



**USAID**  
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## REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)

**Number:** USAID/Egypt 268-10-021  
**Title:** Developing Rehabilitation Assistance to Schools and Teacher Improvement (D-RASATI)

**Issuance Date:** April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
**Application Submission Date:** June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 2:00 pm Cairo Local Time

**Deadline for Questions:** May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 2:00 pm Cairo Local Time

Dear Sir/Madam:

On behalf of USAID/Lebanon, the Regional Procurement Office of USAID/Egypt is seeking Assistance Applications from US non-governmental entities to implement the program description explained below.

The federal grant process is now web-enabled. This funding opportunity is posted on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and may be amended. As the Request for Application (RFA) may be amended, potential applicants should regularly check the site to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this RFA.

Only **electronic** applications will be considered received. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes associated with electronic submissions.

To be eligible for award, the applicant must provide all required information in its application, including the requirements found in any attachments to this Grants.gov opportunity.

This RFA consists of this cover letter plus the following Sections:

- Section I - Funding Opportunity Description
- Section II - Award information
- Section III - Eligibility Information
- Section IV - Application and Submission Information
- Section V - Application Review Information
- Section VI - Award and Administration Information
- Section VII - Agency Contacts
- Section VIII - Other Information

Each section is provided as an attachment except for the two which are provided below:

**SECTION VII. AGENCY CONTACTS:** Please send all questions or comments concerning this funding opportunity to the following e-mail address: [drasati@usaid.gov](mailto:drasati@usaid.gov).

**SECTION VIII. OTHER INFORMATION:** USAID retains the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. Eligible organizations interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this RFA thoroughly to understand the type of program sought and the application submission and evaluation process.

Sincerely,

Harvey Eichenfield  
Agreement Officer

## SECTION I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

### **Authorizing Legislation:**

This is a discretionary Cooperative Agreement opportunity to be competed and awarded pursuant to the authority of the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act, as amended, and the applicable sections of USAID regulation 22CFR226.

### **Program Eligibility Requirements:**

Type of entities which may apply is described in Section III.

### **How the Award will be Administered:**

For US organizations, USAID Regulation 22 CFR 226, OMB Circulars, and USAID Standard Provisions for U.S. Nongovernmental Recipients will be applicable. Further information including the referenced documents may be obtained via our agency website [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov) directly or via links in USAID Automated Directive System (ADS) Chapter 303: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>. Copies may also be obtained from the listed agency points of contact for this RFA.

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

The following program description indicates the range of activities that might be involved and the goals of this activity which the successful applicant will be expected to meet.

## USAID/Lebanon

### D-RASATI Program

### Developing Rehabilitation Assistance to Schools and Teacher Improvement

#### Section A: Purpose

On behalf of USAID/Lebanon, the Regional Procurement Office of USAID/Egypt in Lebanon is issuing this request for applications to implement education activities that support USAID/Lebanon Assistance Objective Investing in People, which is to Improve Student Achievement. The Developing Rehabilitation Assistance to Schools And Teacher Improvement (D-RASATI) program aims to improve student achievement by improving the quality of teachers' performance through in-service training, upgrading the educational environments at all 1,400 Lebanese public schools based on standards agreed upon in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and increasing stakeholder engagement in school activities. USAID anticipates awarding one (1) five (5)-year Cooperative Agreement for the total estimated amount of approximately \$75 million, subject to the availability of funds. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) will facilitate project implementation.

The Recipient will provide technical assistance and capacity building in six core program components:

1. Assessment
2. School Learning Environments Improved
3. Increased Learning Opportunities
4. Stakeholder Engagement Increased in Public Schools
5. High Quality Monitoring and Evaluation Achieved

## Section B: Background

### Context for USAID Assistance

The Strategic Framework for U.S. Foreign Assistance concentrates U.S. foreign assistance on five priority objectives to meet the goal of “Helping to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their people and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system.” USAID/Lebanon Country Strategy (2009 – 2013) will pursue four specific objectives: strengthening governing institutions and civil society organizations to be more responsive to Lebanese citizens; job creation and income generation; improving student achievement through synergistic basic and higher education programs; and improved water management and infrastructure development. Cross-cutting through all these programs will be a focus on youth and reconciliation throughout Lebanese society.

The Developing Rehabilitation Assistance to Schools and Teacher Improvement (D-RASATI) program supports USAID Strategic Framework Investing in People Objective (IIP). In response to the need to expand and improve education services, the Government of Lebanon and USAID have jointly agreed to emphasize on education program to improve public school learning environments and which contributes to the goal of improved and expanded basic education. The project will address the below IIP Program Area and Program Element:

#### *Program Area 3.2: Education*

Definition: Promote effective, accountable, and sustainable formal and non-formal education systems.

#### *Program Element 3.2.1: Basic Education*

Definition: Improve early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education, delivered in formal or non-formal settings. It includes literacy, numeracy, and other basic skills programs for youth and adults.

### Lebanon Overview

Lebanon is a middle income country with an annual per capita gross domestic product of \$9,757. With a life expectancy of 71.7 years and a school enrollment rate of 76.8 %, Lebanon’s social indicators place it squarely in the middle of the United Nations’ Human Development Index, ranking it 78<sup>th</sup> out of 179 countries. All of Lebanon’s four million residents have access to potable water and improved sanitation facilities, but water supply is often unreliable. The economy grew at an estimated 8% in 2008, but poverty remains a serious problem in Lebanon, with roughly a quarter of the population living in depressed conditions, particularly in the regions of Hermel, Baalbeck to the east and Akkar in the north. Faced with an unemployment rate estimated at 9.2% in 2007, many educated and skilled young people emigrate to seek work abroad. That said, the recent world-wide economic downturn has led to a shift in that trend, with anecdotal evidence indicating that some Lebanese are returning to find employment in Lebanon. This influx of returned workers could precipitate higher levels of unemployment throughout the country. Government debt is over 160 % of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the third highest figure in the world. This debt hampers the GOL’s ability to provide social services and create economic opportunities for all its citizens.

### Education Context in Lebanon: Background and Challenges

The Lebanese Educational System (LES) is among the best in Arab Countries, although it faces some problems not consistent with its high overall ranking. For example Lebanese performance on TIMMS 2003 places it as the highest participating Arab nation in TIMMS that year in math but the lowest in science. Although it has a high, almost universal, primary enrollment rate (97%), it has very low internal efficiency reflected in high drop-out rates

especially in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades; high repetition and delay/retardation rates; and very modest primary completion rates especially among boys (low transition rates to the middle prep stage).

The system is roughly 50% private with a private education subsector that spans a wide range in terms of quality and cost. This results in increased gaps between those who can afford a private education and those who cannot. These gaps are manifested in gaps in the graduates' employment potentials for more productive and profitable jobs in favor of the more economically advanced part of the population.

Lebanon has faced many disruptions to its peace and stability over the past decades. This has resulted in the deterioration of the physical quality of many schools. Completing repairs, renovations, and refurbishments of these schools remains a necessary requirement to create the needed physical learning environments that allow the desired education to take place. A healthy and safe school environment and modern student-centered instructional methods can positively impact student achievement.

The LES relies heavily on examinations, and teaches towards two national level exams at the end of grades 9 and 12, with related problems of relying on rote learning instead of teaching and testing more critical thinking and problem solving approaches. Further, the LES uses English and French to teach Math and Science to increasing degrees especially in the intermediate and secondary stages. There is a big shortage of qualified English, and to a smaller extent French language teachers and of those who can teach in these languages. This is becoming a serious constraint on teaching these main subjects. To improve acquisition and retention of student achievement and learning outcomes the system needs to rely more on cumulative student assessment and evaluation and to diversify the basis for such assessment to cover and assess learning outcomes of other learning activities beside testing and exams.

