Annual Work Plans: Within 30 days of the start of the Cooperative Agreement, the Recipient shall submit the annual workplan. Work plans for subsequent years are due 30 days prior to the end of each program year. In annual work plans, the Recipient will be required to identify early grade reading and math challenges and opportunities; a description of how these challenges will be addressed in the program; identification of relevant performance indicators to measure progress toward overall program goal of improving early grade reading and math learning outcomes; strategies for ensuring high levels of meaningful community engagement; and approaches to working with the Ministry of Education that builds ownership among Ministry personnel.
- b) Quarterly Progress Report: Quarterly reports will summarize the following: program highlights, achievements, and major activities; budget information; problems encountered, proposed remedial actions and impact achieved against the objectives. The Recipient shall submit an electronic copy of a performance report to the AOR. The performance reports are required to be submitted quarterly (30 days after the quarter) and shall contain the following information: Please refer to 22 CFR 226.51(d)
- c) Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: Within 30 days of the approval of the workplan, a draft Monitoring and Evaluation plan shall be submitted to the AOR for review. This plan shall be coordinated with the overall Mission's M&E Guidelines and the Mission's M&E program.
- d) Outreach and Communication Strategy: The first annual communication and outreach strategy shall be submitted to the AOR within 30 days of the start date of the Cooperative Agreement. The strategies for subsequent years are due 30 days prior to the end of each program year. The strategies will include the overall communication messages of the program. The strategies must also focus on opportunities for USG visibility through the components of the program in terms of branding and marking but also with regard to events and other direct engagement. The strategy must ensure the use of traditional and social media and must be updated on a quarterly basis.
- e) Final Report: The Recipient shall submit the original and one copy to FMO, the Agreement Officer (if requested), and the AOR and one copy, in electronic (preferred) or paper form of final documents to one of the following: (a) Via E-mail: docsubmit@dec.cdie.org; (b) Via U.S. Postal Service: Development Experience Clearinghouse, 8403 Colesville Road, Suite 210 Silver Spring, MD 20910, USA; (c) Via

Fax: (301) 588-7787; or (d) Online:
<http://www.dec.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=docSubmit.home>.

The final performance report shall contain a summary discussion of all activities conducted under the Cooperative Agreement, the results achieved, complete data from the performance monitoring and evaluation plan.

- f) **Data Collection and Training Materials:** The release or dissemination of any information, data, documents, or materials containing sensitive information about the program must be approved by the USAID/Jordan AOR. The Recipient shall submit all reports, evaluations of training activities, training materials, instructional manuals, etc. developed to USAID/Jordan for prior approval before their use.
- g) **Branding Strategy and Marking Plan:** The apparently successful applicant will be required to submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan along with the final cost proposal.

BRANDING STRATEGY – ASSISTANCE

(a) Definitions

Branding Strategy means a strategy that is submitted at the specific request of a USAID Agreement Officer by an Apparently Successful Applicant after evaluation of an application for USAID funding, describing how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, and how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and host country citizens. It identifies all donors and explains how they will be acknowledged.

Apparently Successful Applicant(s) means the applicant(s) for USAID funding recommended for an award after evaluation, but who has not yet been awarded a grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance award by the Agreement Officer. The Agreement Officer will request that the Apparently Successful Applicants submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan. Apparently Successful Applicant status confers no right and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.

USAID Identity (Identity) means the official marking for the Agency, comprised of the USAID logo and new brandmark, which clearly communicates that our assistance is from the American people. The USAID Identity is available on the USAID website and is provided without royalty, license, or other fee to recipients of USAID-funded grants or cooperative agreements or other assistance awards or subawards.

(b) Submission. The Apparently Successful Applicant, upon request of the Agreement Officer, will submit and negotiate a Branding Strategy. The Branding Strategy will be included in and made a part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement. The Branding Strategy will be negotiated within the time that the Agreement Officer specifies. Failure to

submit and negotiate a Branding Strategy will make the applicant ineligible for award of a grant or cooperative agreement. The Apparently Successful Applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events and materials, and the like.