The major challenge facing the LES is improving achievement of Lebanese students and preparing them for lives of productive employment, participating in the global economy, active civic engagement, community participation and positive contribution to their country's welfare socially and economically. The challenge of improving student achievements for Lebanese students requires : (i) reducing the gap in quality between the public and private systems; (ii) ensuring uniformity of high quality in both the private and public systems through setting reasonable standards and monitoring adherence by schools and teachers; (iii) improving pre- and in-service teacher and administrator training; (iv) ensuring sufficient attention is devoted to teaching the parts of the curriculum that prepares students for active civic engagement in the lives of their communities and country; (v) preparing students for productive employment and participation in the local and global economies by transitioning to more student-centered, active learning, critical thinking, and program solving pedagogies through improved pre- and in-service teacher training and instructional environments and materials; and (vi) enhancing the participation of communities in governing and supporting the school.

### **Section C: USAID, the Government of Lebanon and other Stakeholders' Priorities in Education**

Prior to the summer 2006 conflict in Lebanon, USAID did not support basic education programs. USAID education program in Lebanon has primarily provided support for disadvantaged students to attend American Educational Institutions (AEIs), including the American University of Beirut, the Lebanese American University, the International College, and the American Community School. Scholarship assistance has been provided for 200 secondary school students and 3,000 university students in an effort to expand and improve access to quality education.

After the conflict, USAID began to support rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in the education sector. These efforts were carried out with the Lebanon Education Assistance for Development (LEAD) program. LEAD benefitted all of Lebanon's governorates as follows: Beqaa, Mount Lebanon, Beirut, North Lebanon, South

Lebanon and Nabatiyeh. To date, the LEAD program has provided assistance as follows: 137 schools rehabilitated; 200 schools provided with school equipment, 100 science and computer laboratories installed; 332 school clubs have been trained and activated.

The LEAD program components included the following:

- 1) **School Rehabilitation:** Provision of rehabilitation work to targeted schools, including but not limited to: painting classrooms, hallways and staircases; tiling; renovation of bathrooms and potable water faucets; water-proofing; replacement of damaged windows and doors; and fixing and improving playgrounds. Rehabilitation work was based on the MEHE needs survey.
- 2) **Provision of Science Labs:** Provision of school science laboratories (Biology, Chemistry and Physics), and related science equipment as per the technical standards set by MEHE.
- 3) **Provision of Computer Labs:** Provision of computer laboratories and related equipment (including but not limited to routers, printers, scanners, Internet connection) as per the technical standards set by MEHE.
- 4) **After-School Activities and Awareness Sessions:** Support the MEHE in the systemization of their after-school activities program by building the capacity of school staff to, in particular headmasters, to run after-school programs.
- 5) **Program Assessment:** As part of a cost extension to LEAD, a program assessment was conducted to determine the cost benefits, means to ensure the impact of USAID assistance on student achievement in the classroom, MEHE's sustainability efforts needed, lessons learned, analysis of the activities that work and those that did not work. (**Annex 1 – the Assessments**)

The LEAD program is considered to be successful, not only for the results it obtained but for building a collaborative partnership with the MEHE in the area of educational development. As the first education program that USAID funded, LEAD established a good foundation for future assistance efforts that support Lebanon's education reform.

The LEAD program is scheduled to end in September 2010. A FACT sheet on LEAD is also attached as **Annex 2** to this document.

The MEHE education reform efforts include the following five priorities: Education available on the basis of equal opportunity; Quality education that contributes to building a knowledge society; Education that contributes to social integration; Education that contributes to economic development; and Governance of education. The National Education Strategy is based on the fundamental principles cherished in the Lebanese Constitution and the National Accord Convention as well as on the laws and regulations governing educational matters which emphasize freedom of and right to education and ensuring the accessibility and equality in opportunities and requirements of education to all. Those principles have also been emphasized in international convention that Lebanon abides by; the most of these are: Declaration of Human rights; the International Convention of economic, social, and cultural rights; and the International Agreement on the Rights of the Child.

Current MEHE education reform efforts are focusing on the following: prevention of drops outs; capacity building for all teachers and staff; pre-school education; mobilizing school life (including extra-curricular activities); assessment of education and curriculum development; national qualification and competency; citizenship education; Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for education; support for an automation system to manage all schools; institutional development: administrative follow up of all schools, performance-based budgeting; and monitoring and evaluation.

Linked to the MEHE is the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) which oversees teacher training and development, curriculum development, publishing of academic books, and control of testing material

to make sure it is relevant to the curriculum with more realistic outcomes to measure the quality of learning the student has achieved.

Outside of the USG, other donors in the education sector include the World Bank, UNICEF, GTZ, and the Islamic Development Bank. The World Bank is the primary donor for education in Lebanon. Its projects include enhancing the MEHE management capacity and restoring credibility of the public education which was greatly diminished during 17 years of civil war. To this end, the World Bank funds primary education programs that focus on access, teacher training, and improved management systems. UNICEF's education program contributes to national efforts to provide access for all to a quality basic education, including for the poorest, and to improve retention. UNICEF also has a program that works with at-risk youth aged 14 to 18 to provide skills and knowledge for their future. Areas of assistance that need collaboration among USAID and other donors include teacher training, school rehabilitation and provision of equipment.

It will be imperative for the Recipient to work collaboratively with the relevant organizations to ensure program complementarities rather than duplicate efforts. All of these programs contribute to an enabling environment and illustrates the commitment and buy-in at different levels to improving school environments and student learning experiences. Cooperation and coordination with the above mentioned donors and other stakeholders need to be established and maintained in all phases and at all levels of the project to avoid overlap and ensure proper planning, implementation and monitoring of activities.

## **Section D: Activity Description**

### Objective:

The primary objective for USAID/Lebanon's D-RASATI program is to increase educational outcomes in all Lebanese public schools by improving learning environments and enhancing community involvement thus promoting positive perceptions of public schools among all stakeholders. Improving learning environments will be accomplished through a) improving in-service teacher training opportunities, b) standardizing the learning environment for all of Lebanon's 1,400 public schools based on standards agreed upon in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), and c) increasing community engagement in school activities, including, but not limited to, working with schools to support extra-curricular activities for students.

There are three primary objectives linked to the program:

- Objective 1- Improve Teacher and Student Performance: Build the capacity of the MEHE to deliver quality in-service teacher training to promote quality improvements within the schools and increase student engagement in school activities both of which strengthen the learning experiences and outcomes and build awareness for the importance of school-community relationships.
- Objective 3- Increase stakeholder involvement in public schools to support the above two objectives thereby improving attitudes toward and support for public school education. Active teacher, administrator, student and other local stakeholder participation will be improved in all activities.

The rationale for the D-RASATI project was based on the public education sector in Lebanon continuing to face serious challenges and educational gaps compared with its private sector counterpart. Numerous schools offer poor quality education. Teachers at these schools often are not properly trained in effective teaching methods.

Additional limitations include physical environments that lack modern equipment, as well as dilapidated or ill-maintained school buildings and classrooms. Finally, parent and community members are not actively engaged in school activities. These elements all greatly affect the students' learning opportunities.

The long-term goal for the D-RASATI program is to increase the capacity of MEHE and CERD to deliver quality in-service teacher training, improve school learning environments, and develop community involvement in schools while promoting positive perceptions of public schools among all stakeholders. The MEHE has strongly affirmed that the D-RASATI program will address a real and critical need of the Ministry and of the public schools. The MEHE has confirmed that there has been limited donor engagement --in the past or currently--focusing on these issues and supports all proposed activities linked to the D-RASATI project.

The D-RASATI project will contribute to USAID/Lebanon education Assistance Objective of *Student Achievement Improved*. Implementation activities will be conducted at the community, regional and national levels. Innovative approaches proposed by the Recipient will be supported by a robust monitoring and evaluation plan that includes results-oriented indicators which measure program performance and impact. These activity indicators must include relevant indicators from USAID Foreign Assistance Framework linked to the Basic Education program element; USAID/Lebanon's indicators as outlined in the Mission's Performance Management Plan (PMP) (provided in **Annex 3**); and custom output and impact indicators that will highlight program results. Custom indicators will be necessary for program management and learning as well.