(c) Submission Requirements

At a minimum, the Apparently Successful Applicant's Branding Strategy will address the following:

(1) Positioning

What is the intended name of this program, project, or activity?

Guidelines: USAID prefers to have the USAID Identity included as part of the program or project name, such as a "title sponsor," if possible and appropriate. It is acceptable to "co-brand" the title with USAID's and the Apparently Successful Applicant's identities. For example: "The USAID and [Apparently Successful Applicant] Health Center."

If it would be inappropriate or is not possible to "brand" the project this way, such as when rehabilitating a structure that already exists or if there are multiple donors, please explain and indicate how you intend to showcase USAID's involvement in publicizing the program or project. *For example: School #123, rehabilitated by USAID and [Apparently Successful Applicant]/ [other donors].*

Note: the Agency prefers "made possible by (or with) the generous support of the American People" next to the USAID Identity in acknowledging our contribution, instead of the phrase "funded by." USAID prefers local language translations.

Will a program logo be developed and used consistently to identify this program? If yes, please attach a copy of the proposed program logo.

Note: USAID prefers to fund projects that do NOT have a separate logo or identity that competes with the USAID Identity.

(2) Program Communications and Publicity

Who are the primary and secondary audiences for this project or program?

Guidelines: Please include direct beneficiaries and any special target segments or influencers. *For Example: Primary audience: schoolgirls age 8-12, Secondary audience: teachers and parents – specifically mothers.*

What communications or program materials will be used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries?

Guidelines: These include training materials, posters, pamphlets, Public Service Announcements, billboards, websites, and so forth.

What is the main program message(s)?

Guidelines: *For example: "Be tested for HIV-AIDS" or "Have your child inoculated."* Please indicate if you also plan to incorporate USAID's primary message – this aid is "from the American people" – into the narrative of program materials. This is optional; however, marking with the USAID Identity is required.

Will the recipient announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens? If yes, what press and promotional activities are planned?

Guidelines: These may include media releases, press conferences, public events, and so forth.

Note: incorporating the message, "USAID from the American People", and the USAID Identity is required.

Please provide any additional ideas about how to increase awareness that the American people support this project or program.

Guidelines: One of our goals is to ensure that both beneficiaries and host-country citizens know that the aid the Agency is providing is "from the American people." Please provide any initial ideas on how to further this goal.

(3) Acknowledgements

Will there be any direct involvement from a host-country government ministry? If yes, please indicate which one or ones. Will the recipient acknowledge the ministry as an additional co-sponsor?

Note: it is perfectly acceptable and often encouraged for USAID to "co-brand" programs with government ministries.

Please indicate if there are any other groups whose logo or identity the recipient will use on program materials and related communications.

Guidelines: Please indicate if they are also a donor or why they will be visibly acknowledged, and if they will receive the same prominence as USAID.

(d) **Award Criteria.** The Agreement Officer will review the Branding Strategy for adequacy, ensuring that it contains the required information on naming and positioning the USAID-funded program, project, or activity, and promoting and communicating it to cooperating country beneficiaries and citizens. The Agreement Officer also will evaluate this information to ensure that it is consistent with the stated objectives of the award; with the Apparently Successful Applicant's cost data submissions; with the Apparently Successful Applicant's project, activity, or program performance plan; and with the regulatory requirements set out in 22 CFR 226.91. The Agreement Officer may obtain advice and recommendations from technical experts while performing the evaluation.

MARKING PLAN – ASSISTANCE

(a) Definitions

Marking Plan means a plan that the Apparently Successful Applicant submits at the specific request of a USAID Agreement Officer after evaluation of an application for USAID funding, detailing the public communications, commodities, and program materials and other items that will visibly bear the USAID Identity. Recipients may request approval of Presumptive Exceptions to marking requirements in the Marking Plan.

Apparently Successful Applicant(s) means the applicant(s) for USAID funding recommended for an award after evaluation, but who has not yet been awarded a grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance award by the Agreement Officer. The Agreement Officer will request that Apparently Successful Applicants submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan. Apparently Successful Applicant status confers no right and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award, which the Agreement Officer must still obligate.