The program targets three main beneficiary groups:

1. Students enrolled in public schools (including kindergarten, primary, intermediate and secondary grades) are the most important beneficiaries. They will benefit from all aspects of this program, including an improved learning environment as a result of enhanced school facilities, laboratories and adequate equipment, better skilled teachers, and extra-curricular activities in intermediate and secondary schools, in particular those in marginalized areas.
2. School leaders, including teachers, principals and local-level administrators will benefit from the training and will contribute to an improved learning environment with more skills for teaching and managing classrooms and the schools.
3. Local stakeholders will benefit from increased engagement with the school community and they will begin to see the benefits of their involvement in school-related activities. Further, improving the quality and relevance of education will lead to graduates who are better able to contribute to their community's civic and labor demands.

### General Program Parameters

The following guidance and parameters will be applied to the activities to be implemented under this program.

**1) Support MEHE Role:** Collaboration with the MEHE, including the CERD and many central and local directorates will be critical to the success of the overall D-RASATI Project. The Recipient will be providing technical assistance to the MEHE in all program activity areas. All program activities shall be carried out, to the extent possible, by GOL staff with guidance from the Recipient. For example, since a primary objective of D-RASATI will be to build the capacity of CERD (and the MEHE) to deliver quality, in-service teacher training programs, to this regard, it is more important for the Recipient to recognize that they will not be delivering the teacher training themselves, rather the objective is to support, guide and provide technical guidance for CERD to carry out these efforts.

**2) Collaborate with Donors:** Any technical assistance or MEHE or CERD capacity-building activities will be coordinated with other donors in order to maximize total donor support to the MEHE and CERD while ensuring complementary, non-duplicative programs among donors.

**3) Adhere to the Programmatic Priorities for Basic Education:** USAID policy provides general guidance for establishing programmatic priorities for basic education projects. The basic education definition is as follows:

*USAID defines basic education broadly, to include all program and policy efforts aimed at improving pre-primary education, primary education, secondary education (delivered in formal or non-formal settings), and in programs promoting learning for out-of-school youth and adults. Capacity building for teachers, administrators, counselors, and youth workers is included. Basic education includes literacy, numeracy, and other basic skills development for learners. The common thread among these elements is that they help learners gain the general skills and basic knowledge needed to function effectively in all aspects of life.*

As a guiding principle, to the extent possible, the intent of Congress and USAID is that basic education funds should be used for programs that can help countries achieve significant results in advancing their national education goals. In other words, basic education funds should not generally be used for programs that do not have advancement of basic education objectives as the primary, overarching objective.

**4) Baseline Survey and Impact Assessment Required:** The D-RASATI program will provide high quality monitoring and evaluation. After the template for surveying public school environment needs is approved by the MEHE and USAID, the D-RASATI project will assist the MEHE to obtain comprehensive data on their schools, which will be designed to include education quality statistics as well as standard statistics such as enrollment, attendance, and physical aspects of the school. This will be the foundation data for the MEHE, schools, and the D-RASATI program to make decisions.

The Recipient will provide USAID/Lebanon with data and information and findings about where and what kind of first interventions are needed to meet the minimal standards for schools. This data will be used to make recommendations to the MEHE and to track program progress across the life of the project. This initial assessment will remain a living document throughout the life of the project, and will be reviewed and updated by the Recipient on a regular basis in consultation with the MEHE and other donors, in order to always have the most updated information on other donor assistance to schools that might emerge.

An external mid-term evaluation will be required and should be factored into the program budget. The final evaluation will document how well the project activities impacted student learning outcomes and perceptions about the quality of public school education in Lebanon.

**5) Design and Build Program:** The D-RASATI project implementer will need to carry out an initial assessment and then with approvals from the MEHE and USAID will set forth to carry out project activities in the areas of building capacity for in-service teacher training, implementing school infrastructural rehabilitation, including building and equipment renovations and repairs, furniture, and computer and science laboratories, and supporting community mobilization and extra-curricular activities. The areas of activities must be designed to demonstrate the extent to which their collective efforts improve the learning environment and perceptions of the quality of the public school system in Lebanon. The D-RASATI program will require tailored activities for individual schools based on needs assessments, but they also must bring together the areas of intervention to demonstrate the collective outcomes of such a program. The Recipient will have flexibility to propose the appropriate design based on initial assessments and discussions with stakeholders, but program design must include a strong monitoring and evaluation system to be able to track and report results.

The Recipient will also determine what percentage of the overall budget will be needed for each area of activity. It is important to ensure that enough funds for the area of building the capacity of the MEHE/CERD to carry out in-service teacher training, as it is the most important one for contributing to improved learning outcomes.

D-RASATI Program Components:

**Component 1: Assessment**

A coordinated and collaborative process for project start up is needed to and will be necessary to carry out the preliminary assessment. This assessment will be used to determine the overall project interventions in three areas: capacity building for providing in-service teacher training; school infrastructure, including renovation, furniture, and laboratory needs; and community mobilization and extracurricular needs, especially for marginalized schools. The D-RASATI team shall initiate methods for determining high impact, priority areas of need within the MEHE and CERD to improve in-service teacher training, as well as for extra-curricular and infrastructural rehabilitation and resource needs, which will vary according to school. The Recipient will conduct a comprehensive assessment of all Lebanese public schools to understand their teacher training needs, current physical status and identify and prioritize their most immediate needs.

The D-RASATI program should consider ways to foster coordination, communication, and collaboration to promote transparency of the project activities, anticipated timelines and expected results as part of the assessment. The assessment can be used as the foundation for a baseline survey and data collection efforts at CERD and the school level that assist MEHE and local stakeholder decision-making about future interventions. The Recipient will need to carry out data collection efforts in all Lebanese public schools (kindergarten, primary, intermediate and secondary) to be able to determine priority schools and areas of intervention. This process and the assessment results and analysis will set the stage for the D-RASATI project and will be the bases for the work plan and performance monitoring plan. Adopting USAID-developed or simple data collection tools that can be shared with the MEHE is encouraged. Ideally, this initial phase of assessment and mapping out of project interventions can be carried out within the first three months of project implementation and will identify priority school-based improvement activities which will be the benchmark against which all schools will be measured and from which a menu of improved options will be organized in order to ensure that all schools meet certain minimum standards for infrastructure and teacher quality, as well as stakeholder involvement given the parameters of this program.

Subcomponent 1.1: Identify and Prioritize Technical Needs to Improve the Delivery of Quality Teacher Training for Lebanese Public Schools

At the national level, an assessment will be done in partnership with the MEHE and CERD to determine areas of need for improving the quality of in-service teacher training programs and to present areas of activity to support. The assessment will examine the status of in-service teacher training, whether there are standards, what these standards are, who currently provides the in-service teacher training, the duration of the training, when this training is provided, the grade level teachers who receive training, the content of the training and other related issues.

Building the capacity for CERD to deliver their support services to the public schools is a priority of this project and the assessment will help to identify and focus where support can have a lasting effect and contribute to efforts to improve the quality of in-service teacher training as it exists in Lebanon today. Given that there is limited formal in-service training for teachers in Lebanon currently, there will likely be a range of needs expressed. The Recipient is encouraged to narrow down options, but the collection and analysis of this information will be shared with the MEHE and CERD to reach a consensus about focus areas for capacity building training and activities. Participatory stakeholder discussions will be carried out to ultimately decide what the focus area will be for this

capacity building effort. The Recipient will also examine international success and various models for delivering support to teachers in the classroom to draw from successful experiences.

Desired Result for Subcomponent 1.1:

- Capacity building needs identified and prioritized for delivering quality in-service teacher training programs

Illustrative Activities for Subcomponent 1.1:

- Carrying out a literature review to identify successful models for in-service teacher training
- Analyzing secondary data supplied by MEHE
- Assessing CERD practices and performance to better understand strengths and weaknesses
- Assessing support and management relationship between the MEHE and CERD
- Analyzing in-service teacher training needs
- Developing and sharing preliminary report developed and shared including recommendations for areas of focus
- Identifying areas for intervention and discussing them collaboratively with the MEHE, CERD, and USAID
- Developing a work plan for focus areas of activity to support MEHE and CERD capacity to deliver quality teacher training services

#### Subcomponent 1.2: Identify and Prioritize Rehabilitation and Academic Resource Needs in all 1,400 Lebanese Public Schools

As part of the initial assessment phase, the Recipient will also determine the areas and priorities for rehabilitation and academic resource needs in all 1400 public schools. The infrastructural and resource needs will be based on the MEHE established standards and use tools that facilitate data collection and analysis. Infrastructural rehabilitation works include but are not limited to painting classrooms, hallways and staircases; tiling; renovation of bathrooms and installing potable water faucets; water-proofing; replacing damaged windows and doors; and fixing and improving playgrounds and fences for all public schools in Lebanon, including kindergarten, primary, intermediate and secondary public schools.

USAID, the Recipient, and the MEHE will work in partnership to determine the best strategy for equitably providing schools with rehabilitation services, including deciding how to work with the schools that have already received USAID-assistance through the LEAD program. USAID and MEHE official approval must be secured prior to beginning implementation. The Recipient will also provide a plan for working with community members and school-based groups as partners in the infrastructural rehabilitation works to the extent possible.

Second, the Recipient will determine, in collaboration with the MEHE and USAID, which schools will need computer and/or science laboratories, including building classrooms or improving plumbing and/or electricity for these spaces. Laboratories may need either partial or full support to improve them depending on the school.

Furthermore, in schools where student achievement is low, the preliminary assessment can be used to identify extra-curricular offerings for intermediate and secondary students that provide additional academic and skill development support to enhance school success among low-performing students. Extra-curricular activities may include, but are not limited to, tutoring, peer mentoring, learning clubs, language clubs, leadership and other skill development activities.

Desired Result for Subcomponent 1.2:

- Capacity building needs identified and prioritized for delivering quality in-service teacher training programs
- School-based infrastructure and academic and extracurricular resource needs identified and prioritized

Illustrative Activities for Subcomponent 1.2:

- Establishing agreed upon school environment standards and a menu of rehabilitation and resource needs available
- Designing a general needs assessment based upon criteria agreed upon by USAID and carried out within the first 3 months of the project implementation
- Establishing a data system for baseline and project monitoring
- Assessing all 1400 Lebanese public schools for rehabilitation needs
- Determining criteria for which primary, intermediate and secondary schools receive infrastructural improvements and/or computer and/or science laboratories
- Determining criteria for which intermediate and secondary schools receive more support for extra-curricular activities are established with MEHE and USAID
- Identifying schools in need of extra-curricular activities
- Selecting types of extra-curricular activities to be developed

Subcomponent 1.3: Present Findings, Analysis, and a Master Plan

The initial assessment in its two areas of study (MEHE and CERD capacity needs and learning environment infrastructural improvements and extra-curricular needs) will be used to create a Master Plan for the D-RASATI project. The Master Plan will be presented to USAID and the MEHE for approval. It will include lists of activities that will be carried out in partnership with the MEHE and CERD to build their capacity to provide quality in-service teacher training (or other needs as identified and agreed upon from the assessment and discussions); a comprehensive overview of infrastructural rehabilitation and resources and/or supplies that will be provided to each school; lists of schools where computer and/or science laboratories will be supported; and lists of student-focused extra-curricular activities that will be provided for which schools. Each school shall be able to be referenced to see what interventions they are participating in, ideally in an easily accessible data system. Baseline survey and results will be presented to the MEHE, CERD and USAID in a user-friendly data system that references all schools, their existing resources and their needs. The Master Plan should also include a list of international donors and national and local partners, public and private, assisting in the overall improvement of the schools and their areas of assistance.

Desired Result for Subcomponent 1.3:

- Master Plan for program implementation approved

Illustrative Activities for Subcomponent 1.3:

- Developing a comprehensive Master Plan that identifies areas for MEHE and CERD capacity building as well as all the school-based rehabilitation, laboratories, and extra-curricular activities organized by region, level, and school to be carried out
- Master Plan approved by MEHE, CERD and USAID
- Training a cohort of not less than 4 MEHE staff in data entry, analysis and presentation techniques for use in the future
- Distributing maps to each school and explaining to communities the logic behind decisions (helpful for transparency) that have been taken regarding infrastructural improvements and training plans

Indicator for Component 1:

- Completed assessment submitted to USAID.

## **Component 2: School Learning Environments Improved**

After the schools' infrastructural rehabilitation and science and computer laboratory recommendations have been approved in the Master Plan, activities in this area shall begin. The Recipient will present a work plan that demonstrates phases for carrying out these activities. It is essential that the infrastructural rehabilitation work and laboratories proposed are integrated with current MEHE standards and systems in this area, and are linked to areas where there is the highest potential for improving learning environments and greatest demonstrated need. These infrastructural improvements shall begin as quickly as possible, even before the capacity building for improved in-service teacher training efforts are finalized, and shall be completed within the first three years of project implementation to ensure that there is ample time for teacher and school leader training with new equipment, time to measure and monitor results for at least one year and to document student learning outcomes.

### Sub-component 2.1: Lebanese Schools Meet MEHE-Established Standards

The Recipient will follow the approved Master Plan and implement infrastructural rehabilitation and resources work in partnership with local organizations (public and private), schools and local stakeholders. Actual rehabilitation work shall be sub-contracted out to Lebanese partners and will conform to MEHE standards for schools. Although the infrastructure improvements are relatively easy to accomplish, there will always be the challenge of maintaining those improvements and ensuring enough ownership on the part of the school and community. Keeping this challenge in mind, the infrastructure improvements will be integrated into ongoing MEHE systems and carried out in a way that would ensure participation, skill-building and direct engagement of the main local stakeholders involved--school staff, students and community members.

Desired Results for Subcomponent 2.1:

- School rehabilitation work meets MEHE standards
- School rehabilitation work is integrated into MEHE system in this area

Illustrative Activities for Subcomponent 2.1:

- Increasing local partners capacity to support school infrastructure improvements
- Integrating renovations that comply with national standards into MEHE systems
- Completing all renovation and/or infrastructure work within the first three years of program implementation
- Forming project oversight bodies at participating school to support rehabilitation work
- Leveraging in-kind or financial contributions from local stakeholders toward infrastructure improvements
- Linking rehabilitation action plans to maintaining school environment improvements developed by local stakeholders

### Sub-component 2.2: Provision of Equipment, School Furniture, Including But Not Limited to Computer and Science Laboratories in Schools

The Recipient will foresee a consolidated process to procure, deliver and install furniture, and complete technology and science lab packages based on the technical specifications set by the MEHE. Computer technology plays a vital role in helping students meet higher order learning objectives (critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, etc.) that

are essential to the education system in Lebanon's economy if it is to flourish. Science labs (physics, chemistry and biology) help students to practically apply what they often learn in theory. Practical learning will greatly enhance the students' ability to understand the scientific subjects. The Recipient will work with teachers and CERD staff to develop new modules and lessons that support the practical application of computer and science lessons. Project-based learning (whether it is part of research, internet lessons, or extracurricular activities) will begin to be integrated into the school curriculum. Teachers will be trained in how to integrate computer and science labs into their lessons and how to use these new materials most effectively. The MEHE has agreed to work toward reducing teacher movement so that training does not leave with the teacher.