USAID Identity (Identity) means the official marking for the Agency, comprised of the USAID logo and new brandmark, which clearly communicates that our assistance is from the American people. The USAID Identity is available on the USAID website and USAID provides it without royalty, license, or other fee to recipients of USAID funded grants, cooperative agreements, or other assistance awards or sub-awards.

A **Presumptive Exception** exempts the applicant from the general marking requirements for a *particular* USAID-funded public communication, commodity, program material or other deliverable, or a *category* of USAID-funded public communications, commodities, program materials or other deliverables that would otherwise be required to visibly bear the USAID Identity. The Presumptive Exceptions are:

Presumptive Exception (i). USAID marking requirements may not apply if they would compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials, such as election monitoring or ballots, and voter information literature; political party support or public policy advocacy or reform; independent media, such as television and radio

broadcasts, newspaper articles and editorials; and public service announcements or public opinion polls and surveys (22 C.F.R. 226.91(h)(1)).

Presumptive Exception (ii). USAID marking requirements may not apply if they would diminish the credibility of audits, reports, analyses, studies, or policy recommendations whose data or findings must be seen as independent (22 C.F.R. 226.91(h)(2)).

Presumptive Exception (iii). USAID marking requirements may not apply if they would undercut host-country government “ownership” of constitutions, laws, regulations, policies, studies, assessments, reports, publications, surveys or audits, public service announcements, or other communications better positioned as “by” or “from” a cooperating country ministry or government official (22 C.F.R. 226.91(h)(3)).

Presumptive Exception (iv). USAID marking requirements may not apply if they would impair the functionality of an item, such as sterilized equipment or spare parts (22 C.F.R. 226.91(h)(4)).

Presumptive Exception (v). USAID marking requirements may not apply if they would incur substantial costs or be impractical, such as items too small or otherwise unsuited for individual marking, such as food in bulk (22 C.F.R. 226.91(h)(5)).

Presumptive Exception (vi). USAID marking requirements may not apply if they would offend local cultural or social norms, or be considered inappropriate on such items as condoms, toilets, bed pans, or similar commodities (22 C.F.R. 226.91(h)(6)).

Presumptive Exception (vii). USAID marking requirements may not apply if they would conflict with international law (22 C.F.R. 226.91(h)(7)).

(b) Submission. The Apparently Successful Applicant, upon the request of the Agreement Officer, will submit and negotiate a Marking Plan that addresses the details of the public communications, commodities, program materials that will visibly bear the USAID Identity. The marking plan will be customized for the particular program, project, or activity under the resultant grant or cooperative agreement. The plan will be included in and made a part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement. USAID and the Apparently Successful Applicant will negotiate the Marking Plan within the time specified by the Agreement Officer. Failure to submit and negotiate a Marking Plan will make the applicant ineligible for award of a grant or cooperative agreement. The applicant must include an estimate of all costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, labels, banners, press events, promotional materials, and so forth in the budget portion of its application. These costs are subject to revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer upon submission of the Marking Plan and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.

(c) Submission Requirements. The Marking Plan will include the following:

(1) A description of the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the recipient will be produced as a part of the grant or cooperative agreement and which will visibly bear the USAID Identity. These include:

(i) program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other programs, projects, or activities that are physical in nature;

(ii) technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audio-visual productions, public service announcements, Web sites/Internet activities and other promotional, informational, media, or communications products funded by USAID;

(iii) events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences, and other public activities; and

(iv) all commodities financed by USAID, including commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs, and all other equipment, supplies and other materials funded by USAID, and their export packaging.

(2) A table specifying:

(i) the program deliverables that the recipient will mark with the USAID Identity,

(ii) the type of marking and what materials the applicant will be used to mark the program deliverables with the USAID Identity, and

(iii) when in the performance period the applicant will mark the program deliverables, and where the applicant will place the marking.

(3) A table specifying:

(i) what program deliverables will not be marked with the USAID Identity, and

(ii) the rationale for not marking these program deliverables.

(d) Presumptive Exceptions.