Desired Results for Subcomponent 2.2:

- School resources and laboratories installed and meet MEHE standards
- Resources and laboratories integrated into classroom learning objectives

Illustrative Activities for Subcomponent 2.2:

- Installing computer and science laboratories into schools that comply with national standards and are integrated into MEHE systems
- Building teacher capacity to use the new computer and science equipment as a part of their classroom lessons

Indicators for Component 2:

- Number of schools that receive USAID assistance
- Number of schools rehabilitated with USAID assistance
- Number of educational institutions receiving teaching equipment and material with USAID assistance

### **Component 3: Increased Learning Opportunities**

While physical improvements to the school environment are undertaken, efforts to address improving the quality of the education provided in the school are needed. In the D-RASATI project, there will be two areas of focus in this area: increasing MEHE and CERD capacity to develop teacher skills through in-service training; and increasing extra-curricular activities for intermediate and secondary school, particularly for at-risk or marginalized schools. Discussions with the MEHE and other donors and stakeholders have pointed to a need for developing and supporting in-serving teacher training efforts. There are approximately 40 teacher training centers in Lebanon and these centers, run by CERD, provide in-service teacher training for public schools. It is now a national requirement that every public school teacher in Lebanon needs to undertake one training per year, either in their content area or in methodology. This project will coordinate with CERD and the MEHE to ensure that there are opportunities for teachers to fulfill this requirement.

Extra-curricular activities is an area of interest at the national level, however the cost of them and legal considerations linked to their implementation hamper the implementation of such programs. Additionally, the MEHE faces challenges in providing extra support to those students in schools who are the most marginalized. The D-RASATI project will aim to expand existing activities in this area, as well as to work toward ensuring these kinds of activities for those students who need them the most.

#### **Sub-component 3.1: MEHE/CERD Capacity to Provide Quality In-Service Teacher Training Improved**

Based on the assessment discussed in Subcomponent 1.1, the Recipient will work closely with the CERD and other providers of in-service training to build their capacity to deliver in-service teacher training for the public school system. In-service training will include both working in collaboration with CERD on the development of existing teacher training modules and the development of new teacher training methodologies where there is a need for

improvement; and it will also include working at the school level targeting teachers, and local administrators for training programs. The Recipient will aim to strengthen these training experiences. Illustrative training objectives include, but are not limited to, the following: to increase teachers' abilities to use effective teaching methods; to better integrate technology in their classrooms by increasing computer literacy skills; and to increase teacher capacity to teach English-based subjects: math and science. Also, training school leadership and administrators will help lead and sustain change in the schools. By working both with the central teacher training agency, linked to the MEHE, and directly with certain types of in-service teacher training programs, both policy and practical level activities will be needed.

Capacity building for in-service teacher training activities shall link to the extent possible to other complementary interventions within or outside of this program. For example, software to learn English language can be provided as part of the package for computer laboratories, or where possible, links can be made to State Department's ACCESS and YES programs for supporting English language instruction or technical English for teaching science and math. Distance and semi-interactive learning on computers may be established to earn certificates.

Desired Results for Subcomponent 3.1:

- Quality and relevance of in-service teacher training programs are improved

Illustrative Activities for Subcomponent 3.1:

- Training MEHE and CERD staff in areas to improve the quality of the in-service teacher training program
- Supporting innovations that improve the delivery of in-service teacher training
- Improving communication systems within the MEHE on in-service teacher training efforts

#### Sub-component 3.2: Extra-Curricular Activities Expanded at Intermediate and Secondary Schools

There is field level support for extracurricular activities, and increasing demand for them. As the MEHE works through education reforms that support extra-curricular activities in schools, the Recipient will continue to support innovative ideas for how to continue to help school principals and staff to implement extra-curricular activities, including in schools where students are at-risk for dropping out or have high repetition rates. The Recipient will also assist the MEHE in their efforts to systematize after-school programs so that they are sustainable at the school level. Illustrative extra-curricular activities include but are not limited to basic literacy and numeracy skills; practice-based projects related to subjects taught; student clubs that support workforce readiness and leadership skills; and awareness raising activities on various pertinent community issues. Encouraging existing clubs and activities to expand into underserved schools as well as building school-career links that make education more relevant to labor market demands shall be carried out. Leveraging the support of the local community, including but not limited to Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) – local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private businesses that can offer internships, municipalities that have goals in common with the project – will help sustain a school's efforts to develop its own resources and become the center of the community.

Desired Results for Subcomponent 3.2:

- The capacity to support extra-curricular activities among all relevant stakeholders is improved

Illustrative Activities for Subcomponent 3.2:

- Increase the awareness among relevant stakeholders of the potential learning improvements gained from extra-curricular activities
- Mentoring school leadership in how to support extra-curricular activities
- Increasing student participation in extra-curricular activities
- Leveraging community support for extra-curricular activities

Indicators for Component 3:

- Percentage of USAID-supported schools that have key personnel that received professional development training
- Number of teachers/educators trained with USAID assistance (F)
- Number of administrators trained with USAID assistance (F)
- Number of in-service training institutions receiving USAID assistance to improve the quality of their training

#### **Component 4: Stakeholder Engagement Increased in Public Schools**

The Recipient will seek opportunities to bring more local stakeholders to contribute to a school's and community's efforts to improve the quality of education. Research indicates that improved school-community relations and increased engagement can lead to improved learning outcomes in the classroom. The Recipient will raise awareness to help communities to play a more active role in enhancing school capability and accountability.

##### Sub-Component 4.1: Increased Local Stakeholder Engagement in Schools

Given the perception in Lebanon that public schools do not offer as high quality an education as private schools, this area of activity will begin to build an awareness and support for local stakeholder engagement in school-community activities that will build confidence in public schools as well as efforts to improve their quality. .

Desired Results for Subcomponent 4.1:

- Increased confidence in the quality and services provided by public schools among community members

Illustrative Activities for Subcomponent 4.1:

- Building awareness of benefits of local stakeholders' engagement in schools to improve the quality of education that they provide
- Participatory discussions (including students, teachers, administrators and other stakeholders in how to transform the learning environment
- Training relevant stakeholders in how to use participatory and democratic processes to determine focus areas for school and school-community based activities

Indicator for Component 4:

- Number of USAID-assisted schools where parent and community members participated in school governance and management

#### **Component 5: High Quality Monitoring and Evaluation Achieved**

Because one of the goals of this program is to build an awareness of and increase attention to the importance of strong public schools in Lebanon quality and rigorous research is needed to inform stakeholders of progress. It will be expected that the results of this program will be of high enough research quality to be able to use at a national and international level to inform best practices in improving learning environments and the quality of education and how much certain activities in this kind of intervention area impact positive classroom practices and improved learning outcomes. Research design, data collection processes, analysis and results will be shared with the MEHE and other relevant stakeholders.

Sub-component 5.1: Establish a Research Design, Develop a Baseline Data Collection Survey, and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for Project

Design a baseline survey and carry it out to monitor and measure the impact of the D-RASATI Project. Monitoring and evaluation of the program shall be based on a sound development hypothesis, research design and plans to ensure that ample data is collected and analyzed to be able to discuss program results and impacts with some degree of validity. An impact assessment shows the degree to which the overall goal of the project is realized. The project will have an impact on a) teachers' attitudes and skills resulting in changing teachers' behavior in the classroom, b) students' learning changes and improved achievement, and c) school administration changes resulting in school reform.

Desired Results for Subcomponent 5.1:

- Quality monitoring and evaluation lead to improvements in the LES

Illustrative Activities for Subcomponent 5.1

- Designing research to demonstrate whether there is a link between program activities and changes in student and teacher attendance, attitudes, and behavior and improved student performance
- Collecting baseline data collection plan approved by USAID and completed within the first 6 months of the program
- Discussing how effective projects were in improving student learning outcomes and perceptions of the quality of public schools at the school level and with the MEHE

Indicators for Component 5:

- Research designed
- Completed baseline data plan submitted to USAID
- Completed Monitoring and Evaluation Plan submitted to USAID

## **Section E: Indicators**

The following indicators are used by USAID for monitoring its basic education programs. These indicators are found under the Foreign Assistance Framework. All activities that can report against these common indicators must do so on an annual basis. Other project indicators will be needed as part of the SDPP Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP).

Indicators for Foreign Assistance Framework reporting:

- Number of administrators and officials trained
  - Number of Females
  - Number of Males
- Number of learners enrolled in USG-supported primary schools or equivalent non-school settings
  - Number of Females
  - Number of Males
- Number of learners enrolled in USG-supported secondary schools or equivalent non-school-based settings
  - Number of Females
  - Number of Males
- Number of teachers/educators trained with USG support
  - Number of Females
  - Number of Males

- Number of Parent-Teacher Association or similar “school” governance structures supported
- Number of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials provided with USG assistance
- Number of laws, policies, regulations, or guidelines developed or modified to improve equitable access to or the quality of education services
- Number of host country institutions with improved management information systems as a result of USG assistance
- Number of host country institutions that have used USG-assisted MIS system information to inform administrative/management decisions
- Number of people trained in monitoring and evaluation with USG assistance
- Number of people trained in research with USG assistance
- Number of people trained in strategic information management with USG assistance

A finalized set of indicators for reporting will be determined after award when the project’s PMP is being developed.

## **Section F: Performance Monitoring Plan**

The Recipient will develop a plan for collecting, evaluating, and validating data, which will be used to measure overall progress and compare status over time (called the PMP). Within the PMP, the Recipient will develop performance indicators and show how baseline measurements can be established to assess the impact of proposed interventions. A list of required indicators (based upon the new Foreign Assistance Operational Plan) is provided in Section E. Other indicators, which are specific to this project, also need to be included. A final list of indicators will be confirmed after the award.

The PMP should demonstrate how this management system will: help clarify and focus project objectives; serve as an early warning system, forecasting, and reporting tool; promote on-going discussions pertaining to project scope and direction; and aid in effective management decision making.

The PMP shall also include an explanation of how data and information will be collected, analyzed, and used, and the cost effectiveness of such activities.

## **Section G: Crosscutting Themes**

The Recipient will take into account gender considerations when targeting beneficiaries at all levels of D-RASATI, including students, teachers, administration, parents, community members and others. (Attention to gender equality means that activities under the program should be designed to ensure that women as well as men are served and reached as a normal and integral part of project implementation.) Integrating gender should be reflected in the results indicators, both qualitative and quantitative. Activities that are gender-sensitive are encouraged. Such activities include but are not limited to: community activities that are interactive and gender sensitive; student activities in the public school system that have emphasis on girls’ or boys’ students’ participation depending on parity issue; encouraging the participation of women and girls at all levels of school-based decision-making.

### Public Private Partnerships (PPP)

The Recipient will establish management of and coordinate public-private partnerships (PPPs) that can support any of the required goods, services or technical assistance needed to accomplish D-RASATI objectives or other innovative interventions proposed by the PPP. Sustainable growth and development of education in schools is

strengthened by the investments of businesses, NGOs, communities and academic institutions. The D-RASATI project will be enriched from taking advantage of the interests, capacities and contributions of multinational and national companies.

Partnerships with private educational institutions are required. It will be up to the Recipient to identify, select and maintain adequate partnership in line with the objectives of the D-RASATI program. The partnership activities will likely support efforts in the in-service teacher training component and/or increase community participation in school.

## Section H: Branding Strategy and Marking Plan

The Recipient will submit a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan that clearly outlines branding and marking issues associated with the program based on knowledge of the country. Refer to ADS 320, (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/>) specifically 320.3.2.2 and 320.3.2.3 for more information. The Recipient will comply with the requirements of the USAID “Graphic Standards Manual” available at [www.usaid.gov/branding](http://www.usaid.gov/branding), or any successor branding policy.

## Section I: Work Plan

The Recipient will be required to submit a draft detailed work plan for the activities with associated budget estimates to USAID/Lebanon for review 15 days after USAID acceptance of the needs assessment. The Agreement Officer Technical Representative (AOTR) will provide written comments on the draft plan within one week of submission. Upon receipt of the comments the Recipient will have one week to revise the plan, the AOTR will provide written approval of the finalized plan.

The work plan must also include the Recipient’s proposed Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), which must establish clear benchmarks and indicators, as well as a timeframe for results to be attained over the life of the award.

The Recipient is required to include an **exit strategy** and operational closeout plan. The exit strategy should ensure that the schools reach an acceptable level of improving the learning environment and ensure that the community is self-reliant and can maintain the equipment and physical repairs provided.

## Section J: Special Considerations

- Applicants are to provide a sound technical approach for all public schools in Lebanon, as outlined in this RFA. Proposals submitted under this RFA shall not cover major school construction works.
- The Applicant must take into consideration the impact of gender on the quality of education. For example, the status of female teachers, role of girls in the classroom, and involvement of mothers in the formal schooling of children, as well as females in community groups, which are all heavily influenced by the pattern of gender relationships.
- Establishing partnerships with local Lebanese non-governmental and/or private and public organizations is required.
- Substantial Involvement: Because the first phase of the D-RASATI project will be to carry out a preliminary assessment, USAID will approve the implementation plan after its delivery and after discussions with the MEHE and other relevant stakeholders. USAID will approve all key personnel. USAID will also be substantially involved as a collaborative member of technical and programmatic advisory committees.

Finally, USAID may immediately halt a construction activity if construction does not comply with approved specifications.

## **SECTION II AWARD INFORMATION**

### Estimated Funds to be Available:

USAID estimates funding for this program will be made available in the amount of \$75 million which includes \$33 million to cover rehabilitation works, laboratories and materials. USAID anticipates making one award for a five year period.

### Estimated Start Date and Performance Period:

The performance period for this program is estimated to begin October 1, 2010 and be completed by September 30, 2015.

### Type of Award:

The award will be a Cooperative Agreement as USAID desires to be substantially involved in the implementation of the selected program that is consistent with USAID policy contained in ADS Chapter 303 concerning non-governmental assistance activities: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>

## **SECTION III ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

- Applicants must be non-governmental entities of U.S. nationality, otherwise there is no restriction. U.S. entities such as non-profit organizations, profit making concerns, faith-based and community organizations, educational institutions, etc. are eligible to apply.

- Cost share: There is a mandatory cost share requirement of 5% of the total estimated amount that will be evaluated as an element of cost effectiveness and in consideration of USAID regulation 22 CFR 226 and of applicable policy and procedure: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>

## **SECTION IV APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### Application:

This RFA and any future amendments can be downloaded from [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this RFA.

### Submission:

Applications shall be submitted electronically in two separate parts: (a) technical and (b) cost/business application. The application shall be prepared according to the structural format set forth below. Applications must be submitted directly to the Regional Procurement Office of USAID/Egypt to the following **mail box: drasati@usaid.gov**

The due date and time for complete application submittals is as stated in the RFA cover letter, unless the RFA is amended to extend the deadline. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for award, unless the Agreement Officer determines all similarly late applications can be considered.

### Point of Contact:

Harvey Eichenfield, the Agreement Officer: e-mail address: [heichenfield@usaid.gov](mailto:heichenfield@usaid.gov), telephone: 011-202-2522-6930  
Abeer Rizk, Acquisition and Assistance Specialist e-mail address: [arizk@usaid.gov](mailto:arizk@usaid.gov), telephone: 011-202-2522-6884

**Application Preparation Guidelines:**

**(A) THE TECHNICAL PROPOSAL FORMAT**

**THE TECHNICAL APPLICATION HAS A STRICT THIRTY FIVE (35) PAGE LIMIT**, excluding authorized attachments. Authorized attachments to the technical application which do not count against the page limitation consist of: Resumes/CVs for key personnel and letters of commitment of organizational partners or key personnel.

Applicants are advised that any pages exceeding this limit will not be considered for evaluation.