(1) The Apparently Successful Applicant may request a Presumptive Exception as part of the overall Marking Plan submission. To request a Presumptive Exception, the Apparently Successful Applicant must identify which Presumptive Exception applies, and state why, in light of the Apparently Successful Applicant's technical application and in the context of the program description or program statement in the USAID Request For Application or Annual Program Statement, marking requirements should not be required.

(2) Specific guidelines for addressing each Presumptive Exception are:

(i) For Presumptive Exception (i), identify the USAID Strategic Objective, Interim Result, or program goal furthered by an appearance of neutrality, or state why the program, project, activity, commodity, or communication is ‘intrinsically neutral.’ Identify, by category or deliverable item, examples of program materials funded under the award for which you are seeking exception 1.

(ii) For Presumptive Exception (ii), state what data, studies, or other deliverables will be produced under the USAID funded award, and explain why the data, studies, or deliverables must be seen as credible.

(iii) For Presumptive Exception (iii), identify the item or media product produced under the USAID funded award, and explain why each item or product, or category of item and product, is better positioned as an item or product produced by the cooperating country government.

(iv) For Presumptive Exception (iv), identify the item or commodity to be marked, or categories of items or commodities, and explain how marking would impair the item’s or commodity’s functionality.

(v) For Presumptive Exception (v), explain why marking would not be cost-beneficial or practical.

(vi) For Presumptive Exception (vi), identify the relevant cultural or social norm, and explain why marking would violate that norm or otherwise be inappropriate.

(vii) For Presumptive Exception (vii), identify the applicable international law violated by marking.

(3) The Agreement Officer will review the request for adequacy and reasonableness. In consultation with the Cognizant Technical Officer and other agency personnel as necessary, the Agreement Officer will approve or disapprove the requested Presumptive Exception. Approved exceptions will be made part of the approved Marking Plan, and will apply for the term of the award, unless provided otherwise.

(e) **Award Criteria:** The Agreement Officer will review the Marking Plan for adequacy and reasonableness, ensuring that it contains sufficient detail and information concerning public communications, commodities, and program materials that will visibly bear the USAID Identity. The Agreement Officer will evaluate the plan to ensure that it is consistent with the stated objectives of the award; with the applicant’s cost data submissions; with the applicant’s actual project, activity, or program performance plan; and with the regulatory requirements of 22 C.F.R.226.91. The Agreement Officer will approve or disapprove any requested Presumptive Exceptions (see paragraph (d)) on the basis of adequacy and reasonableness. The Agreement Officer may obtain advice and recommendations from technical experts while performing the evaluation.

MARKING UNDER USAID-FUNDED ASSISTANCE INSTRUMENTS (December 2005)

(a) Definitions

Commodities mean any material, article, supply, goods or equipment, excluding recipient offices, vehicles, and non-deliverable items for recipient's internal use, in administration of the USAID funded grant, cooperative agreement, or other agreement or subagreement.

Principal Officer means the most senior officer in a USAID Operating Unit in the field, e.g., USAID Mission Director or USAID Representative. For global programs managed from Washington but executed across many countries, such as disaster relief and assistance to internally displaced persons, humanitarian emergencies or immediate post conflict and political crisis response, the cognizant Principal Officer may be an Office Director, for example, the Directors of USAID/W/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and Office of Transition Initiatives. For non-presence countries, the cognizant Principal Officer is the Senior USAID officer in a regional USAID Operating Unit responsible for the non-presence country, or in the absence of such a responsible operating unit, the Principal U.S Diplomatic Officer in the non-presence country exercising delegated authority from USAID.

Programs mean an organized set of activities and allocation of resources directed toward a common purpose, objective, or goal undertaken or proposed by an organization to carry out the responsibilities assigned to it.

Projects include all the marginal costs of inputs (including the proposed investment) technically required to produce a discrete marketable output or a desired result (for example, services from a fully functional water/sewage treatment facility).

Public communications are documents and messages intended for distribution to audiences external to the recipient's organization. They include, but are not limited to, correspondence, publications, studies, reports, audio visual productions, and other informational products; applications, forms, press and promotional materials used in connection with USAID funded programs, projects or activities, including signage and plaques; Web sites/Internet activities; and events such as training courses, conferences, seminars, press conferences and so forth.