To facilitate the review of the application, the applicant must organize the narrative sections of their technical applications in the same order as the selection criteria in **Section V** of this RFA.

**1. Technical Approach 45%**

The Applicant's technical approach should clearly present the strategies that will be used in program implementation, as well as the rationale behind those strategies. The technical approach should be precise, clear and well conceived in addressing all the requirements in the Program Description. The technical approach should also reflect a real understanding of the opportunities and problems that are likely to be encountered throughout program implementation. The technical approach should explain how the Applicant intends to conduct an assessment of all public schools and donor contributions in the public education sector, as well as coordinate with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in providing equipment, renovation works, extra-curricular activities and capacity-building for in-service teacher training. Finally, the technical approach should feature a sound monitoring and evaluation system to oversee overall school improvements achieved.

In addition, all the strategies and approaches proposed by the Recipient should address the Applicant's clear understanding of the local communities and their needs, the community's role in the program's long-term sustainability, as well as knowledge of current Lebanese public school quality standards and in-service teacher training programs and methodologies.

**2. Past Performance: 15%**

The applicant should provide an information sheet for all grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, or other programs that are similar to the program description in this application that have been performed by the applicant or by a member of the applicant's team over the past three years. For each program listed, please provide the following information:

- Award number;
- Agency or entity providing the funding;
- Description of the program including, but not limited to, a brief discussion of the complexity/diversity of activities;
- Primary location(s) of activities;
- Duration of the program;
- Skills/expertise required;
- Dollar value of the program;
- Contact information for two persons, including name, job title, mailing address, phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

(USAID recommends that you alert the contacts that their names have been submitted and that they are authorized to provide performance information concerning the listed awards if and when USAID requests it).

If extraordinary problems impacted any of the referenced programs, provide a short explanation and the corrective action taken in this section of the Technical Application.

### **3. Personnel Qualifications: 20%**

The Applicant should submit a resume or CV for each of the Key Personnel. The resume should at least include relevant work experience in similar projects in technical and academic qualifications, reference contacts and language capabilities. At least three references, with contact information, preferably email addressees. The applicant should also include a signed letter of commitment from the individual proposed. The letter of commitment must specify the length of the commitment to the position.

### **4. Management Capability 20%**

The Applicant should propose adequate approaches to manage all the activities as described in the Program Description, as well as a demonstrated ability to work in partnership with other organizations in the program implementation process. A relevant staffing plan including an organizational chart to implement the Program Description must be provided. The staffing plan should include the following:

- An organizational chart illustrating the proposed staffing pattern,
- A table which shows the level of effort or number of person months for each position proposed (both in-country and home office staff).
- A description of the positions for Key Personnel.
- A description of how the Applicant intends to maximize the use of Lebanon-based personnel.
- A description of Home Office support to field implementation (if any).

Also, the Applicant shall provide an illustration of how the work under the subject RFA will be coordinated with other donors.

## **(B) COST/BUSINESS APPLICATION FORMAT**

Cost/business sections of the application must be separate from the technical section. There is no page limitation to the cost/business submittal.

The cost/business portion of the application must consist of the following completed forms and requests for information which are available on the following web-site <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>:

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-construction Programs
- SF-424B, Assurances – Non-construction Programs
- Pre-Award Certifications, Assurances and Other Statements of the Applicant/Recipient as stated in ADS 303.3.8 and are available on the following web-site <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf> and in **Annex 4**. They are provided below.
- Other submission requirements for applications submitted in response to this RFA.

The following are amongst the Pre-Award Certifications, Assurances and Other Statements of the Applicant/Recipient which are requested to be included with the application submittal:

- Assurance of Compliance with Laws and Regulations Governing Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs;
- Restrictions on Lobbying;
- Certification Regarding Terrorist Funding
- Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants
- Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number

Other submission requirements for applications submitted in response to this RFA consist of:

- Detailed/itemized budget with budget narrative for each budget object class category, including explanation of how costs were estimated, for both the requested USAID funding and proposed cost share amounts. Participant training should be budgeted in a separate line item.
- Similar budget detail with narrative is requested for organizational partners teaming with the prime applicant.
- Current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) negotiated between the applicant and a Federal agency (if available). If a NICRA is not available, the following is required: 1) 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; 2) Projected budget, cash flow and organizational chart; 3) A copy of the organization's accounting manual.
- If program income (i.e., cost recovery or other revenues generated under the award) is anticipated, the estimated amount should be reflected in the budget, and the Budget Narrative should describe how the program income is proposed to be treated, i.e., additive, cost sharing, or deductive, or a combination thereof (See 22 CFR 226.24).

## **SECTION V APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **Technical Evaluation Criteria and Sub-criteria:**

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.

Technical responses will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

#### **1. Technical Approach 45%**

The evaluation of this criterion will be based on the extent to which the proposed technical approach, including descriptions of strategies and their rationale, is clear, well conceived, technically sound and reflects an understanding of opportunities and problems likely to be encountered and directly addresses the objectives identified in the Program Description.

Factors that will be considered include:

- Soundness of proposed approach for conducting an assessment of all schools and donor contributions in this sector.
- Soundness of proposed approach for improving schools' infrastructure rehabilitation, carrying out basic repairs; adherence to Lebanese Government quality standards for schools.
- Soundness of proposed approach for providing laboratories and laboratory equipment, and other school supplies and furniture.

- Soundness of the proposed approach for providing capacity building for in-service teacher training activities.
- Soundness of the approach for developing extra-curricular activities to support community development
- Soundness of approach for increasing local stakeholder engagement in schools.
- Soundness of the monitoring system for overseeing school improvements.

Soundness, innovativeness and originality of the different tactics, strategies and approaches proposed to address the list of components and sub-components listed under item 1 above, especially regarding the:

- Degree to which proposal reflects the applicant's understanding of the relationship between carrying out school improvement activities and building educational awareness and community ownership of selected activities simultaneously.
- Degree to which proposal reflects active community support for overall program development and long-term sustainability.
- Degree to which proposal reflects the applicant's knowledge and awareness of working with schools and communities in Lebanon and is in compliance with current Lebanese public school quality standards.
- Degree to which the proposal reflects the applicant's understanding of carrying out capacity building for in-service teacher training for Lebanese teachers.

## **2. Past Performance: 15%**

(a) Performance information will be used for both the responsibility determination and best value decision. USAID may use performance information obtained from other than the sources identified by the applicant. USAID will utilize existing databases of past performance information and solicit additional information from the references provided by the applicant and from other sources if and when the Agreements Officer finds the existing databases to be insufficient for evaluating an applicant's performance.

(b) If the performance information contains negative information on which the applicant has not previously been given an opportunity to comment, USAID will provide the applicant an opportunity to comment on it prior to its consideration in the evaluation, and any applicant's comment will be considered with the negative performance information.

(c) USAID will initially determine the relevance of similar performance information as a predictor of probable performance under the subject award. USAID may give more weight to performance information that is considered more relevant and/or more current. The applicant's performance information determined to be relevant will be evaluated in accordance with the elements below:

- Quality of product or service, including consistency in meeting goals and targets;
- Timeliness of performance, including adherence to schedules and other time-sensitive project conditions, and effectiveness of home and field office management to make prompt decisions and ensure efficient completion of activities;
- Business relations, addressing the history of professional behavior and overall business-like concern for the interests of the customer, including coordination among team members and developing country partners, cooperative attitude in remedying problems, and timely completion of all administrative requirements;
- Customer satisfaction with performance, including end user or beneficiary wherever possible;
- Effectiveness of key personnel, including appropriateness of personnel for the job and prompt and satisfactory changes in personnel when problems with clients were identified; and

- Cost control, including forecasting costs as well as accuracy in financial reporting, ensuring that unnecessarily expensive technical assistance is not used when lower cost advisors are adequate, and pacing the expenditure of level of effort such that deliverables and outputs can be produced within budget.