Sub-recipient means any person or government (including cooperating country government) department, agency, establishment, or for profit or nonprofit organization that receives a USAID sub-award, as defined in 22 C.F.R. 226.2.

Technical Assistance means the provision of funds, goods, services, or other foreign assistance, such as loan guarantees or food for work, to developing countries and other USAID recipients, and through such recipients to sub-recipients, in direct support of a development objective – as opposed to the internal management of the foreign assistance program.

USAID Identity (Identity) means the official marking for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), comprised of the USAID logo or seal and new brandmark, with the tagline that clearly communicates that our assistance is “from the American people.” The USAID Identity is available on the USAID website at www.usaid.gov/branding and USAID provides it without royalty, license, or other fee to recipients of USAID-funded grants, or cooperative agreements, or other assistance awards.

(b) Marking of Program Deliverables

- (1) All recipients must mark appropriately all overseas programs, projects, activities, public communications, and commodities partially or fully funded by a USAID grant or cooperative agreement or other assistance award or subaward with the USAID Identity, of a size and prominence equivalent to or greater than the recipient’s, other donor’s, or any other third party’s identity or logo.
- (2) The Recipient will mark all program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects (for example, roads, bridges, buildings) or other programs, projects, or activities that are physical in nature (for example, agriculture, forestry, water management) with the USAID Identity. The Recipient should erect temporary signs or plaques early in the construction or implementation phase. When construction or implementation is complete, the Recipient must install a permanent, durable sign, plaque or other marking.
- (3) The Recipient will mark technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audio-visual productions, public service announcements, Web sites/Internet activities and other promotional, informational, media, or communications products funded by USAID with the USAID Identity.
- (4) The Recipient will appropriately mark events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences and other public activities, with the USAID Identity. Unless directly prohibited and as appropriate to the surroundings, recipients should display additional materials, such as signs and banners, with the USAID Identity. In circumstances in which the USAID Identity cannot be displayed visually, the recipient is encouraged otherwise to acknowledge USAID and the American people’s support.
- (5) The Recipient will mark all commodities financed by USAID, including commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs, and all other equipment, supplies, and other materials funded by USAID, and their export packaging with the USAID Identity.
- (6) The Agreement Officer may require the USAID Identity to be larger and more prominent if it is the majority donor, or to require that a cooperating country

government's identity be larger and more prominent if circumstances warrant, and as appropriate depending on the audience, program goals, and materials produced.

(7) The Agreement Officer may require marking with the USAID Identity in the event that the recipient does not choose to mark with its own identity or logo.

(8) The Agreement Officer may require a pre-production review of USAID-funded public communications and program materials for compliance with the approved Marking Plan.

(9) Sub-recipients. To ensure that the marking requirements "flow down" to sub-recipients of sub-awards, recipients of USAID funded grants and cooperative agreements or other assistance awards will include the USAID-approved marking provision in any USAID funded sub-award, as follows:

"As a condition of receipt of this sub-award, marking with the USAID Identity of size and prominence equivalent to or greater than the recipient's, sub-recipient's, other donor's or third party's is required. In the event the recipient chooses not to require marking with its own identity or logo by the sub-recipient, USAID may, at its discretion, require marking by the sub-recipient with the USAID Identity."

(10) Any 'public communications', as defined in 22 C.F.R. 226.2, funded by USAID, in which the content has not been approved by USAID, must contain the following disclaimer:

"This study/report/audio/visual/other information/media product (specify) is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of [insert recipient name] and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government."

(11) The recipient will provide the Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO) or other USAID personnel designated in the grant or cooperative agreement with two copies of all program and communications materials produced under the award. In addition, the recipient will submit one electronic or one hard copy of all final documents to USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse.

(c) Implementation of marking requirements.

(1) When the grant or cooperative agreement contains an approved Marking Plan, the recipient will implement the requirements of this provision following the approved Marking Plan.