### **3. Personnel Qualifications: 20%**

The evaluation of this criterion will be based on the appropriateness of the qualifications of the entire implementing team and key personnel including the Chief of Party, resident team and the short-term technical assistance staff that will be proposed to handle the components described in the Program Description. If applicable, applicants need to present evidence of the commitment of the long term and short-term technical assistance consultants that are proposed.

### **4. Management Capability 20%**

The evaluation of this criterion will be based on the following factors:

- Adequacy of the management approach for the solicitation and delivery of the needed technical assistance.
- Demonstrated ability to work with local organizations to carry out community-driven school improvement activities and create sustainable community-school partnerships. Applicants must offer evidence of their technical resources and expertise in addressing relevant problems and issues.
- Demonstrated understanding of the Program Description as evidenced by the Staffing Plan, including the organizational chart and level-of-effort chart and its appropriateness to achieve the results of this Project.

### **5. Cost Evaluation**

The Cost Application will be evaluated for cost effectiveness and cost realism. Cost sharing contributions will be evaluated for cost realism.

#### **Description of the Review and Selection Process:**

Application(s) which are deemed to offer the best overall value and meet USAID objectives will be selected for award. The Technical Evaluation Committee will evaluate the technical/programmatic merit of each application as measured against the evaluation factors. At the time of RFA issuance, all panel members are anticipated to be USAID employees. The panel may make an award recommendation based on the extent of its evaluation scope. In addition, one or more panel members may be asked to provide input to the cost effectiveness review, any substantial implementation involvement desired by USAID, and on any special provisions that may be included in the award.

Once an apparent successful applicant is identified, additional information and discussion may occur between the applicant and USAID Agreement Officer, before the Agreement Officer makes the final funding decision.

The recommendation or selection of an application for award does not in any way guarantee an award. The USAID Agreement Officer must be fully satisfied that the applicant has the capacity to adequately perform in accordance with standards established by USAID and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This issue of

organizational capability is generally referred to as a pre-award “responsibility determination.” The Agreement Officer must also complete any other necessary pre-award arrangements.

Details on USAID pre-award responsibility determination policy and procedure can be found on our agency website, in its automated directive system (ADS) chapter 303, section 303.3.9: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>.

Other areas of review and discussion will vary according to the circumstances pertaining to the application. The following areas commonly require discussion and agreement prior to award:

1. Branding Strategy and Marking Plan. The apparent successful applicant will be requested to propose a branding strategy and marking plan which provides for appropriate acknowledgment of USAID support, and which will be required as a material element of the Cooperative Agreement. Information on USAID branding and marking policy can be found in ADS Chapter 320. ADS Chapter 320 sections concerning “assistance” applies to this RFA. ADS Chapter 320 sections concerning “acquisition” do not apply to this RFA. ADS Chapter 320 can be found on USAID website: <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/320.pdf>.
2. Final program and budget plans.
3. Payment terms.
4. Procedures concerning administrative reporting and logistical requirements for program including training components.
5. Cost sharing terms.
6. Other award terms including audit, special provisions and/or special award conditions.

## **SECTION VI AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **Authority to Obligate the Government:**

The USAID Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. No costs chargeable to the proposed Cooperative Agreement may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed Cooperative Agreement or specific pre-award written authorization from the Agreement Officer.

### **USAID Disability Policy - Assistance (December 2004)**

(a) The objectives of the USAID Disability Policy are (1) to enhance the attainment of United States foreign assistance program goals by promoting the participation and equalization of opportunities of individuals with disabilities in USAID policy, country and sector strategies, activity designs and implementation; (2) to increase awareness of issues of people with disabilities both within USAID programs and in host countries; (3) to engage other U.S. Government agencies, host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in fostering a climate of nondiscrimination against people with disabilities; and (4) to support international advocacy for people with disabilities. The full text of the policy paper can be found at the following website: [http://pdf.dec.org/pdf\\_docs/PDABQ631.pdf](http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/PDABQ631.pdf).

(b) USAID therefore requires that the recipient not discriminate against people with disabilities in the implementation of USAID funded programs and that it make every effort to comply with the objectives of the USAID Disability Policy in performing the program under this grant or cooperative agreement. To that end and to

the extent it can accomplish this goal within the scope of the program objectives, the recipient should demonstrate a comprehensive and consistent approach for including men, women and children with disabilities.

**Deviations from Standard Provision:**

None are anticipated at this time.

**A description follows of anticipated Reporting Requirements to be included in the award:**

**Reporting Requirements:**

A. Annual Work plan:

The recipient will prepare and submit for approval by USAID an annual work plan, which will include all activities managed and implemented by the recipient. Each annual work plan will clearly indicate specific tasks and individual responsibilities for task completion. The work plan will serve as a reference point for quarterly and annual progress reports and will permit monitoring of the award performance and costs. It will also be one of the progress performance monitoring tools for USAID.

The annual work plan will establish the timeline for objectives that indicate progress towards the tasks that need to be performed to achieve objectives. It will specify activities on a critical path and show critical performance benchmarks for the responsible parties. The work plan will include a detailed budget with a pipeline analysis of costs incurred and projections of costs for the life of award(s) implementation plan for achieving program outputs.

The recipient shall submit an annual work plan in draft to USAID/Egypt no later than sixty days after signature of the award(s). USAID/Egypt will approve the final work plan in writing once any outstanding issues are resolved. Amendments to the annual work plan may be proposed by the recipient for approval by USAID/Egypt.

B. Quarterly Progress Reports

Thirty days after the end of each calendar quarter, the recipient shall submit to USAID/Egypt a brief progress report. It will summarize progress in relation to agreed-upon benchmarks contained on the annual work plan. The report will specify any problems encountered and indicate resolutions or proposed corrective actions. The report will list activities proposed for the next quarter.

C. Accruals

USAID performs a quarterly accrual exercise at the end of each quarter; i.e. December 31, March 31, June 30, and September 30. Awardees are required to submit four quarterly accrual expenditures reports 15 days before the end of a quarter per year. The recipient must submit a spreadsheet showing cumulative disbursements and estimated (undisbursed) accruals to the AO/TR.

D. Quarterly Financial Reports

Thirty days after the end of each calendar quarter, the recipient will submit to USAID/Egypt a report on expenditures incurred during the report period and projected expenditures for the next quarter. This will report against the Award(s) line items.

E. Annual Progress Report

The July-September (last quarter in a fiscal year) Quarterly Progress Report in addition to the first three quarters will constitute the basis of the Annual Progress Report. It will be a comprehensive narrative report summarizing the previous year's activities and accomplishments using the annual work plan as a starting point and will serve as the tool by which USAID/Egypt monitors the performance of the recipient.

The report will include status of project activities and will summarize services delivered and progress towards achieving results identified in USAID's Program Areas. It will document both successes and failures of the interventions, and discuss reasons for shortcomings and recommend actions to overcome them. For each action, the recipient will designate responsible parties and establish a timeframe for completion.

The Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report will be a stand-alone document, but will be included as an annex to the Annual Progress Report.

**F. Recipient Exit Plan**

Ninety days prior to the Award completion date, the recipient will submit to USAID a detailed plan describing all actions to be completed to demobilize the recipient's operations. The plan will designate dates for all actions. It will include an inventory of all commodities procured under the project and a plan for disposition of the same commodities.

**G. Recipient Final Report**

Ninety days after the Award completion date, the recipient will submit a final report to the Project Officer which will summarize implementation progress of all tasks including achievements of strategic results, shortfalls, problems, recommended solutions, and recipient's assessment of Award work completed. The report shall provide quantitative representation. Accomplishments will need to be documented by data and not anecdotal reporting for the analysis and conclusions must be submitted with the final report.

**H. Project Materials:**

The Recipient shall be required to submit copies to USAID/Lebanon of all materials developed under the project including but not limited to: course curricula and training materials, conference reports, and procedure and operating manuals. The materials to be submitted and the number of copies and language shall be identified in the Annual Workplans.