(2) When the grant or cooperative agreement does not contain an approved Marking Plan, the recipient will propose and submit a plan for implementing the requirements of this provision within 30 days after the effective date of this provision. The plan will include:

- (i) A description of the program deliverables specified in paragraph (b) of this provision that the recipient will produce as a part of the grant or cooperative agreement and which will visibly bear the USAID Identity.

- (ii) the type of marking and what materials the applicant uses to mark the program deliverables with the USAID Identity,

- (iii) when in the performance period the applicant will mark the program deliverables, and where the applicant will place the marking,

(3) The recipient may request program deliverables not be marked with the USAID Identity by identifying the program deliverables and providing a rationale for not marking these program deliverables. Program deliverables may be exempted from USAID marking requirements when:

- (i) USAID marking requirements would compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials;

- (ii) USAID marking requirements would diminish the credibility of audits, reports, analyses, studies, or policy recommendations whose data or findings must be seen as independent;

- (iii) USAID marking requirements would undercut host-country government “ownership” of constitutions, laws, regulations, policies, studies, assessments, reports, publications, surveys or audits, public service announcements, or other communications better positioned as “by” or “from” a cooperating country ministry or government official;

- (iv) USAID marking requirements would impair the functionality of an item;

- (v) USAID marking requirements would incur substantial costs or be impractical;

- (vi) USAID marking requirements would offend local cultural or social norms, or be considered inappropriate;

- (vii) USAID marking requirements would conflict with international law.

(4) The proposed plan for implementing the requirements of this provision, including any proposed exemptions, will be negotiated within the time specified by the Agreement Officer after receipt of the proposed plan. Failure to negotiate an approved

plan with the time specified by the Agreement Officer may be considered as noncompliance with the requirements is provision.

(d) Waivers.

- (1) The recipient may request a waiver of the Marking Plan or of the marking requirements of this provision, in whole or in part, for each program, project, activity, public communication or commodity, or, in exceptional circumstances, for a region or country, when USAID required marking would pose compelling political, safety, or security concerns, or when marking would have an adverse impact in the cooperating country. The recipient will submit the request through the Cognizant Technical Officer. The Principal Officer is responsible for approvals or disapprovals of waiver requests.
- (2) The request will describe the compelling political, safety, security concerns, or adverse impact that require a waiver, detail the circumstances and rationale for the waiver, detail the specific requirements to be waived, the specific portion of the Marking Plan to be waived, or specific marking to be waived, and include a description of how program materials will be marked (if at all) if the USAID Identity is removed. The request should also provide a rationale for any use of recipient's own identity/logo or that of a third party on materials that will be subject to the waiver.
- (3) Approved waivers are not limited in duration but are subject to Principal Officer review at any time, due to changed circumstances.
- (4) Approved waivers "flow down" to recipients of sub-awards unless specified otherwise. The waiver may also include the removal of USAID markings already affixed, if circumstances warrant.
- (5) Determinations regarding waiver requests are subject to appeal to the Principal Officer's cognizant Assistant Administrator. The recipient may appeal by submitting a written request to reconsider the Principal Officer's waiver determination to the cognizant Assistant Administrator.

(e) Non-retroactivity. The requirements of this provision do apply to any materials, events, or commodities produced prior to January 2, 2006. The requirements of this provision do not apply to program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects (for example, roads, bridges, buildings) or other programs, projects, or activities that are physical in nature (for example, agriculture, forestry, water management) where the construction and implementation of these are complete prior to January 2, 2006 and the period of the grant does not extend past January 2, 2006.

SECTION VII – AGENCY CONTACTS

Any prospective applicant desiring an explanation or interpretation of this RFA must request it in writing by the deadline for questions specified in the cover letter to allow a reply to reach all prospective applicants before the submission of their applications. Oral explanations or instructions given before award of a Cooperative Agreement shall not be binding. Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this RFA will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment of this RFA, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicants.

Any questions or comments concerning this RFA must be submitted in writing by email to Ms. Arwa Ghanma at aghanma@usaid.gov by the deadline for questions indicated at the top of this RFA's cover letter.